



The Chairperson of the Executive Committee

The High Commissioner for Refugees

Fellow Panelists

Distinguished delegates

Ladies and gentlemen

2ND OCTOBER 2017

**COMPREHENSIVE REFUGEE RESPONSE FRAMEWORK IN THE
CONTEXT OF UGANDA'S REFUGEE MANAGEMENT MODEL**

Back ground

- ❖ Uganda has been hosting refugees way back from the 1940s through 1950s to date and as a country we have continued to maintain an open door policy in accordance with international, regional and national refugee legal instruments.
- ❖ Uganda's refugee management is anchored on the integrated refugee management model by which both refugees and host communities are treated in the same manner and enjoy same rights as Ugandans.

- ❖ Over time Uganda has implemented a number of initiatives such as the Self Reliance Strategy (SRS) in the 1990s, Development Assistance for Refugee hosting areas (DAR), and the Settlement Transformation Agenda (STA) being the latest initiative to address both humanitarian and development needs of refugees and host communities.
- ❖ The major milestone in our integrated refugee management model was the inclusion of refugees in the National Development Plan (NDP11) which concretized our vision of supporting refugees not only as people in need of humanitarian hand outs but also as part of our national development efforts.
- ❖ Uganda did all the above CRRF related interventions before CRRF itself came into being, in other words looking at the vision and objectives of CRRF Uganda could arguably claim patent rights over it.

Uganda's self evaluation against the five core pillars of CRRF

- In relation to *pillar 1 on Admission and Rights*, Uganda has maintained an open door policy on refugees and asylum seekers. The Refugee Act 2006 has domesticated by the 1951 Convention and the 1969 OAU Convention on Refugees in Africa. Under the Act, Section 25 provides for group recognition also termed as *prima facie* recognition.
- This is the highest any country can stretch to provide asylum space to those seeking protection. The same law Refugee Act 2006 guarantees refugees in Uganda all rights save for the right to participate in our politics. In our view refugees can't demand more.
- As a way of "moving as whole", refugees are allowed to elect their own leaders through Refugee Welfare Councils (RWCs) to provide leadership to fellow refugees.

- Regarding *Emergency and ongoing needs under Pillar 2*, as a country Uganda has managed many refugee emergencies with no reported outbreaks and associated deaths. As a country receiving over 2000 refugees per day since 2015 we are able to provide core relief services to all people of concern.
- Similarly Uganda has always *promoted self reliance under pillar 3* among refugees through a number of initiatives such as the SRS, DAR and currently the STA. Refugees' rights to participate in their economic welfare has been buttressed by the 2006 Refugee law that allows refugees to engage in gainful employment without the requirement of work permits as long as a person is qualified for a given job and can be identified as such.
- On *expanded solutions under pillar 4*, Uganda has always looked up to our global fraternity especially those without frontiers with countries in conflict to take up refugees under the resettlement to a third country window. This among the durable solutions is the least exploited and which require embracing by the rest of the international community under the principle of burden sharing.
- *Voluntary return of refugees under pillar 5* is the most critical among all the durable solutions which but depends on factors external to refugee hosting countries. Country of origin stability to allow voluntary return of refugees should not be left to the countries of origin to deal with alone but the international community must design strategies to achieve the requisite stability in those countries that have continued to be net exporters of refugees.

Uganda's contribution to the global CRRF initiative

- Uganda as the pioneer CRRF country many years ago shall continue to allow those countries that would like to learn from our refugee model to come and learn from our best practices.
- As Uganda's Head of State mentioned during the solidarity summit in Kampala in June 2017, we shall maintain an open door policy for those seeking asylum. This is despite the fact that Uganda is among the least developed countries on the global development scale.
- Uganda is ready to contribute to the global compact on Refugees and shall be able to continue to support the operations of the CRRF secretariat once it becomes operational. Recruitment of staff of the secretariat is ongoing including mobilization of start up funds.

What does Uganda expect from the international community?

- ✚ There is need for the International community to realize that we live in a global village and no one should be under any illusion that they are far from trouble spots. The next day or month the problem shall be on your door steps.
- ✚ Uganda needs as much support as can be marshaled by the international community. Uganda's solidarity summit requirements were not adequately addressed and or funded. We need more resources to address host community expectations triggered by the recently held solidarity summit.

I thank you for your attention.

Eng. Hillary Onek

MINISTER FOR RELIEF, DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND REFUGEES