



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

**HON.MINISTER'S STATEMENT AT UNHCR'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY
COMMEMORATION MINISTERIAL MEETING.**

GENEVA, 7-8TH DECEMBER 2011.

The Chairman, the High Commissioner UNHCR, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

Allow me thank UNHCR on mobilizing and availing the necessary resources to the Government of Uganda in hosting refugees overtime. At the same time I congratulate UNHCR for attaining 60 years of existence.

Uganda associate itself with the statement (to be) made by Lesotho on behalf of the African Group.

Uganda today is home to 133,115 refugees and 23,362 asylum seekers. These are majorly from DRC, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Kenya, Burundi and Pakistan.

Government of Uganda is and will continue to offer management and protection of refugees in line with international protection mandate to persons of concern.

1. Refugee Status Determination.

Uganda has a functional Refugee Eligibility process. Though faced with a large backlog of asylum seekers currently of about 20, 000, efforts are ongoing by the Refugee Eligibility Committee to offset this backlog. Extraordinary meetings have been scheduled to expedite this process. We call for continued support from UNHCR.

2. The Refugee Appeals Board.

This has been constituted as envisaged under the Ugandan law and it will go a long way in improving the appeal process and asylum institution. A call is made to UNHCR to support this Board.

3. First Country of Asylum Rule.

In Uganda Invocation of the First Country of Asylum principle is done in the spirit of burden sharing. Uganda has been applying this principle in recent years in particular 2010 to applicants with whom we do not share a common boarder. However we continue to examine the merits of each individual application without necessarily closing the asylum space to all cases.

4. Refugee Durable Solutions.

I intend to submit a proposal to cabinet in relation to the naturalization of protracted Rwandese and Congolese refugees who have lived in Uganda for a long period of time. I request UNHCR for resources to support us achieve the desired integration and naturalization of this group at the appropriate time.

5. Accession to the 1961 Convention on the reduction of Statelessness.

Uganda is a party to the 1954 Convention relating to the status of Stateless Persons but has not yet acceded to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

The International Humanitarian Law Committee has been set up in Uganda with the main objective of promoting ratification and domestication of the various treaties. This will enhance continued quality protection in Uganda.

I thank you for listening to me.

For God and my Country.

Honorable Sephen Oscar Mallinga

Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees

Office of the Prime Minister

Kampala-Uganda.