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DECLARATION OF

THE CAMEROONIAN
DELEGATION

DURING

GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SIXTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE
UNHCR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(GENEVA, 01-05 OCTOBER 2018)

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,

Mr. Chair,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Permit me, on behalf of H.E. the Minister of External Relations, to start by thanking the High Commissioner for inviting the Government of the Republic of Cameroon to take part in this year's session of the Executive Committee.

Cameroon fully aligns with the position of the African Group as expressed by the distinguished Ugandan delegation.

Mr. Chair,

Cameroon, proud of its legendary solidarity and hospitality, is a preferred destination for many who flee persecution and oppression from their home countries. It represents for many in quest of peace, a land of refuge.

Since 2013, the humanitarian situation in the East, North and Far North regions of my country has considerably deteriorated in part because of the political crisis and the repeated deadly incursions of the Boko Haram terrorist sect in neighboring countries.

Cameroon is currently host to 370 150 refugees from over 20 different nationalities, an estimated 321 240 Internally Displaced Persons, and, 83 141 returnees. Most out-of-camp refugees live in complete harmony with host communities.

In the various host communities, refugee camp and adapted sites, the refugees, IDPs and returnees benefit from social amenities, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services provided by the Government of Cameroon, partner countries, the UNHCR and humanitarian organizations. Most facilities have been provided in the domains of education and health through conventions signed between the government of Cameroon and its partners.

Mr. George OKOTH OBBO, Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, experienced the expression of Cameroonian solidarity when he spent this year's refugee day celebration in Ndokayo, in the Eastern Region of Cameroon in the mist of Central African Refugees.

Monsieur le President,

Le Cameroun salue l'important apport du HCR au bénéfice des réfugiés qui se trouvent sur son territoire, et se félicite de la qualité de la collaboration avec sa Représentation à Yaoundé. A ce sujet, il encourage le HCR à faire évoluer ses projets de la logique de l'humanitaire à celle du développement local. Ce d'autant plus que la partie camerounaise exprime ses réserves sur la perspective d'ouverture de nouveaux camps de réfugiés sur son territoire.

La délégation du Cameroun ne peut passer sous silence les tensions sociopolitiques en cours dans ses Régions du Nord Ouest et du Sud Ouest. A cet égard, la partie camerounaise se félicite de la condamnation ferme exprimée par le HCR contre les abus et les violations des droits humains commis dans ces deux Régions, en particulier ceux commis sur les personnes vulnérables dont les enfants.

Face à cette situation, le Gouvernement, garant de la protection des institutions, de la sécurité des personnes et des biens ainsi que de la stabilité et de l'intégrité territoriale prend des mesures appropriées dans le respect des ses obligations internationales, des lois et règlements de la République pour rétablir l'ordre et la sécurité.

Au titre de ces mesures, le Chef de l'état, S.E. Paul BIYA a décidé, dès juin 2018, de la mise en place d'un " **Plan d'Assistance Humanitaire d'Urgence dans les Régions du Nord-Ouest et du Sud-ouest**". Ce plan dont le coût est d'environ 22 million de dollars décline les axes d'intervention prioritaires et coordonne les différentes mesures opérationnelles conduites par l'état et ses partenaires.

Au titre du dit plan, des structures humanitaires tant nationales qu'internationales, sont sollicitées dans sa mise en œuvre.

Mr. Chair,

In the domain of protection, measures have been taken to provide documents to Rwandans who were affected by the cessation clause of their refugee status and who opted to remain in Cameroon. An attestation to serve as a birth certificate is also being delivered to refugees who lost this very important document while fleeing from their countries.

The transfer of competence as concerns refugee status determination (RSD) is ongoing between the UNHCR and the Government of Cameroon since 2016. The managing organs of refugee status (Eligibility and appeals Commissions) will soon be functional.

H.E. Paul BIYA, President of the Republic is a strong supporter of an international nexus to support countries which are most exposed to the refugee crisis. This he reiterated during the leaders' summit on refugees in September 2016, where he called for increase humanitarian support from the international community for countries which like Cameroon, host large numbers of refugees.

It is worth noting that, on May 1, 2018, Cameroon became the first country to receive a 130 million dollars grant from the International Development Association (IDA) Refugee Sub-Window to support low-income countries hosting large numbers of refugees. Cameroon is equally taking measures to benefit from the opportunities provided by the perspective of IDA 19.

Moreover, the President of the Republic recently instructed that studies are carried out in view of signing the protocol to the African Charter on human and people's rights on the specific aspects of the right to a nationality and the eradication of statelessness in Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Cameroon has put in place with countries of origin, the process of voluntary repatriation of refugees.

The second session of the Technical Working Group on the voluntary repatriation of Nigerian refugees living in Cameroon took place in Maroua, Cameroon in June 2018.

The tripartite agreement between Cameroon, CAR and the UNHCR for the voluntary repatriation of Central African refugees is still under negotiation.

I sincerely want to thank all friendly countries for their constant support to our humanitarian endeavors especially Switzerland, Japan, China, etc. I equally thank International Organizations and especially the UNHCR whose precious partnership permitted us to provide humane conditions to afflicted populations fleeing persecution and oppression.

I wish that our deliberations during this session bring us closer to the recommendations contained in the draft text of the Global Compact on Refugees.

In Cameroon we stand together **#with refugees**.

THANKS FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION