

Deputy Minister's Speech ExCom 2024

Honorable Chair, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it is a privilege to address UNHCR Executive Committee 2024. I extend my warmest greetings on behalf of the Government of Somalia as we gather here today. We appreciate the opportunity to address this esteemed assembly and express our gratitude to the High Commissioner for his unwavering commitment and support for Somali refugees in the East Africa region, Yemen, and our internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Somalia is currently overcoming a long period of instability, during which our governance structures, laws, and systems were severely disrupted. Despite these challenges, we are now taking critical steps toward peace, stability, and recovery. A major part of this journey involves upholding and implementing the laws that protect our most vulnerable populations, particularly refugees, IDPs, and returnees. Somalia has registered close to 40,000 refugees and asylum seekers to date, and our commitment to this cause is evident in the recent adoption of the Refugee Law in 2024. Our focus has been on strengthening the National Commission for Refugees and IDP's (NCRI) institutional capacity, and making progress on the Global Refugee Forum pledges, particularly those aimed at addressing climate-induced displacement and marginalization.

Madam Chair, since the adoption of the Refugee Law in May 2024, Somalia has been planning significant strides in its implementation, including the establishment of a comprehensive plan for establishing a strong asylum system in Somalia, ensuring fair and efficient processing of asylum claims and upholding the rights of refugees and asylum seekers within the country. Specifically, we plan to establish a functional and transparent asylum system compliant with international law and human

rights standards; ensure fair and efficient determination of refugee status; equip Somali authorities with the necessary capacity to manage asylum claims effectively; and promote respect for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers in Somalia.

Additionally, the **IDP Act**, currently being debated in Parliament, is set to address long-standing issues related to internal displacement, providing a legal framework that will enhance protection, rights, and assistance for displaced communities across the country.

Madam Chair, Somalia has also made notable progress in implementing the pledges we made at the Global Refugee Forum and they are being integrated into all relevant government sectors, including the NCRI's 5-year strategic plan and the upcoming National Transformational Plan.

We are grateful the support from the international community, but the successful implementation of national initiatives requires adequate and sustained funding. However, current funding levels remain insufficient which limits the ability to carry out comprehensive programs that address the needs of displaced populations.

Finally, Madam Chair,

while the needs and challenges on the ground remain substantial, there is a window of opportunity for all stakeholders to work together and enhance the capacity of receiving communities, expand access to basic services, and create livelihood opportunities. This collaborative effort requires flexible mandates without relinquishing responsibilities. We, therefore, urge UNHCR to maintain its role in repatriation and reintegration.