



Statement

H. E. Mr. José Mandra

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of the
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UNCHR's MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

GENEVA, 8TH DECEMBER 2011 *AM*

Chairperson,

Your Excellence, the High Commission for the Refugees, Antonio Guterres,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At outset, I would like to warmly congratulate you to preside over this Intergovernmental Event at the Ministerial level of the Member States of the United Nations on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 50th Anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

My delegation subscribes the Statement made by Honourable Archibald Lesao Lehohla, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Home Affairs and Public Safety, and Parliamentary Affairs of the Kingdom of Lesotho on behalf of the African Group as it reflects our main positions as a continent.

Mozambique is a country benefiting from the valuable assistance of the UNHCR for many years of its critical moment of history, starting from the time its citizens had to flee the country to neighbouring countries during the struggle for liberation in early 1960's up to the independence in 1975.

Our experience in hosting refugees started in the earlier days after independence when our sisters and brothers from neighbouring countries had to face apartheid in South Africa and minority regime in South Rhodesia, at the time, Mozambique also hosted refugees from Asia, Latin America, among others countries.

It is with this experience, knowledge, spirit of solidarity and respect of International humanitarian law that Mozambique is hosting refugees, asylum seekers and dealing with a great number mixed migration fleeing economic and political instability in their countries of origin even considering its limited economic resource. I would like to pay a special tribute to the UNHCR and its staff members for their tireless efforts working in field, sometimes, under very difficult circumstances.

Chairperson,

Many Mozambicans are leaving abroad mainly in neighbouring countries. As consequence and due to the different legal systems of the hosting countries they are facing difficulties to be recognized or even having a definition of its status of citizenship.

Our country took legal measures at maternity level to reduce the number of situations of statelessness. It is compulsory and free, by law to get a birth certificate in all hospitals. At the regional and international levels the Government has started the mapping process for the registration and documentation of Mozambicans citizens at risk to become statelessness.

The process has been conducted with the support of the UNCHR, and we take this opportunity to thank personally His Excellency High Commissioner, Antonio Guterres. We look forward for your continuing support to this exercise next years.

This event is taking place two days after the acceptance of Mozambique as Member of the International Organization for Migration. This is an indication of the Government's commitment to such viable solutions for the challenge posed by mixed migration, asylum seekers and refugees.

Africa continues to be the most affected continent by the tragic situation of refugees and asylum seekers, especially taking into account that negative impact of the conflicts are exacerbated by the adverse effect of the current world financial and economic crisis, steady environmental degradation and other natural disasters that generate thousands of refugees and internally displaced people.

To concluded, let me to take this opportunity to inform this august assembly that Mozambique is in the advanced stage of acceding the Conventions related to the Statelessness, which principles and practise are already in shrined in our law.

I thank you for your attention.