

16 December 2019

## Uganda joins the first world gathering on refugees in Geneva

KAMPALA: Uganda joined today the Global Refugee Forum in Switzerland's capital Geneva to discuss with some 150 states about ways to improve the response of the international community to refugee situations. Hon. Hilary Onek, Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness & Refugees is heading a delegation of 19 members from Uganda.

The first-ever Global Refugee Forum brings together refugees, heads of state and government, UN leaders, international institutions, development organizations, business leaders and civil society representatives, among others, at the United Nations Office in Geneva.

The three days of discussions, special events, and high-level dialogues in Geneva will focus on six key areas: arrangements for burden and responsibility sharing; education; jobs and livelihoods; energy and infrastructure; solutions; and protection capacity.

UNHCR is co-hosting the Forum together with Switzerland, co-convened by Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Germany, Pakistan, and Turkey. On its part, Uganda is co-sponsoring the themes of Education and Energy and Infrastructure, which includes issues of water, environment, connectivity, sanitation and health.

The aim of the Forum is to generate new approaches and long-term commitments from a variety of actors to help refugees and the communities they live with. Worldwide, over 70 million people are displaced by war, conflict, and persecution. More than 25 million of them are refugees, having fled across international borders and unable to return to their homes.

During the course of next three days, the Uganda delegation will participate in several high level engagements to galvanize support for refugee and host communities. Uganda will present the following pledges and call for more support to sustain its progressive refugee policies:

1. Maintain its progressive, open-door refugee policy;
2. Continue to include refugees in its national planning framework and national statistical systems;
3. Promote access, quality and inclusiveness of the national education system for refugees and host communities by implementing the Education Response Plan;
4. Promote access, quality and inclusiveness of national health services for refugees and host communities by implementing the Health Sector Integrated Refugee Response Plan;

5. Promote inclusive and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems through the implementation of the Water & Environment Response Plan;
6. Ensure the integrity of the asylum system.

Five refugee representatives from Uganda will also participate in spotlight sessions on refugee engagement during the Forum and present a set of pledges on behalf of refugees, as follows;

1. Refugees will support and contribute to programs and initiatives towards livelihood; enhancement for refugees and host communities;
2. Refugees will support actions towards access to education, especially girls;
3. Refugees pledge to support efforts towards environment restoration and conservation in hosting communities.

With over 1.3 million refugees, Uganda is the third largest refugee-hosting country in the world, and largest in Africa. Uganda's progressive refugee management model includes an open border policy and approach which provides refugees with land, freedom of movement, equal access to government-provided social services, such as education and healthcare, and the right to work and set up businesses.

The Ugandan delegation comprises of Amb. Christopher Onyanga Aparr, Permanent Representative Uganda Permanent Mission Geneva; Hon. Jennifer Namuyangu, Minister of State for Local Government; Hon. Kintu Kimono Mary Goretti, Minister of State for Environment; Hon. Joyce Moriku Kaducu, Minister of State for Health - Primary Health Care; Mr. Kibenge Aggrey David, Permanent Secretary Designate - Ministry of Education and Sports; Amb. Eunice Kigenyi, Deputy Permanent Representative Uganda Permanent Mission Geneva; Mr. Kaima Godfrey, Under Secretary Disaster and Refugees /Director Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) Secretariat - Office of the Prime Minister; Mr. Idha Koma Stephen, Ministry of Local Government; Dr. Olaro Charles, Ministry of Health; Mr. Akena Peter Henry, Ministry of Water and Environment; Mr. Kajumba Joseph, Ministry of Education & Sports; Mr. Taban Yassin, Ministry of Local Government; Mr. Natuhanya Aggrey, Ministry of Local Government; Ms. Nyanuri Daphine, Second Secretary Uganda Permanent Mission Geneva; Ms. Hellen Acibo and Ms. Akimanzi Annette Kayonde CRRF Secretariat - Office of the Prime Minister; Mr. Joel Boutroue, UNHCR Country Representative Uganda and Ms. Leslie Velez CRRF Secretariat.

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The programme and further details about the Global Refugee Forum and related events are available [here](#)

Photos and video footage from the Forum are available on [Refugees Media](#)

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