



Republic of Rwanda

Ministry in charge of Emergency Management

UNHCR: Seventy First session of the Executive Committee (5-9/10/ 2020)

**Statement by Rwanda to be delivered by Hon. Marie Solange Kayisire
Minister in charge of Emergency Management**

Mr Chairman

Mr. High Commissioner

Heads of delegation

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased and honored to be part of the Seventy First Session of the Executive Committee of United Nations High Commissioner's Programme for Refugees

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Algeria on behalf of the Africa Group and commends the High Commissioner for his dedicated work and for his comprehensive report.

Mr Chairperson

Currently, Rwanda is hosting 148,684 refugees mainly from the Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi. 92% of them are living in refugee camps across the country and are depending on humanitarian assistance.

In addition, the established Emergency Transit Mechanism is hosting 244 refugees and asylum seekers evacuated from Libya while 63 refugees have been resettled to third countries. To this end, I wish to thank the African Union and the UNHCR for their efforts and I thank in particular partner countries Sweden, Canada, Norway, France, Denmark for their solidarity and commitment to resettle these refugees and to finance the Emergency Transit Mechanism operations.

Mr Chairman,

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Rwanda has put in place all necessary preventive measures to protect refugees and manage the its spread within refugee camps as it is done for the rest of the country. However, COVID-19 has affected refugees' response and returnee's operations as well as their livelihood but accompanying mitigation measures are in place to help them in the recovery process.

In line with finding durable solutions for refugees hosted in Rwanda, the Government of Rwanda in collaboration with UNHCR and the Government of Burundi, has started an organized safe and dignified voluntary repatriation process for Burundian refugees hosted in Rwanda since 2015. From 27th August to date, **2,098** refugees have safely returned. Moreover, as of the end of last week, cumulatively 11,119 individuals were recorded as willing to return in their home country and the process continues. To this end, Rwanda is committed to continue, in collaboration with all concerned parties, facilitating the voluntary repatriation since we believe it is the best durable solution for refugee crisis.

Mr. Chairman

Mr. High Commissioner

The Government of Rwanda continues to ensure security and protection for all refugees and asylum seekers on its territory and to contribute to the promotion of their well-being by integrating them into existing socio-economic programs.

We are pleased to declare the good progress in delivering Government of Rwanda commitments from 2016 Leaders' summit, implementation of commitments on eradication of statelessness as well as inform that last year's commitments made in Global Refugee forum are the right track.

Delivering the above-mentioned commitments on socio economic inclusion of refugees and tackling environmental degradation in and around camps is a journey that needs joint efforts and responsibility sharing. I call upon UNHCR and development partners to continue joining efforts to bridge the existing gaps in humanitarian operations, to cover unmet refugee needs, tackle environmental problems as well as empowering refugees towards their self-reliance.

Mr Chairman

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

To conclude, I would to thank the High Commissioner and UNHCR Leadership for its programme and implementation of the Global Compact for Refugees and I take this opportunity to reiterate Rwanda's commitment to continue working closely with UNHCR to find lasting solutions for refugees and stateless people as well as collaborating with all concerned parties to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of refugees in a safe and dignified manner.

I thank you for your kind attention.