



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

**STATEMENT BY THE
MINISTER OF HOMELAND SECURITY,
HONOURABLE KENNETH REEVES ZIKHALE NG'OMA, M.P
AT THE
75TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH
COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
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**Madam Chair,
High Commissioner,
Excellency's and distinguished Delegates,**

It's an honour for me and my delegation to be part and parcel of the 75th session of the Committee. **Madam Chair**, I take this opportunity to convey greetings from **His Excellency Dr. Lazarus McCathy Chakwera**, the President of the Republic of Malawi and the people of Malawi.

We fully align ourselves with the statement made by Uganda on behalf of the African Group and emphasize on the need for increased support.

Madam Chair, just as alluded to by previous speakers there is an increase in the complex nature of displacement – often consisting of refugees and migrants moving side by side – along transnational routes. Malawi is hosting around 55,000 refugees and asylum seekers as at end September. Considering this huge number, there have been numerous challenges. Malawi calls for equitable responsibility and burden sharing in addressing these challenges.

The asylum regime has been subjected to abuse as Malawi is faced with increased number of illegal migration and transnational

crimes perpetrated by migrants claiming to seek international protection. This has posed a threat to national security and a need for the country to enhance, re-evaluate its reception and admission procedures, policies and laws. Further, illegal migration has led to overcrowding in the camp and an effect on supply of goods and services. As a host country, Malawi is already doing so much but the diminishing funding trends Malawi is currently experiencing has negatively affected the refugee operation. There is need for real tangible commitment of sustainable support.

Since the last session, the Government of **Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera** has registered a number milestones. At present the review and consultations of the 1989 Refugees Act are on-going. There are efforts to improve the legal and policy framework related to forcibly displaced persons. These efforts touch on the Immigration Act, Citizenship Act, National Registration Act, the development of a National Migration Policy as well as a Labour Migration Policy and Labour Migration Regulations and Guidelines.

Madam Chair, migration has challenges that have seen an influx of many people into the country substantially leading to overcrowding, deforestation and an increased demand of goods

and services including health and education facilities. This has hampered economic development of the individuals and the camp area. **Madam Chair**, these challenges have coerced Malawi Government **to draw plans for resettlement in Chitipa District**. 445 hectares of land has been acquired by the Government. Such a move will decongest the Dzaleka Camp, empower and include the Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the development of the economy and individual livelihoods such as small-scale agriculture, skills development and education. We call upon UNHCR and all Partners to provide full support towards the timely development of the Chitipa Settlement site.

Allow me, **Madam Chair**, to emphasize the expansion of access to solutions in third countries and the creation of conditions for a safe and dignified return to countries of origin. Durable solutions and complementary pathways are being encouraged by the Government of Malawi, however there is need for increased support to upscale the number of beneficiaries. There are so many in need of returning home but the resources are not enough. Malawi seeks support on improved resources.

It remains a concern that **Resettlement** as one of the durable solutions is found to be a pull factor for new asylum seekers in the

country. Malawi therefore calls for joint efforts to raise awareness on the processes to reduce the current misconceptions and fraud related risks. Our plea is for increased quotas as we remain grateful to all the States and Partners that have been supporting us.

With regard to **voluntary repatriation**, Malawi in collaboration with UNHCR has repatriated 98 individuals this year with the recent cohort that has departed on the 18th of September, 2024 to Rwanda. Malawi wishes to express gratitude to the Governments of Burundi, Rwanda and Somalia for the support during the repatriation programmes. We hope this support continues and more individuals are repatriated home.

We continue to express our gratitude to partners that have brought about windows of opportunities for the refugee youth through the complementary pathways. I wish to convey our continued support in enhancing access to education and promoting the self-reliance of the refugee community. In the same vain, I am pleased to report that Malawi has just recently resumed the issuance of Electronic Convention Travel Documents (eCTDs) to eligible refugees. Students and others are free to travel as before.

I am **Madam Chair**, further pleased to report that Malawi has continued to ensure the inclusion on refugees into the National Agenda. To date, refugees in Malawi have been included in the National Financial Inclusion Strategy, National Health Demographics Study, National Birth registration programmes as well as the national education system. Malawi believes that this inclusion of forcibly displaced persons is an investment in their self-reliance and empowers them to contribute to local communities and economies until such time they can return home. However, sustenance of these programs will require commitment and resources.

In conclusion **Madam Chair, distinguished delegates**, I wish to reiterate Malawi's commitment to eradicating Statelessness. In line with the High-level segment on Statelessness allow me to highlight a few key achievements in tackling statelessness in the decade since the launch of the #IBelong campaign. Malawi has conducted a study on the extent of Statelessness in the country. Following this, a National Plan of Action on Statelessness with consultations from different stakeholders was developed. Standard operating procedures have also been developed on the birth registration of vulnerable children by the National Registration Bureau (NRB) and plans are underway to register all children below

the age of 16 and issue them with birth certificates. The registration of refugees into the National Identification System is an ongoing process for review and improvement. The country's national citizenship law has been reviewed and awaits Cabinet approval. Refugee Status Determination Committee work has been ongoing to help establish one's nationality and we pledge continued support to refugees and asylum process.

I would like to thank you Madam Chair for your good leadership and to thank **UNHCR** and **its administration** for the continued humanitarian support it renders to Malawi.

The Malawi Government under the leadership of **His Excellency Dr. Lazarus McCathy Chakwera**, wishes to renew commitment to building efforts and developments of our national asylum systems and the implementation of conventions providing a framework for international protection to forcibly displaced persons. Furthermore, we seek to further collaborate with UNHCR and other partners in finding lasting solutions to challenges relating to supporting and protecting refugees.

Thank you all for the attention.