



Statement by H.E. Ambass. Amadeu da Conceição, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Mozambique to the United Nations Office in Geneva and other International Organizations at the 71st Meeting of UNHCR Excom

General debate

5-9 October

Mr. President

Mr. High Commissioner

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset, we express our delight in the way you, Mr. President, are steering the proceedings of the 71st meeting of ExCom, alongside other members of the bureau.

We also wish to commend the UNHCR Secretariat in general for the preparations of this session, but, in particular, to the High Commissioner, Mr. Filippo Grandi, for his opening statement which focuses on the global situation of forced displacement in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR's global emergency response to support refugees, internally displaced persons, host communities and host governments during this unprecedented crisis, with a huge toll on the protection risks.

Mr. President

We hail the joint efforts UNHCR, Governments and partners are exerting in addressing the needs of the growing number of persons of concern worldwide, now estimated at 86.5 million.

We highly appreciate the extent to which the Global Compact on Refugees has enabled the response to both new and protracted refugee crises, as well as to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency response.

Indeed, the International Humanitarian Community is facing challenging times which are marked by global reduction of humanitarian aid, and the limitations caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Now, more than ever, we are bound to work together as global community towards a common interest which is protecting the lives of those that are forced to leave their locations or countries in search for safer refuge.

The structures and frameworks to assist refugees are already in place, and limited resources at our disposal, can be optimized. It is high time for all of us members states, partners and stakeholders alike, to accelerate the implementation of the Global Compact for refugees.

We have been witnessing encouraging advancements of the Global Compact for Refugees by many countries. In this regards, the Government of Mozambique has officially endorsed a multi-sectorial group to address the global compact matters in all its dimensions, in strict coordination with UNHCR. With this structure, the basis for the sustainable improvement of the lives of refugees in Mozambique is created.

Mr. President

The Government of Mozambique understands that local integration as durable solution for refugee situation, provides opportunity for a better life for refugees, as well as national development, as the skills and potentials of refugees are being applied for development.

In this context, the Government of Mozambique pledges to continue ensuring that refugees living in Mozambique are granted access to services of education, health, economic activities and sports in order to foster local integration.

At this junction, we echo the dismay of the African Group, as far as the underfunding of 2019 budget is concerned with attending impacts on the provision of protection and assistance to the people of concern to UNHCR, especially in Africa, home to the bulk of 85% of the total refugees in developing countries. Despite this reality, African countries maintain their borders open to welcome more refugees, for which they should be commended.

Amid this scenario, we join others in appealing donor countries to endeavor to provide unearmarked funding so as to mitigate the underfunding of programs, and afford UNHCR ample space to allocate the resources to the operations in dire need of funding.

As for decentralization and regionalization process, we encourage UNHCR to consolidate the regional offices, as their work and operations on site are proving extremely useful, as testified by the emergency response to COVID – 19 pandemic they have been undertaking.

Mr. President,

On the pledges made at the first Global Refugee Forum in December 2019, we want to reiterate Mozambique's resolve in their implementation and provide update to the members of the ExCom in due course.

We avail ourselves of this opportunity to convey our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the United Nations in General, and to UNHCR in particular; International Organizations, Governments and all individuals of good will that are supporting the Internally Displaced Persons in the Northern Province of Cabo Delgado, scene to terrorist extremist foreign groups that are committing serious violations of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Laws and causing thousands to flee their villages . Your intervention is saving lives in Mozambique.

Mr. President

We pay tribute to the UNHCR's field staff who work in difficult and dangerous duty stations, risking their lives as they undertake their noble humanitarian activities.

To conclude, Mr. President, we commend the peoples and governments of refugee-hosting countries and communities worldwide for their solidarity and hospitality, some of them are grappling with their own internal challenges.

We thank you