



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

**STATEMENT
BY
HON. MACHANA RONALD SHAMUKUNI
MINISTER OF JUSTICE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE 74TH SESSION
OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONERS FOR REFUGEES
PROGRAMME (EXCOM)**

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

9 - 13 OCTOBER 2022

For delivery

**Thank You Chairperson
The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,
Mr Filippo Grandi
Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,**

1. On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Botswana, I am pleased to join other delegations at this important forum of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme. We extend our appreciation to the High Commissioner and his staff for your excellent facilitation of the meeting.
2. Botswana aligns herself with the Statement delivered by the distinguished representative of the Republic of Congo on behalf of the African Group.

Chairperson

3. I wish to express my appreciation for the technical support and collaboration of the UNHCR with Botswana, which continues to maintain its presence in Botswana through the Dukwi Field Office. This includes the training offered to our officers particularly on Refugee Status Determination, which will enable us to ensure that asylum claims are assessed fairly and within the set refugee criteria, thus reinforcing our commitment to accord asylum seekers the right to be heard.
4. Botswana further appreciates the support of the United Nations Agencies operating in Botswana. The Botswana UN

Country Team continues to leverage its capacities to facilitate refugee inclusion, and to this end, a workplan is being developed jointly under the UN Common pledge 2.0. All partners in this effort are ready to implement the joint plan to achieve the agreed targets.

5. The Government of Botswana has adopted a deliberate and comprehensive approach to respond to the plight of refugees. During current Financial Year 2023 - 2024, Government will implement several projects in Dukwi at a cost of more than **Ten Million, Two Hundred Thousand Botswana Pula or Seven Hundred and Forty Thousand United States Dollars (USD740,000.00)**. These projects include the rehabilitation of water supply, construction of access roads, and maintenance of houses, which I am confident will significantly improve the living conditions of refugees in Botswana.
6. Furthermore, it is also pleasing to note that Dukwi Primary School continues to register impressive results, and the same students do well at secondary school. Through the partnership with UNHCR, some private institutions and individuals offer refugee children scholarships to continue their education at tertiary institutions. This makes it possible for the children to fully integrate into the job market and broader society.

Chairperson

7. In order to ensure the capture and maintenance of vital statistics and compliance with 1954 and 1961 UN Convention

on Statelessness, all refugees in the country are registered, including the registration of births and deaths of all refugees occurring within Botswana. This will go a long way in ensuring planning for, and management of their welfare and protection measures, and that no one is left behind.

8. However, what remains a challenge for Botswana is the provision of adequate food and non-food items at Dukwi Refugee Camp. For almost a year now, UNHCR has not been able to regularly distribute food packages to refugees, and this has affected the nutritional and health status of families. These challenges occurred against the backdrop of budgetary constraints exacerbated by global inflationary pressures, the unprecedented expenditure towards COVID 19 recovery measures and climate change. While we have not been able to fully augment rations, Government has put measures in place to ensure that provisions are available to the most vulnerable individuals.
9. We thank all individuals and organisations who continue to support refugees through donations and other forms of assistance.
10. In conclusion, Botswana reaffirms her commitment to expand and strengthen these partnerships towards finding durable solutions to address the plight of refugees.

I thank you for your attention.