

Talking Points - 73rd Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme

10 - 14 October 2022

Firstly, - Welcome everyone (distinguished guest)

- I would like to firstly thank our close allies, partners – the international community – for their continued commitments and support to the Federal Government of Somalia over the years.
- The UN High Commissioner for Refugees in particular, and International Community's efforts in supporting the FGS to provide protection, assistance and solutions to all affected and displaced populations including refugee returnees in Somalia.
- I would like to acknowledge the high level of cooperation between UNHCR and the FGS, as well as the working relationship between UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees and IDPs (NCRI).
- As FGS, I would like highlight our continuous commitment to work with UNHCR in providing protection, assistance and durable solutions to persons of concern and hosting communities.
- I would like to express our appreciation to UNHCR and the International Community for ongoing support to drought-affected communities but with that said we strongly urge and need the international community to step up their support at this critical juncture when the country is at a brink of a famine

Secondly,

- The FGS is pleased to have concluded the national elections earlier this year. The election of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and the peaceful transfer of power following the conclusion of elections on 15 May, as well as the appointment of the cabinet in early August, offers a long-awaited opportunity for Somalia to make progress on urgent national priorities, including those related to national reconciliation, improving relations between the central Government and federal member states, and addressing the security threat from Al-Shabaab. In recent months one of the priorities has been to urgently address the dire drought conditions. Somalia is experiencing the worst drought in four decades, which in combination with the global increase in food prices, has brought the country to the brink of a famine. Against these challenges, the FGS is trying hard to respond to emergencies and provide ongoing assistance to displaced and vulnerable host communities in Somalia.
- There is an urgent need to respond to the ongoing drought, which has so far resulted in the displacement of more than 1 million people and affected the livelihood of many families. In August this year, the Prime Minister announced the re-establishment of the Somalia Disaster Management Agency (SODMA), in response to the ongoing droughts. This independent agency is expected to respond to various disasters within the country, and in particular the current drought and risk of famine. Given that climate change has become one of the major global challenges of this century, and with its adverse impact mostly affecting developing nations, including Somalia, the newly elected government has decided to establish a Ministry of Environment and Climate Change to tackle this. A policy response to climate change in Somalia is vital for adapting and mitigating the country's susceptibility. The FGS recognizes that climate change must be mainstreamed into policies and sectoral activities to achieve sustainable growth.
- As of 31st August 2022, more than **3.1 million people** are of joint concern to the FGS and UNHCR in Somalia. These include approximately **2,967,000 IDPs, close to 136,000 returnees and 33,670**

refugees and asylum seekers. Additionally, **nearly 650,000 more Somali refugees are residing in the region**, many of whom are looking for solutions to return home one day.

- Since the 2013 signing of the the Tripartite Agreement between the Federal Government of Kenya, the FGS and UNHCR governing the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees living in Kenya, close to 86,000 Somalis have returned home. The war in Yemen has also triggered returns to Somalia, and since 2015, the FGS has worked with UNHCR, IOM and partners to assist more than 5,400 Somalis return home. Since 2020 the trend in returns to Somalia has declined, particularly due to COVID-19 and the deteriorating economic situation. The FGS stands ready to work with UNHCR, humanitarian and development partners to improve basic services and infrastructure in priority areas of return.
- Somalia is a signatory to the 2017 Nairobi Declaration and Action Plan on Durable Solutions and collaborates effectively with the IGAD process to develop solutions to refugee issues in the region, including creating a favorable and sustainable environment for refugee returns.
- The FGS continues working towards the fulfilment its international obligations by developing its legislative frameworks. The draft Refugee Act and the draft IDP Act have been development and pending adoption. In addition, FGS has supported the development and operationalization of a number of national policies and frameworks related to durable solutions, including the National Policy on Refugee-Returnees and IDPs; The Interim Protocol on Land Distribution for Housing to Eligible Refugee-returnees and IDPs and the National Eviction Guidelines.
- In March 2021, the FGS launched the **National Durable Solutions Strategy (2020-2024)**, which is inclusive of all persons of concern (including IDPs, refugees and returnees) and is the main policy instrument for the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and accompanying Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in Somalia. With the development and approval of this key strategy, **the FGS's fourth pledge made at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) has been achieved**, and the FGS continues to make significant progress on its other GRF pledges and commitments as well as other regional commitments including the Nairobi Declaration and Djibouti Declaration. Examples include the development of policies and legislation, reintegration of returnees, equitable access to basic services and shelter, access to education in public schools by refugee/returnee children, job creation/providing socio-economic rights to refugees/returnees and improving flood/water management in order to address the root causes of displacement.
- In **June 2021** the FGS launched the **National Action Plan to End Statelessness in Somalia (2021-2024)**, a crucial step in achieving the FGS pledges towards ratification of the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions made at ExCom in November 2019. We have already made significant progress this year in meeting the statelessness pledges. For instance, the FGS has established a technical steering committee to tackle statelessness and is currently undertaking a study to assess the status of statelessness, and to identify groups at risk of statelessness, in Somalia.
- The FGS is also in the process of enacting the **Somalia Refugee Act** and has made significant strides in the development of a draft **Somalia IDP Act**, both of which demonstrate the FGS's commitment to protection, assistance and the pursuit of durable solutions for all displaced communities, include strong efforts for their incorporation in national development systems. Both legislations remain a top priority of the Government.
- The National Commission for Refugees and IDPs (NCRI) through the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation has also championed Somalia ratification of the Kampala Convention and its domestication as the IDP Law.
- NCRI is also undertaking work on a National System for Profiling IDPs that was launched in 2021. The National IDP Registration System is a core component and primary objectives to fulfill NCRI's legal mandate which is to protect and assist displaced individuals. Registration ensures that accurate records are kept to guide programming, help protect the rights of IDPs and has profiled close to 90,000 individuals in the Mogadishu area with expansion to the federal member states to happen in 2023. The recent recommendations from the UN high-level panel on internal displacement highlighted the importance of data and evidence to find solutions.

- Also for the first time, plans are underway for Federal Government land to be used for the relocation of venerable IDPs, currently living in a high risk area, to a new settlement. NCRI and the humanitarian community have discussed and agreed to relocate some 1000 households to a new planned settlement with improved access to basic services and livelihood opportunities. This would be a starting point for more Federal land to be used to find durable solutions for our most vulnerable citizens.
- The FGS remains committed to addressing issues related to **mixed migration**, the plight of displaced people in Somalia caught up in the immigration crisis, and the importance of enhanced coordination among all partners. To this end, UNHCR continues to support the Office of the Special Envoy on Migration.

Yet, Somalia continues to require the support of the International Community to recover from the drought resulting from climate change, and achieve humanitarian and development targets necessary for protection and solutions not only for displaced communities, but for all Somalis.

Finally,

With the support of the International Community, the FGS commits to the following:

1) The adoption and ratification of pivotal national and international legal instruments

- As key measures for protection, assistance and durable solutions for displaced and displaced-adjacent communities, following the conclusion of the electoral period, the FGS commits to adopt the **Somalia Refugee Act by 31 December 2022, and the Somalia IDP Act by 31 December 2023.**
- While unable to meet the anticipated timelines of the FGS's pledges made at the 2019 ExCom related to statelessness, due in large part to last year's compounding emergencies (including COVID-19 and drought) as well as the elections process, the Government successfully launched the National Action Plan to End Statelessness in June 2021 and remains committed to protect/prevent against statelessness, **including taking the necessary steps to accede to the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions by 31 December 2023.**

2) Implementation of the National Durable Solutions Strategy (2020-2024)

- The March 2021 launch of the National Durable Solutions Strategy is fully aligned with the goals of the Global Compact on Refugees, in so far as it is Government-led and inclusive with full participation at the inter-ministerial level, area-based, comprehensive and sustainable.
- The key strategic objectives and outcomes of the National Durable Solutions Strategy are also aligned with and incorporate all the commitments made at the GRF and targets on job creation, relocation and reintegration, and sustainable flood management.
- Additionally, as part of the FGS's commitment and desire to ensure that refugee returns to Somalia are voluntary and sustainable, this crucial strategy helps facilitate returnees' reintegration process and promotes absorption capacities in areas of return.
- The FGS asks for the support of the International Community to double the technical and financial support to Somalia to ensure a **successful implementation of the National Durable Solutions Strategy in 2022 and beyond**, and therefore in ensuring durable solutions to address protracted displacement in Somalia and beyond.

3) Strengthen peace, stabilization and reconciliation efforts in Somalia

- The President and his Government are committed to strengthening reconciliation and the restoration of institutions in Somalia.
- In order to stabilize the country and move closer to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, the new Government is committed to work with partners to improve security, re-establish law and order, and to conduct the necessary political and socio-economic reforms.
- The FGS appeals to the international community to support it in its efforts to bring peace and stabilization to Somalia.

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