



CONFERENCE REPORT

**MINISTERIAL PLEDGING CONFERENCE  
ON SOMALI REFUGEES: CONDITIONS  
FOR VOLUNTARY RETURN**



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency



# KENYA / SOMALIA MAP :

Somali returnees from Kenya by expected areas of return in Somalia

**Somali returnees**



**Somali refugees**



**Indicative cost of action plan**



**3,634** returned to Somalia since 2014, as of 31 August 2015

**135,000** projected Somali refugee returns from Kenya by the end of 2017

**420,711** Somali registered refugees in Kenya

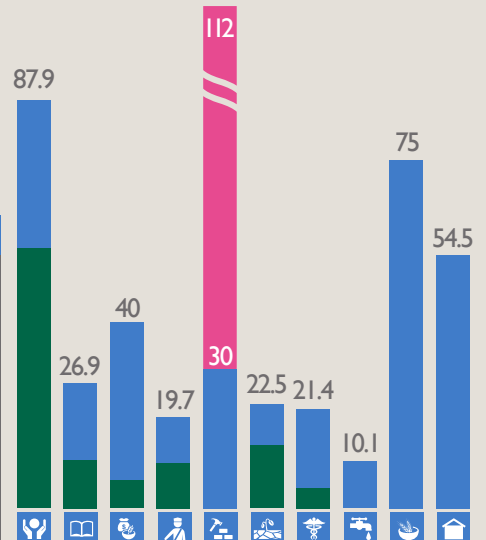
**6,436** Somali refugees new arrivals in Kenya from January to August 2015

**USD 500 million**

Total budget by sectors 2016-2017 (in million USD)

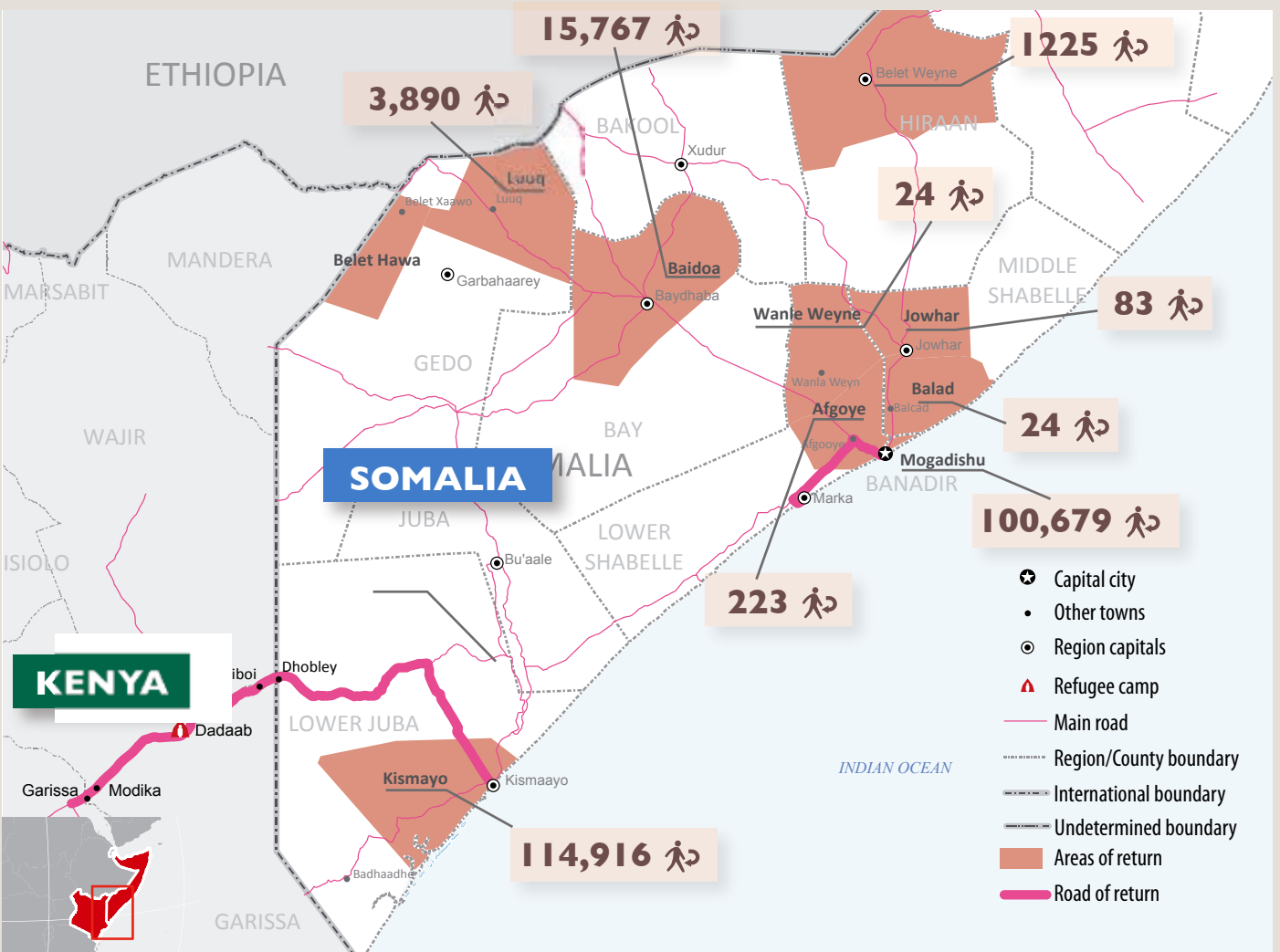
## Number of partners by sector

	KENYA	SOMALIA		KENYA	SOMALIA
Protection	13	13	Environment	14	4
Education	10	16	Health	8	9
Livelihoods	9	6	Wash	N/A	14
Security	4	4	Food & Agriculture	N/A	10
Infrastructure	1	8	Shelter	N/A	7



## Somali refugees from the current nine focus areas of return

Note: In Kenya, USD 112 million has been budgeted for infrastructure development, for the main road of return.



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Sources: UNCS, UNHCR, UNDP

Cover photo: UNHCR/M.H. Salehara

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# Acronyms

<b>AfDB</b>	African Development Bank
<b>AMISOM</b>	African Union Mission in Somalia
<b>ARC</b>	American Refugee Committee
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GCIDP</b>	Garissa County Integrated Development Plan
<b>HCT</b>	Humanitarian Country Team
<b>IDB</b>	Islamic Development Bank
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Persons
<b>IGAD</b>	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OCHA</b>	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>OIC</b>	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
<b>PSG</b>	Peacebuilding and State-building Goals
<b>ReDSS</b>	Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat
<b>SAS</b>	Solutions Alliance for Somalia
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>WASH</b>	Water Sanitation and Hygiene



# Executive Summary

The displacement of Somalis, which has spanned more than two decades and impacted three generations, has become one of the most protracted displacement situations in the world. Over 2 million Somalis remain displaced within and outside Somalia. This includes approximately 1.1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Somalia and nearly 1 million refugees in the surrounding region: 418,900 in Kenya; 249,000 in Yemen; 247,300 in Ethiopia; 17,010 in Uganda; and 19,721 in Djibouti<sup>1</sup>.

To facilitate international support for the voluntary return of Somali refugees living in Kenya, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the European Union (EU) co-hosted the *Ministerial Pledging Conference on Somali Refugees: Conditions for voluntary return* (hereafter the *Conference*) on 21 October 2015 in Brussels. The *Conference* took place after the Tripartite Commission on Voluntary Repatriation of Somali Refugees (hereafter the Tripartite Commission), which is comprised of UNHCR, the Government of the Republic of Kenya and the Government of the Somali Republic, developed the *Integrated Action Plan for the Sustainable Return and Reintegration of Somali Refugees*

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<sup>1</sup> These figures pertain to Somali refugees in the region, as of December 2015.

from Kenya to Somalia (hereafter *Plan of Action*). The projects envisioned in the *Plan of Action* align with the framework of the five Peacebuilding and State-building Goals (PSG), established during the 2013 *Somalia New Deal Conference*, the Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan, the Kenya Comprehensive Refugee Programme and the Garissa County Integrated Development Plan within the Kenya National Development Plan. The January 2016 and December 2017 Action Plan will help foster the safe and dignified return and sustainable reintegration of 135,000 Somali refugees from Kenya to Somalia, including in the nine focus areas of return as well as support the protection and resilience of refugee and host communities in Kenya, including with regard to their security.

To help support the successful return of Somali refugees to their country of origin in line with the projects outlined in the *Plan of Action*, six donors pledged a total of €94 million (US\$ 105 million). The American Refugee Committee (ARC) pledged to create opportunities for 10,000 returnee youth to pursue livelihoods through market-oriented skills training and job creation in Somalia.

Donor	US\$
EU	67,340,067
African Development Bank	30,000,000
Denmark	4,211,160
Italy	2,244,669
Egypt	1,000,000
Total	104,795,896

Those State representatives that did not pledge at the *Conference* were either already supporting Somalia or indicated that financial assistance would be forthcoming. This united commitment to support the return of Somali refugees demonstrates the desire of the international community to assume a more proactive role in finding solutions for Somalia.

In total, 192 delegates (82 State delegates and 110 delegates from international, regional and non-governmental organizations and the media) representing 29 States and 33 organizations (14 United Nations organizations and two intergovernmental, regional organizations) attended the *Conference*. (For details, please refer to the List of Participants, provided in Annex I.)

During the *Conference*, Kenya, in addition to Yemen, Ethiopia, Uganda and Djibouti, were recognized for providing asylum and protection to 1 million Somali refugees for more than two decades. These countries expressed hope that the repatriation of Somali refugees from Kenya would prompt return throughout the region, thereby providing Somali refugees with durable solutions and helping to end one of the world's most protracted refugee situations. State representatives and other conference participants applauded the progress Somalia has made toward stability and expressed their confidence that this progress would continue and aid in the reintegration of Somali refugees. Conference delegates emphasized the importance of strengthening the capacity of the Somali National Army and increasing support to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to help achieve continued stability, national security and the safety of returnees.



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# Background

In May 2015, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. António Guterres, committed to organize the *Conference* with the objective of mobilizing international support for the return and reintegration of Somali refugees from Kenya to Somalia as well as strengthening the protection and resilience of refugee and host communities in Kenya, including with regard to security.

In preparation for the *Conference*, the Tripartite Commission developed a set of documents including the *Strategy*, *Operations Plan* and *Plan of Action*.<sup>2</sup> Both the *Strategy* and the *Operations Plan* incorporate findings from a voluntary repatriation pilot project, in which 2,589 Somali refugees were supported to repatriate to Baidoa, Kismayo and Luuq Districts between 8 December 2014 and 30 June 2015. The *Plan of Action* was the result of extensive consultations that took place between humanitarian and development agencies and the Governments of Somalia and Kenya from May to October 2015.

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<sup>2</sup> For more information, please see the conference documents at: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/55fac9aa6.html>.

Each of these documents takes into account existing frameworks. The *Plan of Action* builds upon the *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)* between UNHCR and the Government of Kenya (January 2015), as defined through the Security Partnership Project, as well as the *Garissa County Integrated Development Plan (GCIDP)*<sup>3</sup>. It is also aligned with the *Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan* and the Peacebuilding and State-building Goals (PSGs) of the *New Deal*, the development framework of Somalia that was defined during the 2013 *Somalia New Deal Conference*. The *Strategy*, *Operations Plan* and *Plan of Action* also fit within the broader regional framework established in the *Addis Ababa Commitment towards Somali Refugees*<sup>4</sup>, which was adopted unanimously by the Governments of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda and Yemen, in a ministerial meeting in August 2014.

Peacebuilding, state building and development cannot be achieved without finding durable solutions both for refugees in neighbouring countries and for IDPs. The *Plan of Action* takes into account the protection and repatriation of Somali refugees, currently underway, as well as the reintegration of IDPs in Somalia. Toward this end, the objectives of the *Plan of Action*, outlined below, are two-fold.

- **Kenya:** Preserve asylum space; support the resilience of the host community; improve security, crime prevention and response; and support refugees who wish to voluntarily repatriate to Somalia in the exercise of their right to return.
- **Somalia:** Ensure the safe, dignified and sustainable reintegration of Somali returnees by addressing both humanitarian and development needs.

This emphasis on both refugees and IDPs was reiterated in a High-Level Partnership Forum, held in Mogadishu 29-30 July 2015, and again at the United Nations General Assembly on 28 September 2015. In addition, UNHCR convened eight roundtables with the Somali diaspora in seven countries in order to engage them in helping find solutions for refugees.

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<sup>3</sup> The *GCIDP* is linked to the *Kenyan National Development Plan* (Kenya Vision 2030), as legally required by the *County Government Act*, as well as the *Medium Term Plan* (2013-2017). The host community further prioritized the initiatives outlined in the *GCIDP* at two planning and coordination meetings (Garissa Forum) held in Garissa and Dadaab (May and June 2015).

<sup>4</sup> The *Commitment* outlines seven objectives for the regional response to Somali refugees: 1) maintain asylum space and international protection (e.g. ratification, adoption, implementation of relevant conventions); 2) address protection concerns (e.g. trafficking, smuggling) facing Somali refugees and asylum-seekers and take steps to reduce dependence on humanitarian assistance, build self-reliance and resilience, and promote participation in society; 3) combat stereotypes and xenophobia, and promote positive messages and peaceful coexistence; 4) help the Government of Somalia create conditions to foster voluntary, safe and dignified return; 5) seek to foster peace, security, law and order and ensure that humanitarian programmes translate into development; 6) explore alternative stay arrangements for refugees in protracted situations or who have enduring links with the country of asylum; and 7) work with partners to address host community needs.



# Summary of Proceedings

## 1. Opening Remarks

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. António Guterres, and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Ms. Federica Mogherini, opened the *Conference*, calling on State representatives to support the *Plan of Action* and to provide the resources necessary to ensure safe, sustainable and dignified repatriation. Mr. Guterres acknowledged the unprecedented number of refugee crises that has strained the attention and resources of the world. However, Ms. Mogherini noted that supporting Somalia would be a strategic investment for Europe and critical to the stability, peace and security of the Horn of Africa. Governments were asked to remain committed in their support of Somalia and in fulfilling the *Plan of Action* in order to help address factors contributing to the record numbers of people on the move.

The Prime Minister of Somalia, Mr. Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, observed that the return of Somali refugees is a sign of peace and stability. He emphasized the Government's willingness to welcome back increasing numbers of Somali citizens, underlining the likelihood that development initiatives would make returns more secure and sustainable while also inspiring other refugees to return home. The Minister of Interior and Coordination of National Government in Kenya, (Retired) Major General, Joseph Ole Nkaissey, focused on security concerns in Kenya and the importance of regional collaboration to eliminate Al-Shabaab and bring stability to Somalia and to the region. He also emphasized Kenya's support of the voluntarily repatriation of Somali refugees and the role it would play in reducing pressure on Kenya and preserving humanitarian space in the Dadaab refugee camps. (For more information, please see Annex II: Opening Statements.)

The opening session concluded with a brief film on the return of a Somali family from Dadaab to Kismayo. A Somali returnee from Canada, Ilwad Elman, introduced the film and described her personal experience as a returnee to Somalia, urging governments to continue supporting returnees, especially in the areas of health care, livelihoods and education.



## 2. Thematic Sessions

Moderated thematic sessions provided delegates with the opportunity to explore the key challenges and opportunities around return. The sessions addressed: sustainable solutions for Somali refugees; implementation of the *Tripartite Agreement on Voluntary Repatriation of Somali Refugees from Kenya* (hereafter *Tripartite Agreement*); and regional dynamics and challenges (e.g. refugee flows from the subregion; resilience, self-reliance, and forced displacement; and the impact of events in Yemen).

*The following presents a general overview of the themes that emerged during the discussions.*

### Sustainable solutions for Somali refugees

Delegates praised Somalia for its progress, highlighting in particular the relocation of political power to Mogadishu, support provided for the return of Somali refugees, and continued national efforts to combat extremism. Delegates also recognized the hospitality and sacrifices of neighbouring countries. The need for the international community to provide financial assistance in order to support these efforts and ensure reconstruction in Somalia was stressed.

The complexity of Somali displacement was also underlined by delegates. Investment and development must account for the overlapping needs of refugees, IDPs, and the diaspora. A regional approach in which United Nations (UN) organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and governments work closely together is critical. Careful planning that takes into account the impact of large-scale returns on security, communal access to basic resources (e.g. water, land) and social services (e.g. education, health care) is essential for host communities.

Numerous calls were made to strengthen the link between humanitarian and development interventions in order to promote the conditions for voluntary repatriation and reintegration. To meet the objectives of the *Plan of Action*, moreover, delegates highlighted the need for careful planning and coordination as well as for the full integration of the *Plan of Action* with respect to the development strategy for Somalia. The adoption of a new *National Development Plan* in Somalia will ensure that access to services, such as water and livelihoods, is improved in an integrated manner, thereby helping all Somalis, whether long-term residents or new returnees.

Delegates emphasized the need to focus on repatriation in regions where there is evident potential for successful local reintegration. For the time being reintegration would not be plausible in Puntland because of reemerging security concerns, poor nutrition rates and deplorable living conditions.

To facilitate local reintegration, the need to provide returnees with access to long-term employment opportunities was also stressed. Vocational training and public sector employment were proposed as means to prepare returnees for employment and help them establish themselves in the short-term. Thereafter, the focus would be on employment in other sectors that are safe, meet the needs of the market, enable returnees to work in dignity and are sustainable. Ensuring returnees long-term financial stability also requires strengthening the country's legal frameworks and providing them with access to formal financial services.

Given that Somali asylum-seekers represent a significant group of persons currently arriving on the shores of Europe, the urgent need to facilitate the repatriation and successful reintegration of Somali refugees in the Horn of Africa was acknowledged as a crucial first step toward addressing the current global refugee crisis. Currently, those who manage to find physical safety in the region are confronted by insufficient access to essential services, such as education, and little prospect for a life in dignity as a result of poverty and a lack of resources. Unless opportunities for self-reliance are improved, more of the displaced will opt to undertake the long and perilous overland routes to reach boats run by smugglers. This growing flow of people making their way to Europe through informal channels at high personal risk and financial cost highlights the need to expand legal and safe forms of migration. This may mean expanding the current resettlement programme, easing eligibility requirements or thinking beyond the three traditional solutions (return, local integration, resettlement) available to refugees, to include avenues, like labour migration.

Delegates called for a response that would help foster resilience and improve the long-term prospects of young people. Frustrated youth without opportunities or hope for a better future may be targeted for recruitment by extremists. The international community needs to try to ensure refugees are not targeted by those with terrorism goals and extremists must be prevented from exploiting refugee camps. The additional security measures laid out in the *Plan of Action* were commended as a means toward this objective.

## Implementation of the *Tripartite Agreement on Voluntary Repatriation of Somali Refugees from Kenya*

Since 2011, 98,000 Somalis have voluntarily left the camps in Kenya, on their own and without any support or formal process. This voluntary movement motivated the signing of the *Tripartite Agreement* in December 2013. During the *Conference*, Delegates emphasized the importance of the voluntary nature of return as well as the need for timelines and careful planning to ensure that the returns are sustainable. The signatory parties to the *Tripartite Agreement* noted that systematic and structured support would encourage more refugees to return to Somalia voluntarily. The *Tripartite Agreement* is a tool that will be used to monitor and assess the situation of refugees and returnees on both sides of the border to ensure returns are safe and voluntary.



THE 2014 JOINT UNHCR/IOM RETURN INTENTION SURVEY CONDUCTED IN DADAAB FOUND THAT 2.6 PER CENT OR APPROXIMATELY 10,000 SOMALI REFUGEES LIVING IN DADAAB WERE PLANNING TO RETURN TO SOMALIA WITHIN 24 MONTHS. OF THOSE SOMALI REFUGEES WHO DID NOT INTEND TO RETURN IN THE SHORT- TO MEDIUM-TERM, 97 PER CENT CITED CONCERNS OVER SECURITY AND THE UNAVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC SERVICES.

Djibouti, Ethiopia, Uganda and Yemen renewed their commitment to continue hosting Somali refugees, while welcoming the *Plan of Action* as a step toward long-term solutions.

Regional dynamics in the Horn of Africa have been further complicated by the deteriorating political situation in Yemen, which has prompted many Somali refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR to flee. Over 25,000 Somali refugees previously in Yemen have returned, since August 2015, due to instability in Yemen. This movement indicates that repatriation is now possible and should be more actively supported, to ensure the safety, dignity and successful reintegration of returnees.



## Regional dynamics and challenges: including refugee flows from the subregion; resilience, self-reliance and forced displacement; and impact of Yemen events

Currently, the Horn of Africa has one of the highest numbers of displaced persons in the world, with approximately 2.4 million refugees and 6.7 million IDPs. The challenges facing the Horn of Africa are the result of a complex interplay of recurring conflicts and natural disasters coinciding with rapid population growth, dependency on humanitarian support, and a limited and diminishing natural resource base for livelihoods. Weak State institutions unable to foster economic opportunities, provide basic social services, or protect fundamental rights of their citizens has also fostered increased population movement to Europe and the Middle East.

Several delegations expressed continued concern about the presence of Al-Shabaab in the region. As one delegate noted, elimination of Al-Shabaab will only be feasible through continued support of AMISOM and cross-border operations. AMISOM initiatives need to be enhanced in order to address these as well as regional issues related to ethnic divisions and organized crime.

Recognizing that security and stability in both Somalia and the wider region could lend to economic development, delegates called on the international community to support infrastructure development and social services in countries hosting refugees. It was also recommended that the road between Garissa and Liboi be rehabilitated, as it is the main route for return from Kenya to Somalia.

Natural disasters were also recognized as drivers of conflict and forced displacement. Delegates expressed concern over the potential effect that El Niño would have on the return process, as it is expected to cause both droughts and floods in Somalia and the region.

### 3. Summary of Statements and Pledges

Mr. Neven Mimica, the European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, opened the session on statements and pledges and set the context by stating that Europe's history is marked by migration, forced displacement and returns. Mr. Mimica spoke about the new EU initiative addressing the root causes of irregular migration in the Horn of Africa.

The three pillars of the initiative include:

- helping countries in the region increase their capacity to better handle migration flows and displacement and implementing actions to improve the conditions of people that find themselves in protracted displacement situations or along migration routes;
- providing a targeted response to the need for resilience in the region's most fragile areas and for the vulnerable; and
- promoting socio-economic development and increasing work opportunities, especially for young people.

To better achieve the objectives of the initiative, the EU decided to establish the EU Emergency Trust Fund to help expedite the delivery of aid to the countries most affected and to their populations.

Mr. Mimica began the pledging by committing €50 million to support programmes toward the sustainable and durable reintegration of refugees in Somalia. The programmes will be fully aligned with the *New Deal*.

An additional EU contribution amounting to €10 million was committed for northern Kenya with the aim to provide relief and better opportunities to refugees in protracted situations.



#### SUMMARY OF PLEDGES

BELOW IS A SUMMARY OF THE THEMES FROM THE STATEMENTS AND PLEDGING SESSION. PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS SUMMARY DOES NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE INDIVIDUAL VIEWS OF PARTICIPANTS AND THAT THE ORDER IN WHICH IT IS PRESENTED REFLECTS THE ORDER IN WHICH THE PARTICIPANTS SPOKE. TO VIEW THE FULL STATEMENTS AND PLEDGES, PLEASE SEE "CONFERENCE SPEECHES AND STATEMENTS" AT: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/55fac9aa6.html>.

State representatives applauded the progress that Somalia has made and expressed confidence in the outlook for the country and for refugee return. The need for financial resources, including to build capacity and invest in infrastructure development, was acknowledged as a means to foster return. Additional efforts are needed to strengthen security and build capacity for better resource management in order to address the effects of more than 25 years of conflict. As noted by one delegate, increasing returns to Somalia will build confidence in the country's future while also contributing to peace and security in the country and region.

Security in and around the camps in Kenya is also imperative for safe return. Ongoing stabilization efforts in Somalia by the international community need to continue. Delegates were also reminded of the ongoing military offensive and warned that precipitous large-scale returns could destabilize the existing fragile peace. Repatriation, thus, must be voluntary and returns steady and gradual.

The provision of conditions that allow for returnees to live in safety and dignity, including through access to livelihood opportunities, is crucial. Receiving communities already contending with the impact of over 1 million IDPs will be challenged by the returns. The *Plan of Action*, therefore, needs to be realistic and its implementation must continually take into account on-the-ground realities. Meaningful progress on the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees cannot occur without the full implementation of the Peacebuilding and State-building Goals (PSG) of the *New Deal*. The Solutions Alliance Somalia Group (SAS)<sup>5</sup> was also highlighted for the role it can play in successful returns.

Delegates noted that the *Plan of Action* effectively bridges development and humanitarian assistance but also acknowledged the challenge that the international community has faced in successfully linking humanitarian and development efforts in the past. Coordination therefore, must seek to bridge these efforts.

The susceptibility of Somalia to floods and droughts was also highlighted as a concern requiring consideration, especially in light of the El Niño forecast which could increase the frequency of extreme weather in Somalia.

Delegates underlined the importance of the November 2015 EU-Africa Summit on Migration, which took place in Malta, as a means to situate the *Plan of Action* within initiatives affecting the entire region.

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<sup>5</sup> The Solutions Alliance Somalia Group (SAS) is a branch of the global Solutions Alliance initiative and comprised of the Danish Embassy in Somalia, United Nations Development Programme, UNHCR, World Bank and ReDSS (a consortium advisory board consisting of the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development, CARE, Danish Refugee Council, International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps, Norwegian Refugee Council, Oxfam, Refugee Consortium Kenya, and World Vision International). SAS seeks to support Somali refugees and IDPs and to help find durable solutions to their displacement.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY ON DEVELOPMENT (IGAD)

The Representative of IGAD welcomed the convening of the Ministerial Pledging Conference for Somali refugees underlining that IGAD member states were hosting significant numbers of refugees in the region. The root cause of the refugee crisis in the region, he said, is political and in order for sustainable returns to occur, the current stabilization efforts needs to continue.

## SWEDEN

While the Government of Sweden did not make a specific financial pledge at the *Conference*, it affirmed its commitment to support both Somalia and Somali refugees in response to appeals by UN agencies as well as to continue receiving Somali refugees through the resettlement programme. The Government of Sweden will also continue to provide UNHCR with unearmarked funding in 2016.

## DENMARK

The Danish Government underlined the need for activities, which are outlined in the *Plan of Action*, to be implemented through structures established under the *New Deal* and the Humanitarian Response Plan. The Danish Government pledged US\$ 4,211,160.

## AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (AFDB)

The AfDB pledged US\$ 30 million toward the implementation of projects outlined in the *Plan of Action*.

## ITALY

The Government of Italy pledged US\$ 2,244,669 million to the *Plan of Action*, highlighting its support for livelihood programmes for both Somali refugees and IDPs and noting its interest in prioritizing services, protection and humanitarian aid for its intervention.

## EGYPT

The Government of Egypt emphasized its duty to assist Kenya and Somalia through supporting protection and the provision of asylum as well as through its support for voluntary repatriation. It also pledged US\$ 1 million to support the reconstruction and rehabilitation of health services in Somalia and to provide education scholarships.

## UNITED STATES

Although the United States Government did not announce a funding pledge at this time, it remains committed to providing support for protection and assistance in Somalia, with a focus on education and livelihoods.

## CANADA

The Representative of Canada praised Kenya for its generosity in hosting refugees and underlined the lingering instability in Somalia, noting that the Canadian Government will review how it can best support the *Tripartite Agreement* and *Plan of Action* and notify other participants of its intentions in the future.



## LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

The League of Arab States thanked neighbouring countries for hosting Somali refugees and indicated its prioritization of the initiatives led by the high-level partnership forum for Somalia.

## AMERICAN REFUGEE COMMITTEE (ARC)

The ARC announced that it would provide market-oriented skills training and also create jobs for a total of 10,000 returnee youth in Somalia.

## ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC)

The OIC is focusing on the development of agricultural projects (e.g. soil preparation, rehabilitation of irrigation and water collection channels) as well as the rehabilitation and construction of schools, health posts and clinics to ensure access to essential services for returnees and their families.

## ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK (IDB)

The IDB is committed to financing a settlement programme for 300-400 refugees, and a pilot project is currently being designed to provide shelter, health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), as well as agricultural support and resources for efficient energy use. In January 2016, the IDB will announce the specific amount it can contribute alongside its commitments to refugee return in Somalia.

## UNITED KINGDOM

The Government of the United Kingdom is providing multi-year support to both Kenya and Somalia. Because insecurity and rudimentary basic services have resulted in a low number of returns to date, the Government of the United Kingdom is prioritizing support to the security sector as well as the provision of essential services.

## GERMANY

Although Germany did not make a specific financial pledge at the *Conference*, the Representative from the Government of Germany indicated that it is already providing more than €100 million to support Somalia in the areas of infrastructure, WASH, and humanitarian assistance to refugee and host communities. The latter includes settlements in Kismayo, which is in one of the nine designated return areas.



# Conclusion and Next Steps

## Conclusion

On behalf of Kenya, the Minister of Interior and Coordination of National Government, (Retired) Major General Joseph Ole Nkaissey, expressed solidarity with the goals of Somalia and highlighted the significance of the *Conference* in helping rebuild Somalia. Referencing the long-standing efforts of Kenya to provide asylum and protection to Somali refugees, (Retired) Major General Nkaissey drew attention to the burden of hosting the largest number of refugees in the region. In particular, he highlighted environmental degradation and heightened security requirements due to extremism, including the use of refugee camps as locations to recruit and radicalize vulnerable refugees. These issues have necessitated a re-allocation of resources to refugee-hosting areas at the expense of other development priorities. Kenya will continue to participate in the AMISOM initiative to help strengthen stability in the region and help Somalia safely rebuild itself.

*“The success of Somalia is not only an important contribution to the security of the region but the security of the whole world.”*

António Guterres

The delegate speaking on behalf of the Prime Minister of Somalia expressed the gratitude of Somalia for each pledge that was made during the *Conference*. The delegate also reiterated the commitment of Somalia to the dignified and durable nature of returns and emphasized the need for Kenya, Somalia and the international community to collaborate in order to meet this objective. Somalia will continue to work closely with governments in the region to improve stability and prosperity, including for the most vulnerable.

The EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa, Alexander Rondos, closed the *Conference*, describing it as a commitment toward progress and indicating his hope that support will grow as results are demonstrated. He also noted that, for the individuals and families who make the decision to return home, voluntary return reveals their courage and hope despite the risks it carries. To ensure successful return, Mr. Rondos identified three conditions that must be met in a targeted, timely and flexible manner: (1) local political structures must provide stability and services to help citizens return to their normal way of life; (2) security must be strengthened; and (3) economic opportunity must be ensured.

Mr. Guterres expressed his gratitude to the EU institutions and called on the international community to ensure their solidarity in the return process. Kenya, Yemen, Ethiopia, Uganda and Djibouti were again praised for their support to the Somali people and recognized for opening their borders in a world where borders are not always opened. Mr. Guterres highlighted this example as more important than ever today.

Mr. Guterres thanked the States and the international and financial organizations that made pledges, totalling €94 million (US\$ 105 million), as well as those who announced planned projects or in-kind donations and those whose pledges will be made in the future.

Mr. Guterres reiterated the urgency of implementing the *Plan of Action*, given that displacement has reached a record level, and noted that the staggering escalation of the numbers of persons displaced by conflict can be linked to insecurity.

Mr. Guterres stressed the international community's responsibility to support Somalia fully. To do so, he said, is not a matter of generosity or solidarity but enlightened self-interest.

*“[I]n a situation like this where so many conflicts are getting worse and people are being displaced, to have one country that is moving forward with all of the risks, with all the challenges, with all the difficulties, to have one country in which we hope peace can be re-established, to have one country where we hope people can go back and create conditions for them and their children, to have one country like this, is an opportunity we cannot miss.”*

# Next Steps

- The *Plan of Action* envisages durable solutions for returnees and IDPs and encourages the bridging of humanitarian and development interventions in order to help increase resilience in communities. Partner consultations will be held in Geneva, Nairobi and Mogadishu, as both UNHCR and its partners will need to collaborate in order to effectively implement the funded activities.
- There are differences between funding channels in Kenya and Somalia. In Kenya, funding pledges will mainly be channeled through UNHCR whereas, in Somalia, most of the funding will pass through both humanitarian and development partners. Although UNHCR Somalia is the leading humanitarian actor for return and initial reintegration, other United Nations agencies and partners play significant roles in responding to humanitarian and development needs. As agreed with the Government, partners and donors in Somalia, pledges to the *Plan of Action* will be channeled through the existing funding mechanisms established under the Humanitarian Response Plan (for humanitarian activities) lead by OCHA and the *New Deal Compact* (for development activities). Therefore, support for existing programmes, within this context, including those that have been approved but are not yet funded, will be prioritized in the designated areas of return and reintegration.
- The *Plan of Action*, if fully implemented, would cost US\$ 500 million and would facilitate the return of 135,000 Somali refugees from Kenya by 2017. Efforts will continue to be made in order to increase the funds available to enable all Somali refugees who wish to return home, to do so with full support toward their successful reintegration.
- In coordination with development actors and both the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), UNHCR may hold follow-up sessions in order to assess the possibility of expanding the repatriation programme to Somali refugees currently hosted in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Uganda and Yemen.
- Activities implemented through the EU pledge will be part of the newly-established EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa that was formally launched at the *Valletta Africa-EU Summit on Migration*. Leaders participating in the *Valetta Summit* adopted a political declaration and a multi-year action plan.<sup>6</sup>
- The *Valletta Summit Declaration* seeks to address concerns related to irregular migration and its root causes, migration management, the limited avenues for legal migration and to take steps that would advance legal migration and mobility between and within the African and European continents.

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<sup>6</sup> The political declaration and an action plan adopted by leaders can be found at <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/11/12-valletta-final-docs/>

# Annex I:

# List of Participants

## Ministerial Pledging Conference on Somali Refugees

21 OCTOBER 2015 – BRUSSELS

### Delegates List

#### Australia

**Katrina Murray**, Policy Adviser,  
Australian Embassy, Brussels

#### Bahrain

**H.E. Dr. Bahiya Jawad Aljeshi**,  
Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain  
**Najah Ali Rashed**, Counsellor

#### Canada

**H.E. Dan Costello**,  
Ambassador- designate of Canada to the EU  
**Jarett Reckseidler**, Political Officer  
(Humanitarian Affairs and Africa)

#### Czech Republic

**H.E. Ambassador David Konecký**,  
Permanent Representative to the Political  
and Security Committee  
**Jakub Kriško**

#### Denmark

**Ulla Næsby Tawiah**, Deputy Head, Department  
for Humanitarian action, Civil Society, and Advisor  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

#### Djibouti

**Houssein Hassan Darar**,  
Executive Secretary, ONARS  
**H.E Ambassador Omar Abdi Said**,  
Embassy of Djibouti in Belgium

#### Egypt

**H.E. Ambassador Ehad Fawzy**,  
Head of Mission of Egypt  
**Amr Elsherbii**,  
Deputy Chief of Mission or Egypt  
**Tamer Ghaith**, Third Secretary, Mission of Egypt

#### Estonia

**H.E. Ambassador Jüri Kahn**

#### Ethiopia

**H. E. Ambassador Yohannes Abraha**  
**Teklehaimanot**, Ambassador to Belgium  
**Delil Kedir**, Second Secretary

#### Finland

**H.E. Ambassador Ms Sofie**  
**From-Emmesberger**

#### Germany

**Dr. Dominik Kneer**, Desk Officer for Kenya  
**H.E. Ambassador Michael Flügger**

#### Greece

**Natalia-Maria Karageorgou**,  
Head of External Relations  
**Loukianos Klint**, Secretary for Economic and  
Commercial Affairs, Permanent Representation  
of Greece to the EU  
**Kyrillos Spyridoloulous**,  
Permanent Representation of Greece to the EU

#### Italy

**Mario Baldi**, Head of the Humanitarian Aid Office  
at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and  
International Cooperation  
**Luca Maestriperi**, Deputy General Director for  
Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign  
Affairs and International Cooperation

#### Kenya

**H.E. Rt. Maj. General Joseph Ole Nkaisery**,  
Cabinet Secretary for Interior and Coordination of  
National Government  
**Nathif Jama Adam**, Governor, Garissa county  
**Hon. Dr. Mohamed Dahiye**, MP Dadaab  
**Elias Bare Shiiil**, MP Fafi

**Abdullahi Diriye**, MP Wajjir South  
**Eng. Daniel Cheron**, Director,  
Kenya National Highways Authority  
**Dr. Mohamed Guyo**,  
Peace and Security Directorate  
**Joseph Irungu**, Secretary, Internal Security  
**Wilberforce Kionzo**, Deputy Secretary,  
Internal Security  
**Alex Kilowua**,  
Personal Assistant to Cabinet Secretary  
**H.E. Ambassador Johnson Weru**  
**Nick Odoul Odhiambo**, Second Secretary  
**Teresiah Karanja**, First Secretary

## Kuwait

**H.E. Ambassador Dharar Razzooqi**  
**Abdulmohsen Almansour**, Third Secretary  
**Abdulaziz Alkhubaizi**, Third Secretary

## Latvia

**Ilze Zelgalve**, Third Secretary, Permanent  
Representation of Latvia to the EU

## Malta

**Robert Micallef**, ACP Delegate, External Relations  
Unit, Permanent Representation of Malta to the EU

## Netherlands

**René van Nes**,  
envoy for the World Humanitarian Summit  
**Rogier Nouwen**, Senior Policy Officer,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

## Poland

**Elżbieta Lisowska**, Counsellor

## Qatar

**H.E. Ambassador Hasan Bin Hamza Asad  
Mohammed**, Counsellor Chargé d'Affaires,  
Embassy of Qatar in Mogadishu, Somalia  
**Hassan Al-Hammadi**, Second secretary of the  
Embassy of Qatar to Belgium  
**Noora al-Jabbar**,  
Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

## Somalia

**H.E. Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke**,  
Prime Minister  
**H.E. Abdusalam Hadliyah Omer**, Minister of  
Foreign Affairs and Investment Promotion  
**H.E. Abdirahman Yusuf Ali**, Minister of Planning  
and International Cooperation  
**H.E. Ali Sheikh Mohamed Nur**, Deputy Minister of  
Interior and Federal Affairs  
**H.E. Gamal Mohamed Hassan**,  
Somali Ambassador to Kenya  
**Ahmed Nur**, Commissioner for Refugees and IDPs

**Ahmed Said Farah**, Senior Advisor,  
National Commission for Refugees and IDPs  
**Mariam Yassin Haji Yussuf**,  
Special Envoy for Children and Migrants' Rights,  
Office of the Prime Minister  
**Hon. Prof. Abdizirak Osman Hassan**  
**H.E. Ambassador Ali Said Faqi**,  
Embassy of Somalia, Belgium  
**Ali Mohamed Abukar**,  
Embassy of Somalia, Belgium  
**Keyse Daud Abdulle**, Embassy of Somalia, Belgium

## Spain

**Guillermo Tosca Diaz**, Advisor,  
Embassy of Spain, Brussels

## South Africa

**Friedel Dedekind**, First Secretary, South African  
Mission to the European Union

## Sweden

**H.E. Isabella Lövin**,  
Minister for Development Assistance  
**Gabriel Liljenström**, political adviser  
**Ami Larsson Jain**, Deputy Director, Horn of Africa  
and West Africa Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
**Henric Råsbrant**,  
Permanent Representation to the EU  
**Hannah Widstam**,  
Permanent Representation to the EU

## Turkey

**Ayşe Uzer**, Deputy Head of Mission,  
Turkish Permanent Delegation to the EU  
**Cem Gündüz**, Counsellor,  
Turkish Permanent Delegation to the EU  
**Uganda David Apollo Kazungu**, Commissioner,  
Office of the Prime Minister, Uganda  
**Franklin Katangwe**, Chargé d'Affaires,  
Embassy of Uganda, Brussels  
**Vivian Oyella**, Protection Officer,  
Department of Refugees

## United Kingdom

**Keith Mackiggan**, Director for West and Southern  
Africa at the Department of International  
Development (DFID)  
**Rebecca Terzeon**, Deputy Head, DFID Somalia

## United States of America

**Margaret McKelvey**, Director of the Office of  
Assistance for Africa at the Bureau of Population,  
Refugees and Migration (PRM)  
**David Kaeuper**, Chargé d'Affaires, a.i.,  
United States Mission to Somalia  
**Steve Olive**, Deputy Mission Director, USAID

## Yemen

**H.E. Ambassador Shaher Mohamed**  
**Marwan Aldobhany**, Secretary of NACRA  
**Hanan Al-Wareeth**, Embassy of Yemen in Brussels  
**Ahlam Al-Moflhi**, Embassy of Yemen in Brussels

## Organisations

### ACTED

**Andre Krummacher**, Director of Programmes

### Action Africa Help International

**Dr. Caroline Kisia**, Executive Director

### African Development Bank

**Abdirahman Beileh**, Director,  
Department of Special Programmes

### African Union

**Ajay Kumar Bramdeo**, Head, Permanent  
Mission to the European Union

### American Refugee Committee

**Chris Smoot**,  
Vice President of International Programs

### AMREF

**Mario Raffaelli**, Director

### AVSI

**Lucia Conti**, EU Affairs focal point

### Danish Refugee Council

**Malthe Mulvad**, Head of Unit HoAY and MENA

### Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre

**Ilwad Elman**, Director of Programmes  
and Development

### EU ECHO

**Jean-Louis de Brouwer**, Director  
**Johannes Luchner**, Head of unit (Eastern, Southern  
Africa and the Great Lakes region)  
**Beatrice Miège**,  
Head of sector for the Horn of Africa  
**Lars Oberhaus**, Somalia Head of Office  
**Antonio Battista**, Somalia Desk  
**Thorsten Muench**, Somalia Desk  
**Benjamin Thiberge**, Djibouti, Kenya,  
Uganda and Eritrea Desk  
**Charles Dale**, Assistant to the Horn of Africa  
**Ana Rivas**, Intern

### EU EEAS

**Federica Mogherini**, High Representative for  
Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

**Stefano Manservigi**, HRVP Cabinet

**Felix Ferbandex-Shaw**, HRVP's Cabinet

**Koen Vervaeke**,  
Acting Managing Director for Africa

**Alexander Rondos**, EUSR in Horn of Africa

**Ben Crampton**, EUSR Team Member

**Umberto Tavolato**, EUSR Team Member

**Claudia Wiedey**, Head of Division Horn of Africa

**Dietmar Krissler**, Deputy head of Division

**Michele Cervone d'Urso**,  
Head of Delegation Somalia

**Stefano Dejak**, Head of delegation Kenya

**Dilarde Teilane**, Desk Officer Somalia

**Karin Johansson**, Desk Officer Somalia

**Sabrina Bellosi**

### EU DEVCO

**Neven Mimica**, EU Commissioner for International  
Cooperation and Development

**Maud Arnould**, Member of Commissioner  
Mimica's Cabinet

**Koen Doens**, Director for East and  
Sothorn Africa

**Hans Stausboll**, Head of Unit,  
East Africa and Regional Cooperation

**Irene Giribaldi**, Head of Sector, East Africa

**Daniel Plas**, Cooperation Officer, Kenya

**Ingeborg Thijn**, Cooperation Officer,  
Ethiopia and Somalia

**Agnes Kovacs**, Cooperation Officer, Somalia

**Olivia Berthon**, EU Trust Fund

### European Commission communications team

#### Alexandre Polack, EU spokesperson

**Stacey Vickers**, Team Leader,  
Press and Social Media

**Petya Kirizieva**

**Karin Pouls**

**Maria Tardin**

**Marie France Agblo**

### FAO

**Bujar Tijani**, Assistant Director General for Africa

**Luca Alinovi**, Representative in Kenya

**Joanna Athlin Villa**, Liaison & Resilience Officer

### Global Somali Diaspora

**Abdi Barud**, Executive Director

### The Heritage Institute of Policy Studies

**Mursal Saney**, Deputy Director

## ICRC

**Odile Vandenbossche**,  
Adviser at the ICRC Brussels Delegation

## IGAD

**Amb. Mohamed Affey**,  
IGAD Special Envoy to Somalia

## ILO

**Peter Rademaker**, Coordinator, Department of  
Partnerships and Field Support, Switzerland  
**Ali Abdulkadir**, Technical Officer, Somalia

## INTERSOS

**Konstantinos Moschochoritis**,  
General Director

## IOM

**Michael Pillinger**, Head, Kenya Country Office  
**Gerard Waite**, Chief of Mission IOM Somalia  
**Mohammed Abdiker**, Director of the Dept. of  
Operations and Emergencies

## IRC

**Lidia Giglio**, Policy & Advocacy Officer

## Islamic Development Bank

**Nur Abdi**,  
Senior Agriculture and Food Security Officer

## League of Arab States

**H.E. Ambassador Lahebib ADAMI**  
**Hana Koudmani**

## Legal Action Worldwide

**Khadija Hassan**

## Norwegian Refugee Council

**Gabriella Waajman**, Regional Director,  
Horn of Africa

## OCHA

**Vincent Hubin**,  
Head of OCHA Liaison Office in Brussels

## Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

**Aissata Kane**, Permanent Observer Ad Interim

## UN Environment Programme

**Mr. Ulf Björnholm Ottosson**, Head, Brussels Liaison  
Office to the EU Institutions

## UNFPA

**Zahidul Huque**, Representative, Somalia  
**Ivan Hermans**, Senior Policy and External Relations

## UN HABITAT

**Annika Lenz**, Liaison Officer, UN-Habitat – United  
Nations Human Settlements Programme

## UNHCR

**António Guterres**, High Commissioner  
**Kelly Clements**, Deputy High Commissioner

**Valentin Tapsoba**, Director,  
Regional Bureau for Africa

**Ann Encontre**, Deputy Director,  
Regional Bureau for Africa

**Bushra Halepota**,  
UNHCR Representative, Somalia

**Felicitas Nebril**,  
UNHCR Deputy Representative, Somalia

**Carlotta Wolf**, Executive Assistant, Somalia

**Raouf Mazou**, UNHCR Representative, Kenya

**Leonard Zulu**, Rapporteur

**Emmy Takahashi**,  
Global Issues Unit (Rapporteur)

**Marc Fawe**, Global Issues Unit (Rapporteur)

**Veronika Burget**, Global Issues Unit (Rapporteur)

**Raf Rosvelds**, Global Issues Unit

**Rohini Deshmukh**, Global Issues Unit

**Karin de Gruijl**, Department of External Relations

**Claire Lamont**, Regional Bureau for Africa

**Daniela Ionita**, Regional Bureau for Africa

**Sarah Wimaladharma**, Donor Relations

**Wendy Badr**, Global Issues Unit

**Morgane Vasnich**, Intern

**Hanne Lauwers**, Intern

**Cornelia Schick**, Intern

**Lucie Bichet**, Intern

**Ruben Fierens**, Intern

**Claire Bourgeois**,  
Refugee Coordinator Yemen Situation

**Shobha Das**, Regional Bureau for Africa

## UNOPS

**Saverio Bertolino**, Senior Liaison Officer,  
East Africa Hub

**William Axelsson**, Head of Office, Brussels

## UNSOM

**Nicholas Kay**, SRSG

**Peter de Clercq**,  
Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator

**Noboru Fernandes de Abreu**,  
Special Assistant to SRSG

## WFP

**Laurent Bukera**, Country Director for Somalia

**Maria Guimaraes**, Government Partnerships Officer

## WHO

**Dr. Masoud Dara**, Senior Advisor

**Dr. Richard Tran**, Associate Technical Officer



# Annex II: Opening Statements

## Ministerial Pledging Conference on Somali Refugees Opening Statement by António Guterres United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Brussels, 21 October 2015

Excellencies, Honorable Ministers,  
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you to this Ministerial Pledging Conference on Somali refugees. I would like to express my deep gratitude to the European Union, notably High Representative Federica Mogherini and Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development Neven Mimica, for the invaluable support in co-hosting this event. I am also extremely pleased that we are joined here today by His Excellency the Prime Minister of Somalia, as well as his Minister of Foreign Affairs, and by the Cabinet Secretaries of Foreign Affairs and of the Interior of Kenya.

The Somali refugee situation has been going on for 23 years. At its peak, there were over two million Somali refugees living in exile – today, nearly a million remain in Kenya, Ethiopia, Yemen, Djibouti, Eritrea and Uganda. These countries have made enormous efforts to provide protection to such high numbers of refugees. Many Somalis have arrived in remote regions where host communities themselves are struggling to make ends meet, and the huge population increase has had often difficult consequences for the economies and societies of these countries.

In an expression of their strong traditions of hospitality and their respect for the principles of refugee protection, host countries came together in Addis in August 2014 and adopted the Addis Ababa Commitment towards Somali Refugees, a landmark agreement to continue to provide a safe haven to Somali refugees while stepping up the search for comprehensive durable solutions.

Somalia has been facing one of the most complex crises in recent history. Enormous challenges remain in the areas of security, basic infrastructure and access to livelihoods. Some 1.1 million Somalis are internally displaced, and others continue to leave the country to seek safety elsewhere. Somalis are among the top ten nationalities of those who have been crossing the Mediterranean to Europe in 2015.

However, there are also opportunities. The security, political and socio-economic situation in Somalia is beginning to show tangible signs of stabilization as a result of the enormous efforts of the Federal Government and the people of Somalia, with the support of AMISOM, UNSOM and the wider international community.

A growing number of refugees are repatriating spontaneously to safer areas in Somalia. When UNHCR interviewed people in Dadaab about their future plans two years ago, 82% said that they would like to return home if conditions were peaceful. Our help desks in Dadaab have received more than 10,000 inquiries about return. In a recent verification exercise, nearly 98,000 refugees were found to no longer be present in the camp, and it is likely that a meaningful number of them have spontaneously returned to Somalia.

With this momentum, a pilot voluntary return programme was established last December under the framework of the Tripartite Agreement between Kenya, Somalia and UNHCR. It aims to support refugees who wish to return home to one of the nine districts in Somalia where conditions are considered relatively safe. Some 5,200 people have returned under this programme since it started, and UNHCR and partners are carrying out extensive protection and post-return monitoring in the communities of origin. We are now getting ready to move into the enhanced phase of this operation, which will aim to assist 135,000 refugees to return to Somalia between January 2016 and December 2017.

Distinguished Delegates,

The plan we are presenting here today builds on the framework set by the Addis Ababa Commitment, to pursue a comprehensive solutions approach that remains nevertheless sensitive to refugees' continued need for protection. The *Integrated Action Plan* consists of interrelated humanitarian and development proposals that will be implemented in both countries and link the return intention of refugees while still in exile with their needs for sustainable reintegration back home.

The Governments of Kenya and Somalia have enhanced their common mechanisms for the coordination of return and reintegration activities in areas considered safe. I would like to commend their collaboration under the framework of the Tripartite Commission to produce this Plan of Action and work jointly towards enhancing opportunities for the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees in conditions of safety and dignity.

Around the world, sustainable voluntary return home is the solution which most refugees prefer for themselves and their families – and Somalis are no exception. But for this to be sustainable, returnees need better access to shelter, social services and livelihoods. The integrated action plan aims to help create these conditions for sustainable reintegration, through community-based investments targeting high-return areas where conditions are considered safe. It will be implemented in line with national priority programmes such as the Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan and the Peace Building and State Building of the New Deal Compact.

The plan also targets Kenya, which has generously hosted hundreds of thousands of Somali refugees for nearly a quarter of a century. At the height of the famine and conflict-induced humanitarian crisis in Somalia in 2011, the number of Somali refugees who received protection in Kenya rose to more than half a million. Today, the number of registered refugees still stands at over 420,000.

The prolonged presence of such a large population of refugees has had a significant impact on hosting communities in Garissa, Dadaab, Kakuma and even Nairobi. The integrated action plan proposes investments to rehabilitate refugee hosting areas and to support the resilience of the host communities. Interventions also aim at increasing livelihoods and educational opportunities that will prepare refugees for the future and give them the skills to build peaceful, vibrant communities upon their return to Somalia. And, importantly, as security in some of the major refugee hosting areas has deteriorated in recent years, the

Government of Kenya also requires urgent support to enhance security arrangements in the Dadaab camps and continue to maintain the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum.

The Kenya component of the plan also includes the upgrade of the road from Modika via Dadaab to Liboi on the border with Somalia. These road improvements will help to promote socio-economic cohesion and integration within refugee hosting areas and between Kenya and Somalia. The Government of Kenya has started to mobilize financing from various bilateral and multilateral development institutions, and I hope donors will complement that support with additional funding.

It is clear that for both of the components of this plan, in Kenya and in Somalia, humanitarian assistance alone will not meet the needs. We are therefore counting on the support from development actors – supported by development budgets – to ensure the sustainability of these interventions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

No one will deny that there is still a long way to go until real peace can return to Somalia and conditions will stabilize sufficiently for large-scale return. But it is precisely because times are difficult that it's so important to support Somalia and Somali refugees today, and to boost the resilience and security of host communities in Kenya.

Investing in effective and sustainable return to safe areas in Somalia, while preserving asylum space and supporting refugees' access to livelihoods and skills development, are vitally important to the success of on-going efforts to stabilize Somalia and indeed the whole region.

I therefore hope that, as the global refugee crisis has moved into the center of the international community's attention, States and development partners will take a holistic approach to the problem. Doing so will require us to tackle the many different factors that contribute to the record numbers of people on the move today. Given that Somali refugees make up the world's second largest protracted refugee situation, addressing their continued needs for protection in the region and enhancing our efforts to support sustainable voluntary return is absolutely essential. At a time when the world's attention – and its resources – are stretched so thinly across an ever-growing range of refugee crises, we must remain determined to address not only their symptoms, but also their causes. Giving refugees a perspective for the future in their country of origin is one of the best investments one can make in this situation, and I very much hope that the international community will seize this opportunity and pledge their support to this initiative.

Thank you very much.

## Opening remarks by High Representative/ Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the Ministerial Pledging Conference on Somali Refugees

Thank you very much Antonio [Guterres], it's the European Union thanking you for the incredible work that you personally and the UNHCR is doing on this and also other aspects of this magnitude of number of people on the move. But let me address all of you ministers, those sitting here and those sitting in the audience, High Commissioner, your Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen!

First of all, a word of welcome to you to Brussels and this highly important – and timely – Conference focusing on Somali Refugees; it is a great pleasure for me to be here – and to actually have arrived on time. Because as the Prime Minister said I was flying tonight from my first visit to Addis Ababa, where I had the opportunity to work together with the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and other members of Cabinet on different aspects of our bilateral cooperation, including a High Level Dialogue on migration. We agreed to present at La Valletta Summit in a couple of weeks a common agenda on migration and mobility. In Addis I have also had the honour to address the African Union permanent representatives and the pleasure to meet again my friend Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma and other members of the African Union Commission to exchange views on many aspects of our cooperation and namely to prepare the Valletta Summit.

The world is facing an unprecedented magnitude of people on the move, conflicts and crises multiply, poverty and inequalities grow, climate change and humanitarian disasters destroy, destabilise large part of the world. Human rights violations and poor democratic systems push people to look for societies where they can aspire to live in dignity and peace.

This has to be our first common commitment – to tackle together what we call the root causes, not the symptoms only, but the real causes of the phenomenon. This phenomenon is not going to stop any time soon and the magnitude of this phenomenon is hitting first and foremost Africa. Each and every African country is either country of origin, of transit, of destination, and, often, hosting large number of refugees as it is the case we discussed today. So it is not a European crisis, this is a global one. What partners, friends do to face a common global crisis, they sit down together and find common ways to tackle a common challenge, sharing responsibilities on the basis of our common interest and our shared values. In less than a month that is exactly what we are going to do, European leaders will meet with African partners at the La Valletta Summit on migration.

In Malta we expect to agree on concrete actions to maximise the development benefits of migration and to address root causes, to better organise legal channels of migration and mobility, to ensure international protection for migrants and asylum seekers, to intensify the fight against criminal networks engaged in migrants smuggling and human trafficking and to step up our cooperation on return and readmission. At the summit we will also officially launch the European Trust Fund to support African countries dealing with border control, fighting human smugglers and to build opportunities: job opportunities, education opportunities, resilience of communities and societies. The European Commission will make a first contribution of 1.8 billion euros to the fund and we expect our Member States to contribute and to match this amount of money. We also call on other countries to contribute to the fund. I said opportunities and I believe the key to addressing the migration crisis and also the refugee crisis is this: creating new opportunities, the opportunity to live lives free

of fear and persecution, the opportunity to find a job, and a good one, the opportunity to contribute to the countries public life, to open inclusive democratic processes. We can only deal with a current flow of migrants and refugees in the world if we realise that this is not about numbers but about people, men and women and children seeking a better life.

Today's focus on Somali refugees is crucial, in particular for the following two reasons: First, this is one of the world's most protracted displacement situations, as the High Commissioner has highlighted. It has lasted more than two decades, affecting three generations of Somalis and leaving more than two million people either internally displaced or as refugees, in particular in the sub-region. We are very grateful to Ethiopia and Kenya – first and second largest refugee hosting countries in Africa respectively – for hosting large numbers of refugees and in particular Somali refugees. Even if the media attention currently may be elsewhere, this challenge has to remain high on our political agenda and should not be forgotten.

The European Union is ready to provide support, beyond humanitarian assistance, notably through the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) for the Horn of Africa. The second reason – and this is a positive development – thanks to the unprecedented efforts by Somalia and its people themselves, the region and the international community, the country is moving in the right direction towards a more stable federal state; it cannot lose momentum. I know the agenda ahead of 2016 is ambitious but there cannot be any sliding from the commitments, in particular the electoral process and the preceding consultation process. The European Union is – and will remain – a strong supporter of Somalia becoming a viable federal state in line with the New Deal Compact of 2013. The key to success is Somalia's own ownership and commitment to internal and regional stability.

A stable and secure Somalia means a stable and secure home to come back to for Somalis who have been living for several generations in refuge or in displacement; but it means more because it will substantially increase the security in a region of global geostrategic importance, benefitting all in the region, and far beyond the region.

The Tripartite Agreement between Somalia, Kenya and the UNHCR on the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees from Kenya is a very important step. I understand that, to date, some 4000 Somali refugees have been supported to return to some parts of Somalia in the context of this agreement. This is a very positive sign and we all wish to see more Somalis deciding that the moment has come to return and contribute to the rebuilding of their own country. It would be a strong signal of confidence for the country's future. I cannot but emphasize the importance of safe, sustainable and dignified repatriation on a voluntary basis. No one should be compelled or forced to return when the conditions for return are not safely in place in crisis areas. As a response to the current and recently more pronounced challenges in the Horn of Africa, we have elaborated an EU Horn of Africa Regional Action Plan, focusing in particular on two aspects: migration and violent extremism and implications of the broader geopolitical framework.

Regarding the specific focus on migration in the Action Plan, we suggest building on the regional cooperation framework set up with you – the Khartoum Process – focusing on human trafficking and smuggling. We also think it is absolutely necessary to enhance cooperation with regional partners to address the root causes and provide alternatives to irregular migration and forced displacement; and we need to support states' capacity to better manage mixed migratory flows, including border management.

These are just some of the actions we suggest in the new Action Plan. Tomorrow, I know our services will present them to your representatives in Brussels and our Delegations will do the same back in your capitals. I stop here, because I know the continuation of the working day is going to be intense and important, especially the pledging part of it, let me also add that.

With a wish not only to welcome you all to Brussels and to guarantee that the European Union part of the work will continue to be consistent, committed. As we see this as a strategic investment for Europe, in not only the management of the humanitarian and not only a situation in Somalia and around Somalia. But also a key strategic investment in the stability and peace and security of the whole region, which is again, I would underline, of strategic importance for, I would say, the entire world and for sure for this part of the world.

I thank you very much and I wish you a successful day.





**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

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