



**ZIMBABWE**

**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF  
PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE**

**HONOURABLE JULY MOYO (MP)**

**TO THE  
74<sup>TH</sup> EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF THE PROGRAMME OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (EXCOM) MEETING**

**ON AGENDA ITEM 3 ON THE GENERAL DEBATE**

**GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

**9 OCTOBER 2023**

- **Madam Chairperson,**
- **Your Excellencies,**
- **High Commissioner,**
- **Distinguished Delegates,**

At the outset I wish to begin by extending heartfelt congratulations to you Your Excellency on your well-deserved election as Chair of the 74<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Committee of the UNHCR.

**Your Excellency,** my delegation fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Honourable Minister from the Republic of Congo on behalf of the African Group. Zimbabwe acknowledges the unprecedented movement of people in the recent past owing to various challenges which include climate change induced natural disasters, and conflict. The current global humanitarian situation requires of all of us to take collective and concerted action towards mitigating the effects of climate change through sustainable climate financing and investing in peace building initiatives across the world.

**Your Excellency,** since the last Excom, the Government of Zimbabwe has continued to implement programmes that promote and protect the rights of persons of concern to the UNHCR in fulfilment of the commitments made in the various international conventions and instruments to which Zimbabwe is party. We have been recalibrating our systems to realise the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees. As a people, Zimbabweans are peace-loving, welcoming and hospitable and our Government will continue with its open-door policy that welcomes refugees and asylum seekers in line with Ubuntu, an African philosophy which recognizes the importance of respecting and upholding humanity.

Zimbabwe currently hosts some 22 000 refugees and asylum-seekers, around 15 000 of which are accommodated at our Tongogara Refugee Facility in the east of the country.

**In this regard,** the Government of Zimbabwe has a twinning agreement with the World Food Programme. The partnership ensures that refugees and asylum seekers domiciled in Zimbabwe are food secure. In June this year, the Government of Zimbabwe donated 4 400 metric tons of maize to Tongogara Refugee Camp. Under this partnership, WFP covers the costs of transport, storage, handling, milling and fortification of the maize with funds from international donors. This food donation made by the Government of Zimbabwe is in recognition of the fact that funding for refugees is limited and follows the commitment made by our President, His Excellency Dr Emmerson Mnangagwa, in response to the UN Secretary General's call for pledges towards humanitarian assistance.

In order to further boost food security at the Facility and to create livelihoods for those who live there, Government has allocated some 150 hectares of irrigated land. By way of devolution funding, Government is also expanding existing educational facilities so as to enhance enjoyment of the right to education. Additional funding is required to construct more housing units at the Facility to ensure that all those accommodated thereat have access to decent housing.

**Your Excellency**, we note from the High Commissioner's statement that donor Government contributions reached record levels in 2022 and wish to applaud the financial donors for their support. We nevertheless observe that the gap between humanitarian needs and funding continues to widen. This dire funding crisis continues to affect protection pillars such as education, shelter and health among others.

While financial resources can be earmarked, countries hosting refugees have no such options and have to open their borders to refugees and asylum seekers who in turn access in-kind resources that include land and infrastructure and other natural resources. On this basis, we call upon the UNHCR to avail more unearmarked resources to countries already faced with other challenges, like unilateral coercive measures, that militate against states' ability to fully protect persons of concern to the UNHCR.

That said, Zimbabwe is of the considered view that no humanitarian situation is more important than the other. There is need to depoliticize humanitarian assistance and focus on life-saving and constructive initiatives globally. Protracted refugee situations such as that of the Saharawi people in the sadly neglected Western Sahara require attention so as not to be forgotten.

**Your Excellency**, as raised in the Africa Group statement, Zimbabwe shares the concern expressed about the unilateral amendment of the reports of the 88<sup>th</sup> session of the Standing Committee, after agreement had been reached. We deplore the fact that some delegations brought pressure to bear for the inclusion of language which is not universally agreed upon. We urge the Secretariat to always be neutral and to resist such pressures, from wherever they originate.

In conclusion, **Your Excellency**, my delegation expresses its deep appreciation to the High Commissioner, Mr. Filippo Grandi, and his team for working tirelessly in the field for the protection of people of concern to the UNHCR. We pay tribute to staff members who have paid the ultimate price and lost their lives in the humanitarian field.

Finally, Zimbabwe cherishes the excellent relations we enjoy with UNHCR and other UN agencies and development partners who have continued to support refugees and asylum seekers in Zimbabwe.

**I Thank You.**