



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA



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STATEMENT TO BE DELIVERED BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY, MR EDGAR CHAGWA. LUNGU
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**

DURING THE

**HIGH LEVEL PLENARY MEETING ON ADDRESSING
LARGE MOVEMENTS OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS**

**SEVENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**19TH SEPTEMBER, 2016, AT 15 HRS HOURS
IN THE ECOSOC CHAMBER**

New York
September 19, 2016

Mr. President

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representative of Angola on behalf of the African Group.

At the outset, let me join others who have spoken before me to express gratitude to the Secretary General for organizing this High Level Meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants. I am hopeful that this Summit, the first of its kind, will indeed provide a unique opportunity for the global community to identify conditions that have exacerbated large movements of refugees and migrants in order to strengthen our collective response to these movements.

My Government considers the outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit of May 2016, as critical to the ongoing efforts to improve humanitarian assistance, particularly the political commitments to end displacement, as well as the need for humanitarian and development actors to work together and find ways of financing humanitarian and development activities. It is important for us to build on the key commitments of the Summit in order to address the gaps in humanitarian assistance for people in vulnerable situations.

Mr. President,

My delegation welcomes the adoption of the outcome document of the High-Level Meeting which has, inter alia, emphasized the need to provide host countries with support in key life-saving sectors, such as water and sanitation, nutrition, health-care and shelter, including support to community based development programmes.

My administration further aligns itself with the commitments outlined in the document with the conviction that these undertakings will go a long way in alleviating the suffering of the increasing numbers of people who are in most cases forced to leave their homes in search of safety due to conflict, war and climate change among other causes.

Mr. President,

Zambia has been a longstanding home to refugees from neighbouring countries in the region as well as from the Horn of Africa. Two years after gaining independence, in 1966, the first refugee settlement was established in the Western part of the country, followed by another in North-Western Province in 1971. At the peak of conflicts in Southern Africa, Zambia hosted more than three hundred thousand (300 000) refugees in six (6) Refugee Settlements, four (4) of which have since been closed. Between 2008 and 2012, more than two hundred and ten thousands (210,000) Angolan refugees were assisted to return to their country. Today, about twenty-three thousand (23,000) former Angolan refugees have been fully integrated in the Zambian in addition to about six thousand (6,000) former Rwandan refugees.

Mr. President,

Towards the end of 2011, my Government pledged to locally integrate 10,000 former Angolan refugees following the cessation of their refugee status. This durable solution was extended to 4,000 former Rwandan refugees who lost their status after the invoking of the cessation clause in 2013. I wish to report that we have made important strides in the integration of former Angolan refugees with about eight thousand (8,000) having been processed for the issuance of Residence Permits which will accord the affected refugees the freedoms and rights closer to those of Zambian citizens.

My Government has also provided land for the resettlement of the former refugees for farming and other income generating activities. Close to two thousand plots of land, worth over three million United States Dollars have been demarcated in the Resettlement schemes for allocation to former refugees and Zambians on a one-to-one basis. This, Mr President, is one way that as a country, we believe we can ensure that former refugees and host communities live in harmony. We may extend the Local Integration programme to refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo who have lived in the country for more than ten (10) years in the same spirit.

Zambia has continued to welcome newly arrived refugees from eastern DRC, Burundi and Somalia who reside both in the camps and urban areas. Out of the total population of 52,419 refugees and former refugees currently in the country, 20,406 reside outside the settlements. This is despite Zambia having made a reservation to Article 26 of the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees on freedom of movement. Further, we intend to relax the encampment policy by easing the processes for acquiring urban residency and authority to leave the camps whilst ensuring the maintenance of security for our people.

Mr. President,

I wish to re-affirm my Government's commitment to maintaining an open door policy for refugees with regard to access to employment and education. We will double our efforts to provide education to refugee children in the settlements in the knowledge that an educated refugee has better prospects than one who is not educated whether or not they choose to return their country of origin. To promote self reliance, my Government has put in place measures for refugees to access work and engage in businesses of their choice. In collaboration with our partners, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, we have commissioned a study into the refugee economy which will assist us to shape policies on access to work and entrepreneurship. We are confident that these efforts will allow us to transform the widely held perception of a refugee as a burden to a realization that a refugee or migrant is an asset to a country in which they choose to live.

Mr. President,

My delegation fully supports the proposed Global Compact on safe, regular and orderly migration and is hopeful that the consultative process leading to the adoption of the Compact will be held in an inclusive and transparent manner. In the same vein, I wish to stress the need for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to play a critical role in this process.

Furthermore, Zambia welcomes the agreement between the United Nations and IOM which is aimed at forging a closer legal and working relationship.

As I conclude, I wish to re-affirm Zambia's commitment to her international obligations stemming from the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol relating to the status of refugees, as the foundation for the international refugee protection regime, including the core principle of *non-refoulement*. Under these instruments, Zambia takes its responsibility to offer protection to those who seek asylum seriously and will continue to play her role in assisting people affected by conflict, human rights violations and other threats to their wellbeing.

I Thank You.