

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



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**PERMANENT MISSION OF RWANDA
GENEVA**

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL EVENT AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL OF MEMBER
STATES OF THE UN 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**

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND REFUGEES AFFAIRS
H.E. GENERAL GATSINZI MARCEL**

GENEVA, 7-~~8~~/12/2011 *PM*

***Mr. Chairperson,
The High Commissioner for Refugees,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen***

On behalf of the Government of Rwanda, allow me to convey our congratulations, Mr. Chairperson, upon your chairmanship of this historical intergovernmental event to celebrate 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. The Rwanda delegation assures you Mr. Chairperson of its full support.

Rwanda delegation also wishes to congratulate the High Commissioner, Mr. Antonio Guterres and his staff of UNHCR for the excellent work they are doing to serve the refugees and internally displaced persons the world over. We wish also to congratulate the High Commissioner for his focused and comprehensive statement made this morning.

The Delegation of Rwanda fully supports the statement made by Lesotho on behalf of the African Group.

During these two days of celebration, it is crucial that we reflect on the complex and multi-faceted issue of refugees and statelessness people and commit ourselves to enhance partnerships at regional and international levels while accelerating preventative and proactive human solutions to overcome their challenges.

***Mr. Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates***

Rwanda has been affected by the statelessness and refugee problems of its sons and daughters before its self determination and independence in 1962.

After the 1994 genocide committed against the Tutsi in Rwanda, the essential priority of the Government of Rwanda was not only the attainment and consolidation of peace and

security within our country, but also the repatriation and reintegration of Rwandan refugees who were exiled in all regions of the world and especially in neighboring countries. The results were spectacular in this area: from 1994 to date, over 3,4 million refugees, which accounts for close to 98% of Rwandans refugees abroad, have been successfully repatriated and reintegrated. Today, they all enjoy their country and fully participate to its development. With the partnership with all of you, we are looking forward to finding lasting solution for the few remaining Rwandan refugees.

The consolidated peace and national security, national reconciliation, the established rule of law, promoted and protected human rights, the good governance, fight against discrimination, transparency and control of corruption in public governance, the improved welfare of Rwandans have encouraged voluntary return of Rwandan refugees.

Rwanda has been able to achieve this thanks also to strong commitment and excellent partnership we have enjoyed and continue to enjoy with all our bilateral and multilateral partners, including especially UNCHR and neighboring countries.

Being a party to the 1951 Convention on Refugees and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, as well as the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, Rwanda wants to strengthen its international cooperation in this field.

In this regard, the Government of Rwanda remains committed to the promotion of policies and legislations that ensure respect and dignity of all, including refugees. These policies and strategies include among others, dual citizenship, Diaspora engagement, employment creation, poverty reduction and removing barriers for those who want to live and work in Rwanda.

Rwanda also hosts slightly over 50 000 refugees, mainly from Great Lakes Region, and their numbers have been growing slowly. There is a need to consider increased resources for these refugees to support their social and economic livelihood.

***Mr. Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,***

As I conclude, I wish to reaffirm Rwanda's commitment to continue working closely with UNHCR and all UN member States in deterring root causes of flows of refugees and statelessness, and in finding lasting solutions for refugee question regionally and globally.

Thank you for your kind attention.