

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



STATEMENT BY

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**DURING THE 73RD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF
THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAM [EXCOM]**

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

11 OCTOBER 2022

- **Mr. Chairman,**
- **Your Excellency Mr. Filippo Grandi, High Commissioner of UNHCR,**
- **Your Excellencies present,**
- **Distinguished delegates,**

1. It is my pleasure and honour, and that of my delegation, to be among the Member States participating in the 73rd ExCom and address this distinguished house on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Namibia and indeed on behalf of the Namibian people.
2. Namibia aligns itself with the statement delivered by Chad on behalf of the African Group and we take this opportunity to make additional remarks in our national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

3. Namibia thanks the High Commissioner, Mr. Fillipo Grandi, for his opening Statement which, among other things, aptly sums up the drivers of migration, including the urgent need to address the adverse effects of climate change. Similarly, we congratulate Mr. Grandi on his re-election as the High Commissioner for Refugees. Mr. Grandi's re-election to this humanitarian High Office symbolizes his commitment, dedication, passion, and love towards the most vulnerable people of the society, the asylum seekers, refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and stateless people who find themselves out of their homes and countries against their will. The High Commissioner and the entire UNHCR staff can always count on Namibia's support in the execution of the mandate bestowed upon them.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Currently, Namibia is host to seven thousand nine hundred and eighty four (7984) asylum seekers and refugees, and majority of them are from the Great Lake regions with DRC in the lead. In this regard, Namibia together with UNHCR plans to engage governments of DRC, Burundi, Rwanda, and others to initiate tripartite meetings to pave the way for voluntary repatriation. Meetings on the promotion of voluntary repatriation have started and as expected, while some are showing willingness to return home where peace now prevails, others are depicting symptoms of reluctance to do so.
5. In this context, Namibia urges the UNHCR to device mechanisms to best address push and pull factors and to consider invoking cessation clauses for countries where peace has returned so that former refugees can return to their countries. We should not continue hosting asylum seekers or refugees when the circumstances that made people to leave their native countries have ceased to exist. We should rather be hosting each other as orderly migrants.

Mr. Chairman,

6. Our congregation here is for a common objective: to ensure that the basic rights of asylum seekers, refugees, IDPs and stateless people are not violated. The protection of their rights is only possible when we loudly and collectively proclaim that enough is enough, we can no longer afford to lose precious lives, especially that of innocent women and children. Namibia's humble appeal to those who are responsible for the exodus of asylum seekers into host countries is to realize that the barrel of guns will never end the war, the only therapy to the violence in the world is dialogue to resolve differences within the spirit of **"One people, One world"**. This is the only instrument that can transform the current unrest for refugees.

Mr. Chairman,

7. During the Global Compact on Refugees that took place in New York in 2019, Namibia made pledges in the following areas:
 - a. education,
 - b. health,
 - c. statelessness, and
 - d. sport.
8. Let me give a brief update on these pledges. On education and health, the government together with UNHCR has constructed schools (primary and secondary) and a clinic in Osire Refugee Settlement. Equally, the government takes care for salaries for staff members at the schools and clinic.
9. Regarding stateless, Namibia has commenced a project – as part of the country’s development plan – the Harambee Prosperity Plan – to regularize the status of stateless and undocumented persons. In this context, Namibia commenced with the registration of undocumented persons and or potentially stateless people and the number is currently being validated. A new law will be enacted to regularize the status of the affected group of people. Namibia decided to tackle both undocumented and statelessness once considering that the two are closely related. It is pertinent to indicate that there is political will in Namibia to address the issue of statelessness. Therefore, efforts towards addressing stateless in Namibia is receiving meticulous attention by the executive branch of the country.

Mr. Chairman,

10. In conclusion, I want to stress that although Namibia is a young country with small population, it is equally faced with the challenges of HIV/AIDS pandemic, climate change, drought, unemployment, especially among the youth. In this regard, Namibia will continue to do her best to live up to its international obligations by providing humanitarian assistance to asylum

seekers and refugees while at the same time provide basic amenities such as clean drinking water, sanitation, basic education, and primary healthcare to its citizens.

I thank you!