

Remarks from the Ambassador of France,

Stéphanie RIVOAL

Solidarity Summit – UGANDA

Excellency President of the Republic of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni

Excellency UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres

All protocol observed,

On behalf of my brand new French government, let me first warmly welcome this initiative.

In this time of uncertainty, of growing and lasting situations of emergency, the Solidarity Summit represents a real opportunity to unify our forces for the refugees in Uganda - and to start a new way of thinking for refugees all around the world.

As everybody here, we congratulate the Ugandan government for its genuine and unprecedented policy to welcome and support refugees.

The Solidarity Summit aims at better articulating crisis resolution and sustainable solutions, development process and humanitarian response: the two sides of the same life for people in and around the refugee camps.

We do hope that the Summit will initiate a changing of scenarios and make “business as usual” reflex obsolete. What is needed and tried here in Uganda is to look beyond the crisis, to plan for the future while addressing the most pressing needs, preserving lives and dignity for all.

Whatever the origin of population displacement – conflict, climate change – refugees and host communities are important concerns for France, and particularly in the African continent.

By tradition, France supports populations affected by crisis in various ways. France is committed to help wherever it can. For example in Sahel, where our civil and military involvement has ensured protection of populations against mass atrocities.

France provides financial support, throughout bilateral or multilateral instruments, in response to hunger in Uganda, but also South Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia, Yemen, Kenya and Ethiopia. France is also of course contributing to all EU initiatives in Uganda and the world, including today's contribution. The direct pledge of France to the fund will be modest compared to the needs. However, it will be complemented by additional actions led by our different cooperation activities, some of them at grassroots level, some more permanent and structural through the French Development Agency, AFD, like providing electricity to rural area in Northern Uganda, where most refugees are hosted.

Because the question of refugees is not only a technical issue, but - also and equally - a political issue, it is important for us to tackle the root causes of the phenomenon. Individuals coming in Uganda are often fleeing violence and persecutions.

Therefore, pursuing common efforts for peace and stabilization of the region is as important as access to basic services.

To conclude, I would like to illustrate the changing of the approach as discussed in some side events about the Private Sector or the Youth yesterday :

1. The importance of creating conditions of a vigorous emerging economy in these areas, in order to achieve a sustainable livelihood for all, and
2. the need to consider refugees not only as fragile, vulnerable people, but also as potential contributors to the local economy, able to do their share for the development of Uganda and the world.

I thank you for your attention.