

REMARKS BY HINDIYO ABDULKADIR
REPRESENTATIVE OF REFUGEES AT THE
UGANDA SOLIDARITY SUMMIT ON REFUGEES

Kampala, 23 June 2017

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Uganda

Your Excellences, Heads of State and Government

Your Excellency, the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Your Excellency, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

The theme of my speech is “sacrificed ambitions.”

As we participate in this Solidarity Summit on Refugees, Uganda is the nation with the third largest refugee population in the world.

This is a reflection of the conflicts, trauma, displacement and adversity that afflicts many of the citizens of our region.

Worst affected are children. In Uganda, over 700,000 of the 1.2 million refugees are children.

We fled insecurity. We fled to save our lives.

In Uganda we are no longer afraid.

In Uganda, children discover hope.

Uganda embraces children. Uganda allows us to go to school.

Uganda gives refugee children the right to **free primary education**.

In Uganda, refugee children also have access to pre-primary and secondary education, vocational skills training and tertiary institutions.

However, not every child can enjoy these rights. Transforming them into reality comes at a cost.

In Government primary schools, particularly in the refugee settlement areas, there are up to 200 students in a classroom.

For secondary school and university education, most refugees rely on very limited scholarships. The rest are forced to sacrifice their ambitions.

Many schools do not have adequate classrooms, teachers, learning and teaching materials, and the supplies needed to provide good quality education.

Yet, we, the children in those schools are the future leaders. We are the future doctors, teachers, engineers, carpenters, technicians and presidents—leaders of this world.

I would like to say, as a child, a girl, and a refugee, that education is the seed that grows into the will and the ambition to make this world a better place.

Because of our experience in the classroom, we develop the urge to give back to society.

We recognize that being in a classroom is a position of privilege.

We feel the burden of responsibility to be agents of positive transformation here and in our home countries.

I do not want to be a refugee forever.

I want to visit Uganda and other countries as a guest.

I want receive Ugandans in my home country, Somalia.

That is my dream.

Because I am educated, I do not define myself by the trauma, hardship and suffering that comes with being a refugee.

Because of my education I have the confidence to speak before you today, in a language that I learned in Uganda.

We children are highly resilient. When engaged in meaningful ways, we find the agency to cope and to move forward despite the hardship and the suffering.

My appeal to all who are gathered here or who will hear my message is:

- Please support Uganda, as Uganda supports refugees.
- Please let not our ambitions be sacrificed.
- Please help to secure our future.
- The destiny of our generation is in your hands.

Thank you Uganda.

Thank you for standing With Refugees.

God bless you.

Asante sana

Mwebale nyoo!