



Remarks at the Launch of the 2019-2020 Refugee Response Plan (RRP)
***“The UN in Uganda’s perspective on the humanitarian-development
nexus”***

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Minister of Relief and Disaster Preparedness, Hon. Hillary Onek

Members of Parliament present

Members of the Diplomatic Community

Development Partners Present

UN Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

It’s a challenging moment to launch the Uganda Refugee Response Plan. Let me take this opportunity to thank the Government of Uganda, the people in the host

districts, Development Partners, donors and all key stakeholders who have supported the exemplary refugee response in Uganda.

In 2016, Uganda was a normal development country, but this was interrupted by a dramatic influx of refugees from South Sudan as well as from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and other countries. Three years on, Uganda has become the largest refugee response in Africa, hosting over 1.2 million refugees who are sharing basic services, access to land and jobs in 30 settlements across 11 districts, and in Kampala, alongside their Ugandan hosts. These are families traumatized by conflict, seeking refuge in the Pearl of Africa. In some areas refugees and their Ugandan hosts are also affected by disasters the Ebola and drought.

Last week, I was in New York where Uganda's approach to refugee protection and management was highlighted by the UN SG as an example of African leadership that promotes dignity, self-reliance for refugees and creates a conducive environment for asylum seekers to join host communities in development-oriented solutions that improve the quality of life for all.

The Government of Uganda has included refugee management and protection in its second National Development Plan (NDP II) through the Settlement Transformative Agenda (STA), shifting the focus from a solely humanitarian approach to one that recognizes the nexus between humanitarian and development. Led by the Office of the Prime Minister's Refugee Department, the STA, aims to foster sustainable livelihoods as well as an enabling environment for refugees to live in safety, dignity and in harmony with the host communities.

In support of the STA, the United Nations and the World Bank developed the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) approach which is a joint multi-year framework for self-reliance and resilience programming for refugee and host communities. It's focus is on sustainable livelihoods and integration of social services. This ReHOPE framework set out principles to operationalize the Government's STA and was adopted by the Government in June 2017. Before the world came together to commit to a comprehensive approach to refugee management, CRRF Uganda had already been leading with these homegrown solutions. In Uganda, the Government's progressive and comprehensive approach to refugee response dictated that the UN think differently on its delivery to the needs of refugees and Ugandans. It has fostered more expedient linking of humanitarian, development and peace interventions at local and national level.

More over the nature of response whereby refugees are in settlements with freedom to move across the territory once they are registered, meant that apart from the immediate response, we had to focus on building resilience and self-reliance of both

refugees and communities hosting them. Operationally humanitarian agencies took on some activities which were deemed to be of a recovery nature or mid-term while development agencies carried out early recovery activities alongside humanitarian actors. There was also a shift in the mindset of the Government line ministries and other partners. As we all put people first, we found ourselves having to deliver on the multi-sectoral needs of refugees and host populations – to ensure coherence and sustainability.

I would like to share a few examples of linking humanitarian response to development:

Coordination

To ensure integration of the refugee response into district planning and operations, the Ministry of Local Government now co-chairs the CRRF Steering Group meetings together with the Office of the Prime Minister. The CRRF coordination structures have strengthened coordination at the district level enabling local leaders to respond to both humanitarian and development needs for the populations in their districts regardless of status. In the UNCT, WFP and UNHCR are co-leads; WFP and UNDP represent UNCT on CRRF.

The Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities, launched in September 2018, is the first of its kind worldwide. It clearly articulates where additional international support is needed to ensure that children, both refugees and from host communities, have access to quality education in refugee hosting districts.

The Ministry of Health launched the Health Sector Integrated Refugee Response Plan in January 2019. The work to make local solutions more viable will continue with two additional priority areas: Jobs and Livelihoods Plan as well as Water and Environment Response Plan. These plans are comprehensive in nature, placing refugees on the development agenda of the government in key service delivery sectors, triggering a response from development actors and highlighting opportunities for investment by private sector. These are significant steps towards economic inclusion and are laying the foundation for districts hosting refugees to remain part of the next National Development Plan.

Policy Frameworks

Over the last two years, partners have come up with programmes and funding which have helped to respond across the humanitarian development nexus building upon a progressive set of policies, strategies and provisions. It is important to recognize that in addition to ReHoPE, Uganda uses the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) as another way through which the New Way of Working is

brought to life. During the Global discussions on the CRRF, Uganda was recognized as a reference how a developmental State can develop inclusive policies, enable freedom of movement, and promote investment in both refugees and host communities. It is worth noting that Uganda's STA and ReHoPE cover Pillar 3 of the CRRF. To build upon the generous policies, we need to find innovative financing models that enable us to respond concurrently to humanitarian, development and investment needs.

Funding/Programmes

I would like to use this opportunity to reiterate our thanks to the Government, donors, partners as well as the UN system for the contributions and investments already made to date. The World Bank through the International Development Association (IDA) set aside \$50 million to support the Development Response to Displacement Impact Project (DRDIP) which has helped local government improve access to social services, expand economic opportunities, and enhance environmental management for the host communities in the 11 districts impacted by refugees. The DRDIP project supports investment in critical infrastructure with guidance from the local government to identify and prioritize areas. It also supports income generating activities by engaging communities in alternative livelihood projects such value addition to agriculture, fish farming, bee keeping, etc. On environmental management the project invests in integrated natural resources management including access to alternative energy sources. Enhanced accountability is being established at central and local government levels. DRDIP focuses on education, health, roads and water and sanitation as priority sectors.

In November 2017, the World Bank and Norway launched “An Evidence-based and Comprehensive Response to Forced Displacement in Uganda” which aims at boosting resilience to refugee shocks, in part by ensuring the refugee response is integrated in sectoral strategies and development planning; enhancing self-reliance and long-term socio-economic development in areas that host refugees; and strengthening effective coordination of humanitarian aid and development programs. This partnership supports the implementation of ReHoPE strategic framework and the roll out of the CRRF. It will also be catalytic for additional funding by the World Bank.

The Government of Japan through JICA has developed a Project for Capacity Development of Local Government for Strengthening Community Resilience in Acholi and West Nile Sub Regions. The project covers 17 districts in Northern Uganda and West Nile, including the refugee hosting districts. Currently in its second phase, it promotes bottom-up identification of needs and evidence-based prioritization and planning – which should in turn inform resource allocation. The

Government of Japan also supported UNDP in March 2018, with a project in line with ReHoPE titled: “Strengthening the Humanitarian- Development nexus in responding to the South Sudanese refugee crisis in West Nile, Northern Uganda.” Japan is supporting programmes aligned to the UNDAF outcomes and the UNDP Country Programme Document.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Before I conclude allow me to highlight areas that require additional work in implementing the Humanitarian Development Nexus

While there is a shared understanding of the demand to work differently in light of the unique operating environment, the shift in mindset of actors, including some donors local government officials UN is not in tandem and comes in the way of action. The temptation for siloed response approaches still lingers resulting in fragmented and short-term interventions that fail to build upon the comparative advantages of different actors including a more diverse set of donors and a more robust private sector participation. We are still talking about projects instead of programs with parallel implementing structures instead of strengthening accountability at local and central government levels. We are yet to benefit substantively from the technological advances in governance, skilling and delivery of services at large scale. We have actors who have spread themselves too thin across sectors and geographically missing the opportunity to reinforce community-based organizations. We have some donors who continue putting more resources towards the humanitarian response and little towards resilience and activities urgently needed to restore the environment and promote self-reliance when we know that the average time of displacement goes beyond years. There is need to tackle the response with a long-term perspective from the first phase of the crisis. District leaders, local influencers must be part of contingency plans, discussions on modalities for delivery and clear definition of goals and aspirations.

Call to Action

Ladies and Gentlemen: I want to thank the commendable efforts by donors in supporting the Humanitarian Development nexus in Uganda and issue a call to all Member States of the United Nations, to the leaders of Industry and other Private Sector leaders to invest in both the Comprehensive Refugee Response as well as the local development plans. It is unacceptable that the CRRF in Uganda is still severely underfunded.

Comprehensive responses under the Global Compact on Refugees and its CRRF benefit Ugandans and refugees alike and remain Government's priority, but burden sharing is key. Uganda's solidarity is to be lauded and we must invest in it. The task is too big for one country, one community or one sector. Everyone plays a critical role in bringing Uganda's response plans to life by living up to their burden sharing commitments and giving hope to the hundreds of Ugandans sharing their land, services and homes with those who need it most. We have heard about the RRP and its priorities, the large needs of refugees and how we intend to meet them but frankly this will not work without a minimum level of funding. As we all know, development support for large number of people can't work without adaptive shelter and medical care or any other human needs. This response therefore is a pre-conditional for development.

Uganda has reiterated its commitment to help its brothers and sisters who seek safety, it's ability to maintain this model as it pursues its development is at risk. Uganda has fulfilled its obligations as a refugee hosting country in accordance with its national laws, its PanAfrican vision and in line with its international commitments under the Global Compact on Refugees and the Sustainable Development Goals agenda. We, the international community, have a critical opportunity to meet our obligations by mobilizing support for enhanced governance and investment in this country. This is an opportunity to those working on the 4th Industrial Revolution; for those seeking to strengthen bilateral ties and for those vested in sustaining peace in the Great Lakes region. Invest in the Pearl of Africa and support the transformation of a new generation of African leaders, who today just happen to be refugees or vulnerable residents of host communities.

I thank you all for listening.