

Remarks by

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Director General of Refugees and Returnees Service of Ethiopia

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Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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Thank you, Madam Chairperson,

Thank you, High Commissioner,

Ethiopia aligns itself with the statement delivered by Republic of the Congo on behalf of the Africa Group.

Madam Chair,

Ethiopia is home to over 1 million refugees and asylum seekers who need international protection. The Government of Ethiopia has made significant progress to enhance the self-reliance of refugees by promoting socio-economic inclusion. On Social inclusion, we have made a considerable progress on achieving our commitments on the inclusion of refugees in Secondary and TVET schools. In addition, we have integrated refugee education data in the national Education Information Management System (EMIS) and in the Education Sector Development Plan. In 2022/2023 academic year, over 114,000 refugee children are in primary education. In the same manner, Ethiopia continues to provide basic healthcare services for refugees in collaboration with partners.

We have implemented different development-oriented projects in agriculture and livestock sectors that have a direct positive impact on the lives of refugees. Refugees are also included in a Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems (CRVS) Improvement Strategy and Costed Action Plan of Ethiopia. In line with this, digitization of the refugee civil registration system has commenced in order to facilitate integration of the refugee data into the national civil registration system. Furthermore, the Government of Ethiopia has already commenced integration of refugees into the National Digital ID Program to strengthen their social protection and to improve access to financial and other services. Refugees and asylum seekers are included in the National Strategy on Violence Against Women and Children. They can access holistic response services to GBV survivors provided in One Stop Centers across the country and shelter services established for survivors.

In relation to environment and energy, the issue of climate change is a critical concern for a country like Ethiopia that hosts a substantial number of refugee population. In my

country, access to clean energy in host communities remains very low and the presence of refugees worsens the strain on the local environment due to their reliance on firewood for cooking and shelter. To mitigate the impact, climate action and resilience are also mainstreamed and prioritized in the refugee response programming. The focus is on environmental conservation and rehabilitation in refugee hosting areas. Currently, millions of tree seedlings are planted to restore degraded lands in refugee camps and host communities.

Madam Chair,

UNHCR operation in Ethiopia faces a continued chronic underfunding year to year. The underfunding is affecting the gains that we have already made. In addition, as we speak, Ethiopia is receiving refugees from Las Anod, Somalia and Sudan due to ongoing conflicts and from South Sudan due to the recent conflict. We are dealing with the emergency while the support from donors is dwindling over time. Most notably, the emergency response fund has primarily gone towards providing food to refugees upon arrival and afterward. Therefore, timely financial assistance is critically needed to save lives and provide the necessary protection and basic services to the refugees.

Ethiopia, the co-conveners of the first Global Refugee Forum, is very committed to make additional pledges in GRF 2023 in line with our national plan. We believe that GRF 2023 would be a good platform for equitable burden and responsibility sharing. Ethiopia will make new and bold commitments in areas of climate action and energy, urbanization of refugee camps, inclusion of refugees in national systems, GBV, access to land and irrigation schemes for food security and economic empowerment, and protection services for refugees. To fulfill the existing pledges and new pledges, we look forward to pledge matching. In this regard we would be interested to engage with partners for possible pledge matching.

In conclusion, Ethiopia has a large number of internally displaced persons, particularly climate change induced IDPs. The Government of Ethiopia has been taking various measures, including by putting in place a well-functioning legal and policy framework with a clear plan, budget, and operational capacity to comprehensively address these challenges. This has enabled many IDPs to return to their homes. These measures taken by

the Government of Ethiopia aimed at addressing the root causes of internal displacement and repatriating IDPs to their homes, however, requires enhanced development assistance and rehabilitation support. My delegation would like to seize this opportunity to thank UNHCR and partners for their continued support. We firmly believe that this is the time to demonstrate concrete solidarity to stand with refugees and host countries.

I Thank You!