

Uganda Solidarity Summit on Refugees

“Translating New York Commitments into Action”

Kampala, Uganda – June 23, 2017

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Statement by

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Your Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni

United Nations’ Secretary General, Antonio Guterres

Heads of State and Government

United Nations’ High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi

Executive Director, World Food Programme, David Beasley

Secretary General’s Special Representative to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Maman S. Sidikou

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Representatives from Civil Society

Representatives from the Private Sector

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

The past several decades, Uganda and Ugandans have demonstrated generosity and strong commitment to provide protection to refugees.

The Government of Uganda has *consistently* implemented one of the most progressive refugee policy and legislative frameworks in the world.

And Ugandans *have continued* to welcome brothers and sisters fleeing conflict from neighboring countries; with many communities donating their land to host them.

The international community, including the World Bank, is humbled by your efforts. You are an example for other countries to follow, and we sincerely thank you!

Let me also express my appreciation of UNHCR, UN agencies, and other humanitarian actors for their support to the Government in responding to the emergency effectively and with great professionalism.

Your Excellency:

The massive influx since July last year is putting enormous pressures on refugee hosting communities, many of which are located in the very poorest parts of the country.

Systems and administrative capacities are being stretched to the limit, social services are about to collapse, environment resources are being taxed at an alarming rate. The list of impacts is long, and you need our support.

It does indeed fall to the international community to help the Government respond to the situation urgently and comprehensively. And our support should not be a matter of shifting current program financing for national development priorities to the refugee response. What is needed is additional support. Significant additional support!

Your Excellency:

When World Leaders met at the United Nations' Summit in September last year to adopt the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, they committed to work to increase the support for countries that host large refugee populations.

Uganda is one of those countries. And Uganda is already doing its part. Besides now being the largest refugee hosting country in Africa and having an admirable policy framework, Uganda is *also* implementing—as one of the first countries in the world—the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework as called for in the New York Declaration.

A key component of this is the Government-led Refugee and Host Population Empowerment Strategy—the ReHoPE Strategy—supported by the World Bank, the UN and other humanitarian and development actors.

Through ReHoPE, the World Bank contributes to a more comprehensive and harmonized response to displacement in Uganda in order to support the Government to better plan and coordinate the immediate humanitarian response with the longer term development response to ensure an integrated approach, greater sustainability, and cost efficiency.

That is the “*New*”, or rather, that is “The *Ugandan* Way of Working”!

The World Bank is contributing financially to ReHoPE through a US\$50 million credit aimed at improving access to basic social services, expanding economic opportunities, and enhancing environmental management for host communities.

But clearly, much more is needed, and *Excellency*, I'm pleased to confirm that the World Bank has been empowered by the deputies of the International Development Association to provide significant *additional* support on *very* favorable terms—grants in combination with interest rate free loans—through a new sub-window to finance medium- to long-term investments that will benefit both refugees and host communities.

The Government of Uganda has already expressed interest and will be first in line to access this financing, which will complement and reinforce other interventions targeting refugee hosting areas.

In the coming months, we will therefore work with the Government to prepare a program that will help to ensure that Uganda's progressive policies and practices can continue to be applied in refugee hosting areas. In line of the overarching goal of the sub-window, the program will aim to mitigate the "shocks" caused by the influx of refugees (with the understanding that 86% of refugees are women and children); create social and economic opportunities for refugees and hosts; facilitate sustainable solutions to refugee situations; and strengthen preparedness for potential new refugee flows.

The World Bank will make hundreds of millions available to support such a program, but due to the urgency of the situation, we also call upon the Government—under His Excellency the President's strong leadership—to ensure that the preparation, approval and implementation of this program is fast-tracked.

Your Excellency:

To close, I am here today to commend you and thank you for showing the world what a progressive and transformational approach to refugee management and protection looks like.

And I want to express the World Bank's continued full support to assisting you in delivering protection and achieving development solutions for both refugee and host communities.

I thank you.