


KENYA

COUNTRY STATEMENT

BY

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MINISTER OF STATE FOR IMMIGRATION AND
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ON

**THE OCCASION OF THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
1951 REFUGEE CONVENTION AND THE 50TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONVENTION ON
STATELESSNESS**

WEDNESDAY 7TH DECEMBER, 2011 PM

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

Thank you Mr. Chairman
The Commissioner for Refugees,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates

It gives me great pleasure to join you in commemorating this special occasion. I commend the High Commissioner for his foresight and for the excellent arrangements

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the Kingdom of Lesotho on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like at the outset to reaffirm Kenya's commitment to the 1951 refugees convention. We are fully committed to honouring our obligations of protecting refugees to the letter and spirit of the convention

As we commemorate the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, let our deliberations be guided by the needs of the millions of persons of concern worldwide.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation notes with concern that half of the past 60 years have been characterized by protracted refugee situations. At the end of 2010, 7.2 million refugees were stuck in protracted refugee situations in 24 countries across the world. Kenya was the sixth largest hosting country in 2010. My country is host to

This year, has been particularly challenging, with about 1,500 refugees crossing into Kenya daily. Between June and September Kenya received close to 200,000 refugees fleeing famine in Somalia. The majority of asylum seekers, who were women and children, were in poor health and nutritional situation.

While conflict remains the foremost cause of forced displacement across borders, drought, famine and other natural disasters have heightened the number of refugees. Nevertheless, our response should be guided by the principles of the refugees Convention such as non-refoulment.

Mr. Chairman,

Our nation's commitment to the 1951 Refugee Convention has been demonstrated. In response to expanded needs of refugees in our country, my government has put wide range of measures to enhance refugee protection, which among others include: provision of more land i.e. Ifo II, to ease congestion at the existing camps. We are also amending the refugees Act to make it a stronger for protection.

This year, the government took over the reception and registration of all refugees and asylum seekers from UNHCR early this year to enhance refugees' protection. In addition, the government boosted provision of security at the camps by signing a security partnership program with UNHCR through which the number of security personnel in Dadaab refugee camp doubled.

Further, the government in coordination with UNHCR and other non-governmental organizations facilitated the putting up of

additional facilities to provide protection, relief and other social services to avert humanitarian crisis during the emergency.

Mr. Chairman,

Statelessness continues to be a challenge for many persons of concern. Kenya has made significant strides in addressing this challenge through constitutional and legislative reforms. We have made provisions for the grant of citizenship to stateless persons of various categories who have been resident in Kenya for 40 years. In addition the Kenyan women can now confer citizenship to their children.

Mr. Chairman,

Birth registration is the first right and recognition for a child by a State. In this regard, Kenya has put in place a mandatory policy for birth registration for all children born within our territory – including refugees. We shall therefore continue to work with UNHCR and other stakeholders in our efforts to achieving universal birth registration.

Mr. Chairman,

Finally, while our hospitality is assured, I urge the international community to seize the opportunity created by this meeting to observe the principle of burden sharing. We should also address the challenges of protracted refugee situations in the world especially in Somali. I believe if we work closely together, we can attain our collective objective.

I Thank You.