



SOMALI'S STATEMENT on
66TH Session of the Executive Committee
Geneva, 6 OCTOBER 2015 by the
Deputy Interior Minister of the Federal Republic of Somalia

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the High Commissioner, and also give our heartfelt appreciation to the Executive Committee generally and particularly UNHCR-Somalia for their grate work for Somali refugees and IDPs.

Mr. Chairperson, I would like to begin by saying that Somalia aligns itself with the statement of the African Group.

Over 2 million Somalis remain in what is one of the world's most protracted displacement situations, which has lasted 25 years and affected three generations. Approximately 1.1 million Somalis are displaced within Somalia and nearly one million are refugees in the sub-region: 420,711 in Kenya, 249,350 in Ethiopia, 32,447 in Uganda and 12,044 in Djibouti; in addition to about 240,000 registered as refugees who are in Yemen.

Having said that, I would like to add that tangible improvement of conditions were made in Somalia in recent years which would lead to the voluntary returns of Somali refugees. Since last Excom meeting of October 2015, Somalia experienced both achievements and challenges.

In Kenya alone, from 2011 to August 2015, a significant number of the 97,785 Somali refugees are no longer active in UNHCR's population database and that may have spontaneously returned to Somalia. Furthermore, over 4,000 refugees have been supported to voluntarily and spontaneously return to safer parts of Somalia. For your confirmation, Mr. Chairman, while we thank the Kenya people and government for hosting Somali refugees for so many years and also for their troops who are participating in the fighting against Al-Shabab and liberating many areas in Somalia; while we also express our deep sympathy for the tragedies Kenya experiences because of terrorist activities; we would like to state that there is no link between the presence of Somali refugees in Kenya and the terrorist activities. However, as we all know, Somalia even experienced terrorist activities more than Kenya and we believe whatever may be a terrorist or criminal activities the rule of law must always applied.

In the case of Yemen crisis, Mr. Chairperson, it was very challenging and still is. There are about 1 million of Somali nationals stranded in Yemen of whom about a quarter are registered refugees, and so far over 30,000 returned back to their homeland.

Equally it has caused reversal of the usual migration dynamics in the Horn of Africa where Somalis tended to migrate to Yemen whereas now not only Somalis coming back home but also it is the Yemenis who are seeking refuge in Somalia. So far there are over 3000 Yemenis in Somalia and they have been granted prima facie refugee status and their transition in Somalia has been made smooth with the cooperation of UNHCR and IOM, and also other international organizations. We were also encouraged by UNHCR's initiative of the Regional Refugees & Migrant Response Plan (RRMRP) towards refugees from Yemen in which was held in Djibouti in August this year.

Mr. Chairman, there are many other encouraging Initiatives and Support from UNHCR. Mention must be made first of all for the High Commissioner's initiative for the Ministerial meeting on the Global Initiative for Somali Refugees in August 2014 and the Addis Ababa Commitment towards Somali Refugees signed by 6 countries in the Horn Africa. This was emphasized the importance of supporting the safe, sustainable and dignified repatriation of Somali refugees who wish to return voluntarily. It was also stressed the role of the international community in this Endeavour, particularly in supporting the Federal Government of Somalia in creating the conditions for sustainable return.

Mr. Chairman, secondly, we would like to add that the important initiatives are the Portfolio of Projects and the upcoming Pledging Conference in Brussels on 21 October 2015.

Following the Tripartite Agreement signed on 10 November 2013 by Somalia, Kenya and UNHCR to govern the voluntary, safe and dignified repatriation of Somali refugees, the parties have jointly developed Portfolio of Projects which are under the auspices of the Tripartite Commission which will mobilize support and investment for the time-phased voluntary return of 420,000 Somali refugees from Kenya, and their sustainable reintegration in Somalia. The funding period covers four years from January 2016 to December 2019. The projects for Somalia are also aligned with the Somali Compact and the New Deal principles.

Mr. Chairperson, the current problems are not easy but are many and constantly changing; so the needs are massive requiring equally massive levels of protection and assistance. In Somalia, the problems are fundamentally arise from underdevelopment and other associated issues. In addition we have undergone a long period of civil war which led to state collapse from which we are now recovering. We have begun to rebuild many of our institutions and most importantly we have managed to render the National Commission for Refugees and IDPs (NCRI) operational.

Mr Chairperson, while we appreciate each countries contribution, we believe that a coherent and inclusive approach is essential and for that reason we call that:

- The Executive Committee should support the High Commissioner in order to ensure the success of the pledging conference and to mobilize the support and resources needed to achieve sustainable solutions for Somali refugees in the Horn of Africa and to enhance the conditions necessary for the safe and dignified voluntary return to Somalia.
- As the Pledging Conference will bring together a wide range of international community, many of them are present here, we also appeal to them to take their part in the preparation of the Somali refugee return with the means of reintegrating in their society.

Mr. Chairperson, I would like to express once again the deep appreciation of Somalia to the High Commissioner Guterres for his untiring and dedication to the cause of Somali refugees & IDPs. His visit to Somali twice in less than two years despite the conditions in the countries is proof of that dedication.

Thank you.