

ADDRESS

BY

**H.E HON. WILLIAM S. RUTO, E.G.H DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

DURING THE

CO-CHAIRING OF THE ROUNDTABLE ON:

**“INTERNATIONAL ACTION AND CO-OPERATION ON REFUGEES AND
MIGRANTS AND ISSUES RELATED TO DISPLACEMENT: THE WAY
AHEAD”**

AT THE

**HIGH LEVEL MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO ADDRESS
LARGE MOVEMENTS OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS**

Monday, September 19, 2016

United Nations, New York

1. This High Level Plenary session affords us an opportunity to reflect on our collective efforts in responding to the escalating humanitarian tragedy of large-scale movements of refugees and migrants.
2. As we assemble here today, 86% of the world's 22 million forced migrants and refugees are hosted in 10 developing countries. Nothing can better demonstrate the failure of international burden-sharing than this reality. It is also an indictment on the global framework for responding to human distress.
3. In May of this year, we convened in Istanbul and made a solemn commitment to leave no one behind. Unfortunately, even after that, people have continued to be displaced under duress, turned back, dehumanized and subjected to extreme existential threats. Clearly, this reflects a huge gap between our resolve and meaningful action to prevent and manage forced migration.
4. This is why, Mr. Chairman, my Delegation welcomes the convening of the 6 Round Table discussions on large scale movements of refugees and migrants. It is our earnest hope that these discussions will galvanize action that translates into positive impact on the lives of the affected populations.

5. Since independence, Kenya has been host to refugees and asylum seekers from tens of countries, with Somalia giving the largest number for the longest time – more than two-and-half decades. This protracted situation has evolved into a complex crisis posing peculiar challenges to us as a host country.
6. The hosting of large numbers of refugees in socio-economically and ecologically fragile areas has led to over-exploitation of scarce resources and acute environmental degradation. In turn, this has exerted stress on the livelihoods of host communities, and in some cases degenerated in conflict between the communities and refugees. For long, the areas hosting refugee populations have been conduits of contraband, impacting negatively on our economy.
7. More recently, the Dadaab Refugee complex has lost its humanitarian character and been appropriated by terrorists and their agents, transforming it into a center of radicalization, terrorist training, planning and launching of attacks. It is also a hub for illicit movements of small arms and light weapons.
8. In 2012, Kenya informed the international community during the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly of the unsustainability of the Dadaab Refugee Complex, and urged for international support to ameliorate the disproportionate burden. The international community pledged USD 500 million to meet the financial aspect of this burden. Sadly, less than 1% of this commitment has been realized.

9. Owing to these concerns, and considering our investment in the improvement in Somalia's security situation, the Government of Kenya announced its decision to close the Dadaab Refugee Complex and facilitate the repatriation of Somali refugees, within the framework of the 2013 Tripartite Agreement. We have also set up an elaborate structure that is interacting continuously with the Government of Somalia and the UNHCR on all aspects of the repatriation.

10. Kenya also deployed USD 1 million in new money to support the repatriation. We have engaged a number of development partners including the World Bank, the African Development Bank, Arab Development Bank to create an enabling environment for the Somalia Government to receive its people.

11. Mr. Chairman

The repatriation process is complex and requires solidarity with the Somali people. I urge the international community to collaborate strongly with the Government of Somalia in the reconstruction and +restoration of critical services in order to support repatriation and resettlement.

We believe that the opportunity for the reconstruction of Somalia lies in the return of its people. Furthermore, the solution to protracted refugee situations demands that the root causes of violence and conflict are addressed. I therefore, urge support for reconstruction efforts in Somalia and support for AMISOM, which is playing a critical

role in Somalia's stabilization and guaranteeing the safe return of its people.

12. The success of AMISOM to date is a demonstration of the value of effective solidarity. Just last week, on the 13th September, an IGAD Summit convened in Mogadishu powerfully demonstrated the region's commitment to Somalia. I therefore stand here, once again, to make a strong appeal for support for the safe and dignified return of Somali refugees.

13. Finally, Mr. Chairman, I reiterate our strong call for meaningful solidarity and a broader international collaboration to rapidly reduce human suffering.

14. Kenya welcomes the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and the envisaged comprehensive refugee framework that will inform our humanitarian response to manage large movements of refugees and migrants in a humane, sensitive, and compassionate and people centered manner.

I thank you