

**ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE FEDERAL COMMISSIONER,
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES, MIGRANTS AND
INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS OF NIGERIA AND HEAD OF
THE NIGERIAN DELEGATION TO THE 69TH SESSION OF THE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S
PROGRAM GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

1 – 5 OCTOBER 2018

Your Excellency, Madam Chair the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen it gives me great pleasure and honour to represent my country, Nigeria at the 69th Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Program to share and deliberate on issues affecting millions of vulnerable persons who need and look up to us for protection. Nigeria aligns itself with the statement made by Uganda on behalf of the African Group. I would like to also thank the High Commissioner for his inspiring opening statement.

I wish to convey the appreciation of our President, President Muhammadu Buhari and the Federal Government of Nigeria to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for its assistance and support in providing care and protection to refugees and IDPs in Nigeria. I also wish to commend UNHCR for its dedication and commitment in helping out countries, especially third-world countries, in managing their refugee crises.

The importance of this annual event cannot be over-emphasized as it affords countries the opportunity to gauge their current national humanitarian response mechanism with what is obtainable in other parts of the world and international best practice.

Madam Chair, in 2018, Nigeria witnessed an unprecedented influx of asylum seekers from Cameroon into the Nigerian states of Akwa Ibom, Benue, Taraba and Cross-River, on account of the crises in the southern and North-West region Cameroon.

The Federal Government through the NCFRMI in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Representation in Nigeria have so far registered about 28,000 Cameroonian asylum seekers while the influx continues. An average of 100 persons are verified per day and it is expected that the verification process will be completed in six months and the majority of the refugees are women and children as well as young pregnant women.

The influx of the Cameroonian refugees has been mainly into border villages of the above-mentioned states with which the refugees share the same language, customs and trading ties. Host communities in Nigeria continue to share their limited resources with refugees and have made farmlands and petty jobs available to some of the refugees. Co-existence however is becoming tense, as local resources have been over stretched for more than eight months since the beginning of the influx. So far Nigeria's assistance to refugees is being provided in only two States out of the four states that host the Cameroonian refugees.

Presently Nigeria is hosting about 800 Turkish asylum seekers, who have fled their countries due to civil unrest, persecution based political opinion. This is in addition to over 1,950 refugees from other parts of Africa, Middle East and Asia living in urban areas, mainly Lagos and Abuja.

The assistance given to other refugees has been in the form of skills acquisition programs, provision of starter packs for those who have been locally integrated, which has resulted into making them economically self-reliant.

The Federal Government in reaffirming its commitment to providing protection to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) is in the process of finalizing a health scheme under the NHIS to make healthcare more accessible to IDPs. Refugees already enjoy health support by the Nigerian government in collaboration with UNHCR.

Nigeria has put in place a system for the protection of refugees, IDPs and other persons of concern (PoCs). Nigeria carries out protection monitoring activities to ascertain the protection needs of refugees and IDPs, and has a referral mechanism where refugees and IDPs are referred to specialized Government agencies and humanitarian actors, both national and international, with the mandate to address their particular needs.

Madam Chair, currently, there are approximately 1.9 million internally displaced persons in Nigeria, mainly in the North-East which has become a situation of serious protracted displacement. Nigerian IDPs face numerous challenges such as lack of adequate shelter, food and educational facilities for displaced children. They also face protection challenges as many of them are subjected to Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and can be victims of trafficking.

For easier management of IDPs and Refugees, Nigeria has developed a mobile application, for the profiling and registration of refugees and IDPs. This mobile application is only accessible to

authorized personnel and helps in assessing the needs of our Persons of concern for quicker and timely interventions and more efficient execution of durable solutions.

Madam Chair, Nigeria is in the process of amending the enabling Act of its National Commission for Refugees to incorporate the provisions of the Kampala Convention to provide the necessary legal framework to support the provision of Durable Solutions to IDPs as well as address of displacement.

Nigeria has welcomed UNHCR's increased involvement in mixed migration issues in the country, which is regarded as a major country of origin, transit and destination.

The concept of mixed migration is a phenomenon which is of increasing importance, both in terms of sheer numbers, but also with regard to national, regional and global politics. Indeed addressing issues and challenges faced by complex population movements that include refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, stateless persons, unaccompanied or separated children, as well as other vulnerable persons travelling in an irregular manner along similar routes, using similar means of travel, calls for national, regional and global cooperation.

Nigeria represents a good example of a country where the two Global Compacts on Migrants and Refugees can interact and propose practical solutions to the plight of asylum seekers, refugees and other categories of people on the move or planning to do so.

The UNHCR collaborates and works closely with Nigeria through the Refugee Commission in providing protection and material assistance to refugees and IDPs. One of the major challenges Nigeria faces in managing the affairs of refugees and IDPs is the lack of technical capacity. Nigeria wishes to profoundly thank the UNHCR for its help in building the capacity of the NCFRMI via numerous trainings.

However, we need more of such capacity trainings considering the large number of the Commission's staff whom are all Protection Officers. We hope this request will be considered in the UNHCR's budget for 2019. We also need more assistance in and support from UNHCR, and other UN agencies, in the management of IDPs.

In conclusion, Nigeria supports the CRRF and is also looking forward to the adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees by the end of the year in New York.

I thank you all for your kind attention.

NCFRMI

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