

# **REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**



**STATEMENT BY**

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**DURING THE 74th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAM  
[74<sup>th</sup> ExCOM]**

**GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

**10 OCTOBER 2023**

- **Madam Chairperson,**
- **Your Excellency Mr. Filippo Grandi, High Commissioner of the 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 74<sup>th</sup> ExCom and address this distinguished house on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Namibia.
2. Namibia stands aligned with the statement delivered on behalf of the African Group.

Madam Chairperson,

3. I take this opportunity to make additional remarks on behalf of Namibia. Namibia welcomes the opening statement by the High Commissioner which sets out the tone for our discussion for this session.
4. The world is witnessing high levels of displacement, with millions of lives disrupted, many futures uncertain, the devastating consequences of climate change and war which lead to displacement of people.
5. There are currently 110 million people whom UNHCR is tasked to help protect, assist, and find solutions for. In Namibia, there are seven thousand, one hundred and eighty-one (7181) asylum seekers and refugees. Many of them hail from the Great Lake regions, with DRC in the lead.
6. As customary, Namibia commends UNHCR's effort in providing humanitarian assistance particularly in the areas where thousands of people are affected by war and natural disasters. The responsibility to provide humanitarian

assistance rests on all of us, it cannot be achieved by one role player alone. I therefore equally thank all those who are lending a hand to provide asylum to those who seek it.

7. Namibia is extremely worried about the funding shortfalls and reduction on UNHCR humanitarian operations. This affects the livelihood of asylum seekers and refugees and at the same time puts pressure on host countries.

Madam Chairperson,

8. Namibia successfully conducted a voluntary repatriation operation in August 2023 for ninety-six (96) repatriates from DRC.

9. Namibia will continue engaging other countries that have regained peace and whose nationals are still hosted in Namibia as refugees to promote voluntary repatriation as we firmly believe that refugee status must be temporary.

10. In the face of these harsh realities, Namibia as a child of international solidarity and despite her own challenges, continues to provide asylum, instill hope and support asylum seekers and refugees.

Madam Chairperson,

11. We call on this session to constructively engage, share insights and collaborate toward concrete actions that can make a difference in the lives of asylum seekers, refugees, IDPs and stateless persons.

- 12.** Let us intentionally shift the paradigm towards the global eradication of man-made causes of human displacement. We must not only eradicate these problems but also ensure that we do not create or cultivate an environment that breeds and feeds them.

Madam Chairperson,

13. I now wish to provide some updates since the previous ExCom with regard to pledges.

- a. An update on health and education: Government has committed to the payment of salaries for teachers and nurses at the two schools and one clinic at Osire Refugee Settlement.
- b. An update on statelessness: Two new bills and two amendment bills have been drafted to end statelessness and prepare for domestic legislative environment for the ratification of the two UN Instruments on statelessness. The bills are at an advance stage of promulgation.
- c. An update on Sport: The Namibia Olympic Committee has donated sporting equipment to refugees aiming at uplifting various sporting codes in Osire Refugee Settlement. As part of the Government effort to inspire and motivate refugee learners in order to prioritize sports, the Ministry together with the Committee arranged in April this for a motivational session with the award winning Namibian sprinters namely Beatrice Masilingi and Christine Mboma at Osire Refugee Settlement.

Madam Chairperson,

Namibia is concerned that the Programme budget for 2024 was amended by the Secretariat after the 88<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee. It would be prudent to follow established processes and procedures with regards to reports or document of our meeting.

14. As I conclude, Namibia remains committed to upholding her international obligations toward asylum seekers and refugees. Namibia will continue to work with UNHCR and other UN Agencies in accordance with the established international instruments and national laws to achieve this noble service to humanity.
  
15. I THANK YOU!