

STATEMENT BY HON MINISTER OF INTERIOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA AT
THE 70TH UNHCR EXCOM MEETING IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND FROM 07th - 11TH
OCTOBER 2019

Chairperson
Distinguished delegates
Members of The press
Ladies and gentlemen

I bring you warmest greetings and best wishes from the Government and the people of the Republic of The Gambia. The Gambia aligns herself with the position of the African Group on the statement delivered by Zimbabwe.

The Government is appreciative of the continued support of UNHCR which goes a long way in complementing our efforts in providing a fair protection environment for refugees and other persons of concern living in The Gambia.

Chairperson, the Government and people of The Gambia have over the years been very hospitable and supportive in assisting refugees, asylum seekers and other persons of concern for appropriate durable solutions to their protracted refugee situation.

The Ministry of Interior, through the Gambia Commission for Refugees, UNHCR and partners, have engaged and continues to collaborate with the Constitutional Review Commission on legislative amendments of our Refugee Act, nationality and citizenship laws with a view to addressing the existing gap particularly for refugee children and those refugees opting for local integration and naturalization.

Chairperson, I would like at this juncture, to assure this august body that The Gambia Government aligns herself with the rest of the international community's strategic objectives of the Global Action Plan to end statelessness.

This gathering may wish to recall that The Gambia has ratified the two UN Conventions on statelessness and also took part in the drafting of the African Union Protocol on the right to nationality and the eradication of statelessness held in Johannesburg and Abidjan respectively.

Consequently, a nationwide sensitization on the importance of birth registration for the prevention of the risk of statelessness was initiated and is on-going thanks to the technical and funding support from the UNHCR. Statelessness is an important concern to us and we will continue to work with UNHCR and other partners to address the issue.

As expressed in our national pledge to end statelessness The Gambia is committed to undertake and publish a qualitative study to better understand the situation of statelessness and obtain relevant data on groups and individuals living in our country with a view to finding a solution to their situation in line with Action 10 of the Global Action Plan.

Chairperson, allow me to conclude by stating that The Gambia government is appreciative of the support from UNHCR together with other relevant development partners. We will continue our support for refugees and other persons of concern who have sought sanctuary in our country.

Finally, we appreciate the technical support of UNHCR to The Gambia Commission for Refugees and look forward to an expansion of our partnership with UNHCR..

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION