



REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

STATEMENT

BY

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AT THE EVENT

ON

**'UGANDA'S TRANSFORMATIONAL APPROACH TO REFUGEES AND HOST
COMMUNITIES'**

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UNITED NATIONS

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[Please check against delivery]

Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs

Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, Assistant Secretary-General and UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

The present refugee situation in Uganda requires targeted attention towards achieving self-reliance and local settlement for refugees, and to promote social development in the refugee hosting communities as a durable solution to the refugees' problems.

By December 2015, Uganda hosted 500,000 refugees, yet the contingency plan had then indicated receipt of 150,000 refugees by 2016. However, this has doubled. Since July 2016 over 330,000 refugees and asylum seekers have been received from South Sudan, of which 86% are women and children. The current of Refugee population in Uganda stands at 865,000 refugees and asylum seekers and by end of 2016 this figure is estimated to reach 1million refugees.

The presence of large numbers of refugees dramatically affects host communities due to demands on already-stressed resources and/or services. Refugees and nationals face similar development and basic service delivery challenges and the traditional humanitarian responses to refugees are not geared towards sustainability since funding is inadequate and short term which limits longer term planning and interventions.

Uganda's policy and approach provides refugees with land, education and a chance to work – but the continued influx of refugees is putting pressure on the economy and fragile infrastructure. If we do not address this situation realistically, it will create pressures on our host communities. Therefore, while Uganda gets tributes for its generous refugee policy, Uganda needs tangible support to put in place the necessary infrastructure.

The government is investing significant domestic resources estimated at US\$150 Million in the protection, management and integration of refugees, through the provision of land, social services, personnel and security. However, resource gaps remain which include;

- a) The Settlement Transformation Agenda which is a government five-year plan on refugee protection and management which has an estimated budget of US\$300 Million in 2015, this is unfunded.
- b) The South Sudan emergency response is budgeted at US \$251.1 Million. This is funded at 36%.

- c) The Burundi response with an estimated budget of US \$ 21 Million is funded at 33% only.
- d) The overall Government of Uganda/UNHCR Country programme budget is funded at 30%.

There is therefore a need to mobilize additional resources for Uganda to adequately respond to this humanitarian situation, at a time when globally asylum space is becoming a challenge.

Uganda has responded to the refugee situation by placing the refugee protection and management into the National Development Plan II (NDPII). Through NDPII, the Settlement Transformation Agenda (STA) which is a 5 year plan on refugee protection and management with an estimated budget of US\$300 Million in 2015, has been developed but remains unfunded. It has six pillars namely:

a) **Land management**

To ensure settlement land is efficiently and sustainably managed. Support may be in areas of improved basic agricultural practices, land planning for economic and social usages.

b) **Sustainable Livelihoods**

To foster self-reliance for refugees and host communities. Support may be in agricultural modernization, value additions, skills and business initiatives.

c) **Governance and rule of law**

To enable rights and obligations of refugees are ensured in addition to promoting rule of law among refugees and host communities. Support in access to justice, security and participation of refugee leadership and host communities in governance.

d) **Peaceful coexistence**

To have refugees live in safety, harmony and dignity with host communities, and together share and contribute to social cohesion.

e) **Environmental protection**

To conserve and sustain natural environment. Areas of support may be in ecosystem and biodiversity protection, water resources, soil conservation, deforestation prevention, reforestation, solid waste management, tree/forest planting and adoption of energy saving devices among others.

f) **Community infrastructure**

Support may target community and market access roads construction/maintenance, electricity or alternative energy options, construction/maintenance of administrative, staff houses, security buildings, shelter for refugees, water systems, Solid waste disposal infrastructure, health

structures, education structures, markets, community buildings, storage facilities and warehouses among others

All the above are opportunities for partnership and investment

The UN Country Team has come up with a ReHOPE strategy, a strategy that brings together partners in a cohesive manner to overcome fragmented programming. These 2 approaches (STA and ReHOPE), recognize the mutual relationship that exists between refugees and host communities.

The Government is leading the response through the above mentioned NDPII assisted by the UN and Partners but much more is needed to be done to maintain the existing asylum space.

The Settlement Transformation Agenda strategy, identifies areas for investment and partnership opportunities, and my appeal to all stakeholders present to identify resources to support the continuous maintenance of the existing asylum space.

I call on the United Nations and international partners to support our efforts by providing tangible support so that we can put in place the necessary infrastructure to sustainably support refugees. A Solidarity Conference is planned early next year, which I encourage you to attend, details of which will be shared with you in due course.

I thank you all for coming to share in Uganda's perspective on Refugees and Host Communities and look forward to strengthening this important partnership.

I thank you