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الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

P. O. Box 3243

Telephone: 517 700

Fax: 5130 36

website: [www. www.au.int](http://www.au.int)

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**REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE
ON REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND IDPs
(JULY - DECEMBER 2014)**

REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND IDPs

INTRODUCTION

1. The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons and the African Union Commission, in collaboration with AU partners, undertook various activities programmed for the second half of 2014 in accordance with the work plan approved at the beginning of the year.

ACTIVITIES

Ordinary and Extraordinary Sessions of the PRC Sub-Committee

2. With regard to its extraordinary sessions, The Bureau of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons, on 23 July 2014, held the very first working session with the Bureau of the PRC Sub-Committee on the Special Emergency Assistance Fund for Drought and Famine in Africa (SEAF). The objective of that meeting in which the Humanitarian Affairs Division of the Political Affairs Department and the Social Affairs Department participated, was not only to kick-start preliminary work on the harmonization of the mandates and roles of the two sub-committees, but also and above all, to carry out an initial in-depth discussion on African Union's potential response to the Ebola epidemic that broke out in West Africa and other parts of Africa. It was at that meeting that the first strategic guidelines that needed to be established within the African Union as part of an African response to the Ebola epidemic were defined.

3. The Bureau of the PRC Sub-Committee met on 8 January 2015 in ordinary session to examine its draft activity report and work on the agenda of the next session of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons.

4. The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons met in plenary on 16 January 2015 to evaluate the progress achieved during the period July- December 2014 and discuss the way forward.

Participation in African Union Commission activities

5. Pursuant to the Kampala Action Plan and in keeping with the strategic priority of the Political Affairs Department to strive towards finding lasting solutions to the challenges of forced displacement of populations in Africa, the African Union Commission organized, in Accra, Republic of Ghana from 12 to 14 August 2014, an AU consultative meeting on the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa commonly known as the "Kampala Convention". That meeting, the purpose of which was to raise Member States' awareness towards signing, ratification and implementation of the Kampala Convention, was attended by representatives of eight of African Union Member States. The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons was represented by Her Excellency Mmamosadinyana P.J. Molefe,

Ambassador of the Republic of Botswana and Permanent Representative to the African Union.

6. The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons also participated in two other African Union Commission activities on promotion and implementation of the Kampala Convention. The activities in question were undertaken as part of the commemoration of the second anniversary of 6 December 2012, date of entry into force of the Kampala Convention.

7. The first activity was the participation in the training workshop on "*The National Responsibility to Protect Internally Displaced Persons*" held from 8 to 10 December 2014 at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, by the African Union Commission (Political Affairs Department) in collaboration with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). The objective of the workshop which was attended by the Chairperson of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, His Excellency Manuel Gonçalves, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Mozambique to the African Union, was to enable Members of Parliament, key ministries and the civil society from the invited eight Member States to familiarize themselves with the Kampala Convention and, in turn, be in a position to popularize the Convention in their respective countries and become Ambassadors for its ratification and implementation in Africa.

8. The other activity was the participation in the Day of Information on the Kampala Convention staged on 12 December 2014 in Geneva, Swiss Confederation, by the African Union Permanent Delegation in Geneva in collaboration with the Political Affairs Department. Deputy Chairperson of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, His Excellency Mr. Lazare Makayat Safouesse, Ambassador of the Republic of Congo and Permanent Representative to the African Union, participated in this activity. Beyond the celebration, the Day of Information was an opportunity to make a general presentation on the Convention, the status of its ratification and the efforts deployed for its implementation, particularly with regard to its integration into States parties' domestic legal systems. This activity benefited not only the Member States of the African Group and the international organizations represented in Geneva, but also the partners who received better information on the potential and achievements of, as well as the challenges inherent in including, this legal instrument in the African normative arsenal.

9. The PRC Sub Committee on Refugees and the African Union Commission participated in the Sixty-Fifth Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme (ExCOM), held in Geneva, Swiss Confederation, from 29 September to 3 October 2014. Her Excellency Madam Fatoumata Kaba, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Guinea to the African Union, accompanied Her Excellency Mrs. Aisha L. Abdullahi, Commissioner for Political Affairs to the Sixty-Fifth session of ExCOM. The deliberations of that session, regarding the African Continent, focused on consideration of the major refugee and internal displacement situations in Africa, especially in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Mali, Somalia and South Sudan. The deliberations also underscored the operational challenges and the implications of such situations in terms of urgency. The session offered opportunity for Members States and others participants to reiterate the call for greater emphasis to be placed on conflict prevention; prevention which more than ever requires

determination and sustained political commitment at international level to put an end to conflicts and thus prevent further forced displacements.

10. On 19 August 2014, The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons participated in a public session of the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) on the Humanitarian Situation in Central African Republic, South Sudan and the Sahel. Organized by the Commission in collaboration with its partners on the occasion of the celebration of the World Humanitarian Day, that public session of the PSC which saw the participation of AU Member States, organizations of the United Nations system and humanitarian organizations was an opportunity for the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees to pay tribute to the humanitarian workers operating in often difficult and sometimes dangerous conditions to bring aid to people in distress, and commend them for their sterling commitment in responding to emergency situations in Africa.

11. On 22 October 2014, at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, the Chairperson of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees and the entire Member States participated at a seminar on the theme "*Protection of Health Care Services in Armed Conflicts and Other Emergencies*" organized jointly by the African Union Commission and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The objective of the seminar was to provide a forum for discussion on the potential role of both the AU and its Member States in addressing the issue of violence against health workers, and to develop concrete proposals on measures to be taken at national and continental levels to remedy this situation. The seminar brought together the permanent missions to the African Union, representatives of the PRC, Regional Economic Communities, AU Commission, ICRC, representatives of major global institutions and health care providers in Africa.

12. The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons and the PRC Sub-Committee on the Special Emergency Assistance Fund for Drought and Famine in Africa (SEAF) participated in the 3rd African Union Annual Humanitarian Symposium on the theme "*Globalization and Humanitarian Effectiveness in Africa*". The purpose of that symposium organized by the Humanitarian Affairs Division of the Political Affairs Department was to stimulate debate on the new challenges of humanitarian action and arrive at a consensus on the ways and means to bridge the existing gap between humanitarian action deployment and its effectiveness. That humanitarian symposium which brought together eminent experts from Member States and humanitarian affairs experts was an opportunity for the African Union to kick-start its consultations on the definition of an African common position at the World Humanitarian Summit slated to take place in Istanbul, Turkey, in 2016.

Missions of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons

13. The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons undertook several humanitarian assessment missions with the support of the Humanitarian Affairs Division of the Political Affairs Department in the period July - December 2014. The missions were organized pursuant to the decision of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and IDPs, requesting the Commission to coordinate the organization of field missions to AU Member States most affected by

the problem of displacement and other humanitarian challenges. During this period, humanitarian assessment missions were carried out in the following Member States:

- Republic of Madagascar
- Republic of Zimbabwe
- Republic of Kenya
- Central African Republic.

14. It is necessary from the on-set to draw attention to the fact that the Sub-Committee was unable to complete all the assessment missions set out in its annual work-plan for the second half of the year. Therefore, the Sub-Committee was unable to carry out assessment missions to Uganda to assess the conditions of refugees from DRC and South Sudan; South Sudan itself and Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic. With regards to the last two countries, the Commissioner for Political Affairs undertook missions there, but it is recognized that this does not fulfill the responsibility of the Sub-Committee. Therefore, these missions will be accomplished in the first half 2015.

Mission to the Republic of Madagascar

15. The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees visited the Republic of Madagascar from 15 to 19 August 2014. The mission was led by His Excellency Alain-Aimé Nyamitwe, Ambassador of the Republic of Burundi to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union.

16. The purpose was to assess the impact of the February 2013 erratic rains which triggered floods culminating in the displacement of people and destruction of property, and this enable the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees to decide how best to respond effectively to the disaster situation and to recommend appropriate measures that could be taken to support the Government and people of Madagascar.

17. After talks with the relevant Government authorities in charge of humanitarian affairs, the mission proceeded to the southwest of the country in the city of Toliara, 936 kilometers from the capital. Toliara is one of the country's major cities hard hit by cyclone Haruna in February 2013. The Fiherena, the main seasonal river bordering the city, broke its banks causing unprecedented inundations. Several neighborhoods were submerged in more than four meters of water claiming the lives of dozens of people and leaving tens of thousands of victims and displaced persons. According to the statistics available at the time, 90% of the city of Toliara had been totally invaded by water.

18. The mission visited various areas affected by the cyclone and floods in Toliara, including the dam which was destroyed by the cyclone as well as the gymnasium housing a significant number of displaced persons.

19. In response to the humanitarian emergency in the Republic of Madagascar, the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees donated the sum of US\$100,000 to support efforts at reconstruction of the dykes which collapsed in Toliara.

20. Recommendations were also made for the attention of the Government of the Republic of Madagascar to develop an early warning system in the Southern region

so as to allow the region to be more prepared with regards to cyclones and floods and to create public awareness on environmental protection.

Mission to the Republic of Zimbabwe

21. The PRC Sub-Committee visited the Republic of Zimbabwe from 27 to 31 October 2014. The mission was led by H.E Mrs. Catherine Muigai Mwangi, Ambassador of the Republic of Kenya to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

22. The mission assessed the humanitarian impact of the erratic rains which occurred in Masvingo province in the south-east of the country between mid-January and early 2014, causing enormous material damage and population displacement. The objective was to enable the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees to assess the damage and how best to support Government's response to the situation and recommend appropriate measures to be taken to support the Government and people of Zimbabwe.

23. The AU mission visited the Tokwe Mukorsi dam. As part of the project for construction of this dam, a gradual resettlement plan was developed to resettle a total of 6,393 households (about 32,000 people) and their 18,764 cattle by October 2015 at the latest. However, the river levels were not expected to rise so quickly in this Masvingo province which is generally dry. Before the mid-January and February 2014 rains, the Government could manage to resettle only 611 households. The rest of the households were affected by the heavy rains, thus leading the Government to declare a state of natural disaster in the region.

24. The mission also visited the Chingwizi resettlement site to gain first-hand knowledge of the situation of internally displaced persons and evaluate their needs in terms of water, education, health and nutrition.

25. As part of its recommendations, the mission emphasized that the only sustainable solution for the resettled families would be to stabilize the displaced community. In response to this humanitarian situation and as AU support to the Government and people of Zimbabwe, a gesture of solidarity of USD 100,000 was made by the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees with regard to the displaced persons living in the Chingwizi resettlement site.

Mission to the Republic of Kenya

26. The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons undertook humanitarian assessment mission to the Republic of Kenya from 20 to 25 November 2014. The mission was led by His Excellency Mr. Manuel Gonçalves, Ambassador of the Republic of Mozambique to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. The Intergovernmental Agency for Development (IGAD) also took part in the mission.

27. Assessment of the humanitarian situation in the Republic of Kenya was deemed necessary in view of the massive population displacement that occurred in

the aftermath of the 2007-2008 post-election violence. The post-election violence occasioned the displacement of over 664,000 people in the north of the Rift Valley province and other provinces of the country. It is in this light that the Commission drew the attention of the Chair of the Sub-Committee to the need to assess the situation against the backdrop of the fact that even though Kenya was yet to rectify the Kampala Convention, it has nonetheless, implemented the Convention and has in place an Act of Parliament, thus already domesticated the Convention.

28. The mission of the PRC Sub Committee on Refugees proceeded to the Rift Valley province to visit the Maai Mahiu and Shalom resettlement sites in Nakuru county and other in Uasin Gishu sites to learn first-hand about the current situation of the victims of the violence and assess the response measures put in place by the Government of Kenya to discharge its obligations to protect and provide relief and assistance to the affected populations.

29. In that regard, the mission was able to obtain information on the efforts exerted to bring assistance to the displaced populations. In January 2008, following the post-election crisis, the Government of Kenya established a National Humanitarian Fund specifically to facilitate the IDPs resettlement process. In February of the same year, the Government set up an advisory council to implement the guidelines it issued regarding the strategies for resettlement of internally displaced persons. Implementation of these Government strategies materialized in terms of cash transfers to households, land acquisition and construction of houses for resettlement of displaced persons. Of a total of 245,416 households displaced directly by the 2007/2008 post-election violence, the Government has resettled more than this number, that is, 303,466 displaced households. The resettlement consisted of the construction of houses and/or monetary contribution by government to some households.

30. The total number of the resettled households exceeded the original number of those displaced. This was accounted for due to the fact that the programme catered for additional displaced persons such as 'forest evictees' due to environmental degradation as well as carry over caseloads from earlier displacements from previous political crises in the country.

31. The flagship programme embarked upon by the government was the 'rudi Nyumbani' programme, in which 74,847 households were returned and resettled back in their previous homes. The government constructed a total of 71,473 houses for internally displaced persons. The programme covered counties in the following provinces – Central, Coast, Eastern, Nairobi, Nyanza, Rift Valley and Western Provinces. The Province that received the largest assistance in this respect was Rift Valley County, with over 55,977 houses constructed. 12 counties in the Rift Valley Province were beneficiaries of government assistance from the programme, with Nakuru and Uasin Gishu counties benefitting from the construction of 18,287 and 12,441 houses respectively.

Mission to the Central African Republic

32. The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons undertook a humanitarian assessment mission to the Central African Republic from 26 to 31 December 2014. The mission was led by His Excellency Mohamed Edress, Ambassador of Arab Republic of Egypt to Ethiopia and Permanent

Representative to the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. The mission assessed the current humanitarian situation in that country which was engrossed in a conflict situation, and to decide how best an African response could be developed to address the humanitarian situation.

33. Since the last civil unrest in December 2013, the deepening crisis in Central African Republic had thrown up an urgent need for humanitarian assistance for over 2.5 million people, including more than 450,000 IDPs in almost all the country's cities; while over 419,000 refugees spread across four neighboring countries (Cameroon, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo and Chad).

34. The existing humanitarian situation in CAR continues to be disconcerting with more than 334,000 internally displaced persons in 38 sites. The security situation has improved considerably in the capital, Bangui, though tensions persist in the outlying communes. Future humanitarian situation in CAR will depend to a large extent on the outcome of the on-going political negotiations between the various stakeholders in the crisis and the efforts at restoring State authority throughout the territory.

35. The delegation met the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Social and Humanitarian Affairs of the Transitional Government of CAR and further held talks with various stakeholders operating in the humanitarian domain in CAR and visited PK5 IDP camps where the Muslim population of the capital had been cantoned, and the Bangui airport Mpoko camps, currently home to about 20,000 internally displaced persons.

36. The mission led by Ambassador Mohamed Edress also visited the facilities of Central African Republic Red Cross where he was briefed on the work that the organization continues to undertake to bring assistance and relief to the victims of the conflict.

37. By way of response to the humanitarian emergency in the Central African Republic, the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugee, Returnees and Displaced Persons of the African Union donated the sum of US\$100,000 to the Central African Republic Red Cross to support the commendable efforts being exerted by the local organization assisting the Government of the Central African Republic in providing first aid to the victims of the conflicts, by improving the displaced populations' access to safe drinking water, promoting International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and facilitating the re-establishment of family ties. The implementation of the use of the donation will be monitored by AU Liaison Office to Central African Republic.

CONCLUSION

38. The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and IDPs implemented its 2014 work plan with satisfaction and would continue to do so with the same commitment and dynamism in the coming years. Given the array of humanitarian challenges confronting the Continent and in the expectation of adopting its work program for 2015, the Sub-Committee plans during the new year to focus on the following activities:

- a) *Continue to undertake missions to the countries most affected by the problem of refugees, returnees and displaced persons;*

- b) *Seek opportunities to raise awareness of appropriate response to early warnings of humanitarian crises resulting from both conflicts and natural disasters;*
- c) *Contribute to the promotion of African Union legal instruments on humanitarian issues;*
- d) *Continue to work on the preparation of a common African position at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, Turkey;*
- e) *Participate in the work of the STC on Migration, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons.*

EX.CL/864(XXVI)vi
Annex

**REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON
THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN AFRICA
JULY– DECEMBER 2014**

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UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Telephone: +251 11 551 7700 Fax: +251 11 551 7844
Website: www.africa-union.org

**REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON
THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN AFRICA**

JULY– DECEMBER 2014

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN AFRICA

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The report gives a general overview of the humanitarian situation on the continent and analyzes the challenges and key priorities in situation of conflict and disaster affected populations, as well as specific populations of concern in each region. It also gives an account of the activities carried out by the African Union Commission during the year. The information in this report was provided by some Member States, from field visits by the Commission and the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons, as well as from African Union partners, and other humanitarian agencies in the field.

II. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN AFRICA

2. The overall humanitarian situation in Africa is characterized by ongoing conflicts, persistent instability, and harsh and erratic climatic conditions that contribute to significant food insecurity and other worrying humanitarian consequences, including massive displacement within and across borders. The last six months, Africa has continued to experience worrying new waves of insecurity in Libya, CAR, Eastern DRC, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan that have generated new displacement with massive humanitarian consequences.

3. The conflict in South Sudan has resulted in massive displacement of persons both within and outside of the country. It has led to a severe humanitarian crisis occasioned by food insecurity resulting from the inability of the population to engage in agriculture, the consequence of which is that the country is at risk of famine. The conflict in Central African Republic continues and this is further deepening the dire humanitarian crisis on one part and on the other part it is also triggering forced displacement both within Central African Republic and into neighboring countries, particularly Chad and Cameroon. In addition the conflict situations in Somalia and South Sudan continue to generate displacement across the respective borders into Ethiopia and Kenya, as well as into Sudan, which is presently hosting over 115,000 South Sudanese refugees. The situation has been compounded by the additional influx of refugees into Ethiopia in particular, from South Sudan as a result of renewed fighting in the last six months in that country thus making the former country the highest recipient of refugees. The conflict in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile States in the Sudan remains a driver of displacement both internally and externally into countries such as Ethiopia and Chad.

4. At the same time, insurgencies and conflicts in Libya and Nigeria are also immediate factors that are generating massive displacement of persons within these countries and into neighboring states. In Nigeria alone, the National Emergency Management Agency has put the number of internally displaced persons at about 3 million and this figure has been supported by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)¹. While the conflict in Libya has resulted

¹ IDMC, The Global Overview, May 2014

in the internal displacement of 454,000 persons². All in all, figures from the global agency with the mandate for forced displacement and other international NGOs such as the IDMC put the Sudan at 3,400,000 IDPs³, Eastern DRC (2,715,000)⁴, South Sudan (1,498,500)⁵, Somalia (1,107,000)⁶, Libya 454,000, CAR (438,500)⁷ and Mali (101,279)⁸.

5. The protracted vulnerability and food insecurity in the Sahel region, as well as the red flag indications from IGAD and development partners in the Horn of Africa highlights the threat of drought and food crisis across parts of the Horn as well as famine including South Sudan and other parts of the continent. These multiple, repeated, and increasingly frequent slow on-set disasters, compounded and driven by political instability in affected states, its effects is eroding the coping capacity of affected communities and their ability to recover from crisis.

6. Greater attention needs to be placed on early warning and preparedness by local and national authorities, as well as adequate investment in building the resilience of communities to manage disasters at national, regional and continental level. In 2014, early warnings were received about the threat of drought and food crisis across parts of the Horn including famine in Somalia and South Sudan due to conflict as a driver. Indeed, the outbreak of the South Sudan conflict created additional stress on a region that has already had to manage pockets of chronic vulnerability and food insecurity.

7. In Somalia, populations experiencing acute food security crisis, the majority of them internally displaced, are found in large numbers in rural and urban areas, namely Sanaag, Sool, Bari, Nugaai, north and South Mudug, Galgaddug, Hiran and middle Shabelle, as well as Middle and Lower Juba regions in South Central Somalia. These areas are the primary areas that have continued to experience repeated food security crises in the last six months and have persistently recorded high levels of acute malnutrition that remain of serious concern. In addition to all of these, environmental conditions together with political instability and the prevalence of conflict and insecurity render millions of people in the sub region vulnerable to severe food insecurity and mal-nutrition.

8. Increasing irregular migration, within the continent and onward to Europe and the Middle East has also had devastating consequences on the continent. Africans continue to flee from poverty and conflicts, and the last six months was no exception. Irregular and mixed migratory movement is now perennial towards Europe via North African countries and eastward via the Red Sea into Yemen onwards to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States.

9. The number of persons of concern in Africa grew to 15,100,000⁹ with an increase of more than 500,000 in 2014, as conflict, violence and human rights abuses continued to create more displacement according to UNHCR. This figure includes 3.4 million refugees; 400,000

² IDMC Report, November 2014

³ IDMC Report, October 2014

⁴ IDMC Report, September 2014

⁵ IDMC Report, January 2015

⁶ IDMC Report, December 2014

⁷ IDMC Report, January 2015

⁸ IDMC Report, August 2014

⁹ UNHCR Global Appeal, 2015

asylum-seekers, and about 270,000 returnees to Somalia and Mali. In addition, an estimated 721,360 stateless persons are found in Africa, out of which more than 90 % are found in West Africa. There remain huge needs, both immediate and long-term for returnees, for host communities and for communities in areas of return. Adequate and sustainable resources for the reintegration process needs to be mobilized.

10. Furthermore, there is the plight of millions of people who have languished in exile for decades. They remain in a low-profile but high risk situation with serious humanitarian and security implication. These are protracted refugee situations. There remain a number of protracted refugee situations, including that in the Great Lakes, in the Darfur, and of Sahrawi Arab Republic. The root causes of these longstanding refugee population stem from persistent conflicts that engender chronic regional insecurity. More efforts need to be made with regard to their humanitarian needs and to finding durable solutions to the root causes of the displacements.

11. The continent has faced a number of public health emergencies during the second half of 2014. The Ebola outbreak in West Africa is now affecting four countries in that region. So far 20,206 persons have been infected, and 7,905 have reportedly died¹⁰. Whilst the rate of infection is reportedly decreasing in Liberia and Guinea, this is not the case for Sierra Leone. Emphasis should be placed on ensuring strict adherence to measures to contain the disease, such as quarantine, and absence of body contact with infected persons and /or corpses.

12. Another health crisis has been that of the measles epidemic across a wide spread of the continent with 34,105 cases reported since the beginning of 2014 across Chad, Benin, Cameroon, Guinea, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic all of whom are also hosts to displaced populations. Stronger guidelines and frameworks for response are needed, given the transnational nature of these emergencies.

13. The continued burden faced by many Member States with regard to the significant refugee populations that they are hosting should be emphasized. While the legitimate concerns of Member States with regards to security and social and economic pressures need to be addressed, Member States must also adhere to their regional and international obligations in respect of the displaced populations within their territories and ensure compliance with these obligations. Durable and holistic measures are necessary to ensure that the causes for displacement are addressed and the measures are in place for the voluntary and supported returns and reintegration of populations.

14. There is no doubt that notable progress has been made in addressing the humanitarian challenges in Africa, but the challenges remain many. The Commission in close cooperation and collaboration with Member States, the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons, Regional Economic Communities, AU Partners and other relevant Organizations will continue to forge ahead in search of durable and holistic solutions to the problem of forced displacement and other humanitarian priorities for the continent. This will be done through the promotion and domestication of relevant policies and instruments,

¹⁰ WHO Ebola Response Roadmap, Situation Report, December 2014

domestic and external resource mobilization, and the reinforcement of local, national, and regional capacities to deal with the pressing humanitarian challenges.

III. REGIONAL ANALYSIS

NORTHERN REGION

15. The second half of 2014 saw many migrants and asylum seekers lose their lives than before, whilst attempting to cross to Europe and to Yemen onwards to Saudi Arabia and other countries of the Persian Gulf. The Northern Region has made tremendous progress in terms of the democratic transformation that has taken place in some of the countries of the region. However, the region remains the main transit routes for irregular migration, particularly from the Horn of Africa and neighboring States. The stricter immigration laws and policies in preferred destination countries as well as the construction of border fences is expected to push migration flows away from the northern passage towards Israel and the eastern route towards Saudi Arabia into alternative routes.

16. The situation in Western Sahara continues in a stalemate as the population continues to live in refuge in the Sahara desert near Tindouf refugee camps in Algeria. The burden on the host country for almost 4 decades remains high and the suffering of the people who depend entirely on humanitarian aid is abysmal. Donor fatigue has settled in and a more sustainable humanitarian resourcing needs to be discussed. There continues to be reports on human rights abuse in the occupied territories of Western Sahara with no human rights monitoring mandate for the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). Efforts by the African Commission on Human Rights were unsuccessful as they could not get admission into the occupied territories.

17. The situation of refugees and asylum seekers in Libya continues to give cause for concern. According to UNHCR, 37,000 people are registered with UNHCR in Tripoli and Benghazi, with many living in areas heavily damaged by fighting and unable to leave to safer areas due to on going clashes¹¹. Amidst the growing insecurity, thousands of desperate people are taking the dangerous sea journey to Europe. Some 88,000 people are estimated to have arrived in Italy by boat in 2014, of whom about 77, 000 are believed to have departed from Libya¹². This is almost more than double the known number of crossings last year. With continued fighting amongst rival armed groups intensifying in a number of areas in Libya, the internal displacement is presently estimated at 287,000 people in 29 cities and towns across the country.

18. In Mauritania, despite two good harvest years, Mauritania is still feeling the effects of the 2012 Sahel food and nutrition crisis¹³. One million require humanitarian assistance due to food insecurity. 126,000 children under five years old are malnourished. Mauritania remains the largest recipient of Malian refugees with the Mbéra camp near the border with Mali hosting some 59,100 people.

¹¹ UNHCR Briefing Notes, August 2014

¹² Ibid

¹³ UNOCHA Humanitarian Bulletin, Issue 12, 2014

WEST AFRICA REGION

19. The Western Region continued to experience challenges in security, stability, food security, nutrition and displacements. Increase in the caseload of food insecure people is particularly expected to rise in Northern Nigeria, Northern Cameroon, Mali and Senegal. This is due to a combination of both acute and chronic factors such as climate change, conflict, lowered production and population growth. Violence, insurgency and insecurity have forced more than 4 million people to leave their homes in the region leading a protracted displacement crisis. It is anticipated that the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, AU Strategy for the Sahel, and the ECOWAS Strategy for the Sahel will all collectively enhance coordination among actors, prioritize actions, and mobilize resources for building the resilience of the region.

20. The region saw an unprecedented outbreak of Ebola fever in March 2014, in areas of South-East Guinea, the first such epidemic in two decades. Whilst all efforts are currently underway to contain and eradicate the epidemic, the outbreak has continued to ravage in the hardest hit countries, Liberia and Sierra Leone, killing thousands of people, and creating fear and paranoia in the region and around the world. In the worst affected countries, the annual re-opening of schools for the 2014-2015 academic school year was postponed, in an effort to contain the spread of the disease. Children have been kept at home, with educational radio broadcasts of the main curriculum subjects used as a temporary pedagogic measure.

21. The African Union set up the African Union Support to Ebola outbreak in West Africa ASEOWA, which deployed teams of volunteer medical personnel to Liberia and Sierra Leone. The UN has also set up the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), based in Ghana, with offices in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone. Great Britain, France and the USA, have also contributed significant financial as well as human resources to combat this epidemic. Whilst clinical trials are underway for a vaccine to be produced in early 2015, all segments of society is affected in the worst affected countries.

22. Niger, as in previous years, has been challenged by chronic food insecurity affecting about 4 million people, and more than 1 million children who are moderately or severely malnourished, while 1 million people face severe food shortages. The country experienced a drop in cereal production and continues to face the consequences of repeated shocks, including heavy rains and flooding that took place in 2013 which led to the destruction of agricultural land and assets. The government is implementing a comprehensive agricultural plan to address the chronic food insecurity by linking humanitarian and development efforts, particularly in highly vulnerable areas. Insecurity threats also persist, particularly along the border with Nigeria. 50,000 people who fled into Niger Diffa region, with an estimated 700-1,000 people crossing every week into Diffa. If the current pace of arrivals is sustained, this number could reach 100,000 by the end of the year. Niger continues to host 50,000 Malian refugees. In May 2014, Mali, Niger and UNHCR signed a tripartite agreement on repatriation of Malian refugees. The agreement supports spontaneous and voluntary returns of Malian refugees.

23. In Mali, there have been significant returns to the North with 196,000 people returning to Gao and Timbuktu, the majority of the returnees being IDPs. This influx is likely to exert additional pressure on limited resources. There has been however resurgence of terrorist activity and inter-ethnic clashes further scaling up humanitarian needs in the region. The total number of IDPs stands at 187,000, while an additional 143,000 remain refugees in Mauritania (59,100), Niger (50,000), Burkina Faso (32,170) and Algeria (1,500). There is worrying deterioration of the food security situation, following a close to 10% drop in the cereal production for the 2013 -14 agricultural season due to late and erratic rains. An estimated 3.3 million people were food insecure in 2014 out of which 1.5 million people needed immediate food assistance in Mali.

24. A regional return and reintegration Strategy was developed as part of the United Nations Strategic Response Plan for the Sahel and the Government's Accelerated Strategy for Northern Mali. In May 2014, UNHCR and the Governments of Mali and Niger signed a tripartite Agreement in preparation for voluntary repatriation, once the security situation is deemed sufficiently improved. Meanwhile, the office will continue working towards the improvement of conditions in return areas, focusing on a community-based approach that fosters social cohesion.

25. In Nigeria, as violence in the north east of the country escalates, more than 75,000 people have fled across the border to Cameroon, Chad and Niger¹⁴. Since last year, the insurgent group, Boko Haram intensified their campaign of terrorizing, killing and kidnapping civilians in Nigeria's north-eastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. Aid agencies expect that the number of people fleeing to the three neighboring countries could exceed 95,000 by the end of the year¹⁵. More than 62,000 people have found refuge in the Diffa region of Niger since the beginning of 2014, according to IRC. This population is spread over more than 140 towns, villages and islands on Lake Chad. The Nigeria crisis continues to also affect Cameroon, which is now hosting some 44,000 Nigerian refugees¹⁶. In addition, the Nigerian authorities requested UNHCR's support to better protect the several thousands of internally displaced persons in the six north-eastern States.

EASTERN AFRICA REGION

Global Initiative on Somali Refugees:

26. A ministerial meeting co-chaired by the Ethiopian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Teodoros Adhanom, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Dr. Aisha L. Abdullahi, and UN High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, met in Addis Ababa on 20 August 2014 to reaffirm its commitment to find solutions for Somali refugees and called on the international community to help the Somali government in its efforts to restore peace and progress. "The Addis Ababa Commitment Towards Somali Refugees" was adopted during the Ministerial Meeting, attended by ministers of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda and Yemen, which together host nearly 1million Somali refugees. Another 1 plus million Somalis remain

¹⁴ UNHCR Briefing Notes, September 2014

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ UNHCR Briefing Notes, October 2014

displaced within Somalia. Participants agreed to work with national, regional and international partners in a coordinated manner towards the renewed commitments made. Issues of development, governance and security were emphasized. The international community was called upon to commit to the renewed engagement and work together for a more meaningful life for Somali refugees.

SOUTH SUDAN

27. The suffering of the people in the year - long conflict has been acute. The conflict has devastated economic activity, impeded agriculture and stultified the provision of basic social services. The total number of South Sudanese refugees who have entered Ethiopia since the outbreak of the conflict in mid - December 2013 is now over 191,000 individuals, with the number continuing to increase daily. Some 100 refugees continue to cross into Ethiopia per day mainly through the Burbiey border entry point from Upper Nile and Jonglei states in South Sudan. The new arrivals cite insecurity, including sporadic fighting between government forces and rebels amid food insecurity as reasons for their flight.

28. The Ethiopia borders remain open to asylum seekers. The South Sudan refugee population has now become the largest refugee group in Ethiopia, surpassing the Somali refugee population. A multi-agency response led by the Government of Ethiopia and UNHCR is providing protection and assistance to these refugees. Ethiopia is currently Africa's largest refugee hosting country with more than 600,000 refugees overtaking Kenya.

29. A total of 153,770¹⁷ South Sudanese refugees have been assisted in Uganda since the influx began in mid - December 2013, while a similar number of south Sudanese have also sought refuge in Kakuma Camp in North Western Kenya.

30. In October 2014, the Government of Tanzania announced it had resolved the nearly four-year-long interruption of the implementation of the decision on the naturalization of the remaining caseload of the 1972 Burundian refugees. The Government will also start the naturalization process for many of their children benefitting some 200,000¹⁸ people overall. This is the first time in UNHCR's history that naturalization is offered as a solution to such a large group of refugees in protracted situation in a country of first asylum. It also said that the new citizens would be allowed to remain in the settlements, where they can exercise their rights as Tanzanian citizens, or move to any other part of the country if they wished to do so. It is the first time that naturalization is offered as a solution to such a large group of refugees. Tanzania previously granted naturalization to some 32,000 Rwandan refugees in 1982, while in 2011, granted naturalization to over 162,000 1972 Burundian refugees. In February of this year it again concluded the naturalization of some 3,000 Somali who had fled Somalia in 1991, after the fall of the Said Barre regime. Tanzania is also host to approximately 60,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo¹⁹.

¹⁷ UNHCR Uganda; Report on Refugees & Asylum- seekers, December 01, 2014

¹⁸ UNHCR News Stories, October 2014

¹⁹ Ibid

CENTRAL AFRICA REGION

31. In Central African Republic, violence broke out again in mid-October in parts of the capital Bangui, targeting civilians and humanitarian workers. The unrest was reportedly sparked by a grenade attack in Gobongo in the 4th district of Bangui on 7th October that killed four people. These events were followed by attacks on civilians that left around nine civilians dead and 55 people injured. Initial reports of over 6,500 people being newly displaced, but the number could be much higher as there is no access to the displacement sites²⁰.

32. Over 357,000 CAR refugees are in Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo and the Congo since the beginning of the crisis in December 2012. Some 160,000 of them have fled since December 2013 after clashes intensified between the Seleka alliance and anti-Balaka militia²¹. There are some 438,500²² internally displaced persons in the Central African Republic including over 125,000²³ in 34 sites in Bangui. The outflow of mostly Muslim refugees continue to flee from the Central African Republic, and many of the affected persons are severely weakened by the time they arrive at their first country of asylum.

33. In the Republic of Congo, in July 2014, a convoy carrying 81 DRC refugees living in the Republic of Congo crossed the border into the DRC, marking the end of five years in exile for the group and the final voluntary repatriation of Congolese refugees from the Republic of Congo. This group are the last of the 119,000 DRC refugees to repatriate from the Republic of Congo with UNHCR's help since May 2012. They were among the 160,000 people who fled to neighboring countries – 140,000 in Republic of Congo and 20,000 in the Central African Republic – when clashes erupted between the Munzaya and Enyele communities over traditional fishing rights in DRC's Equatorial province in 2009. Since then, the refugees had been living in isolated areas along a 600-kilometre stretch of the Oubangui River, which separates Republic of Congo from the DRC. Once home, returnees benefit from reintegration programs that provide health care, education, income generating activities, shelter kits, and construction of boreholes for water. There are also awareness campaigns to promote peaceful coexistence between communities.

34. Chad continued to be affected by food insecurity and population displacement during the second half of 2014. The insecurity in Darfur, Central African Republic, and northeastern Nigeria which created an influx of refugees and returnees to the country, that has placed a strain on the coping capacity of the population, as well on local infrastructure such as water pumps/wells, classrooms and health structures. Moreover, the Libyan crisis prompted the return of over 150,000 Chadian migrant workers to their areas of origin or transit zones, mostly in areas already at high risk of food insecurity. Some 100,000 people have sought refuge in Chad from the violence in CAR, including 12,000 refugees and 900 third country nationals²⁴. The Chadian Government has put in place mechanisms to help returnees and IDPs to settle.

²⁰ UN News Centre, October 2014

²¹ UNHCR Briefing Notes, July 2014

²² IDMC, January 2015

²³ Ibid

²⁴ UNHCR, 2014

The Government is also working on a medium and long term plan to reintegrate the over 60,000²⁵ Chadian nationals who returned from CAR back into Chadian society, on the social as well as economic level. These persons migrated to CAR two or three generations ago and most of them have now lost their ties to villages of origin and have no family links on which to rely. The vision of the government is to build on the skills and experience of the returnees to help them to build their future in Chad. From 20-24 October 2014, this vision was presented and discussed during an inter-ministerial retreat with the participation of key stakeholders from the ministries, humanitarian and development actors. Following this retreat, a committee was put in place to finalize the plan.

35. Between end of August and end of October, 172 cases of cholera, of which ten proved fatal, were recorded in the Mayo Kebbi Ouest and Lac regions. The comprehensive medical response was followed by WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) interventions. In early 2015, the first cholera vaccination campaign in Chad will be conducted in the areas most at risk.

36. According to recent results of a Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief Transitions Survey (SMART) on nutritional and retrospective mortality, the malnutrition rates in Chads Sahel zone continued to remain above the 15% emergency level in nearly half of all districts²⁶. The survey was jointly conducted by UNICEF and the Ministry of Public Health in August and September and financed by ECHO. The results were approved on 28 November 2014.

SOUTHERN REGION

37. The Southern Region is one of the regions that has several cases of asylum seekers including mixed migratory movements and also continues to host thousands of refugees mainly from Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia and some remnants from Burundi and Rwanda. Durable solutions for the remaining Angolan refugees through voluntary repatriation or local integration continued in the first part of 2014. With regard to Rwandan refugees, only four countries – Malawi, Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe and Zambia have officially invoked the cessation clauses for Rwandan refugees as recommended by UNHCR which brings to fore the commitment from several governments to bring an end to this longstanding refugee situation. However, some countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and South Africa have not yet invoked cessation for various reasons including the lack of clear and defined durable solutions for former refugees.

38. Some of the countries in the region experienced multiple, repeated, and compounding natural disasters, eroding the capacity of affected populations to fully recover. Countries such as Madagascar were particularly affected during this period, being prone to multiple hazards, including cyclones, food insecurity and pest infestations, in addition to localized insecurity. In March, Cyclone Hellen struck Madagascar, affecting over 2,400 people, destroying close to 200 houses, and submerging over 2,000 hectares of rice fields. Agriculture has been particularly hard hit by the floods, which may impact on food insecurity in the coming months.

²⁵ UNOCHA Humanitarian Bulletin, Issue 6, 2014

²⁶ UNOCHA Humanitarian Bulletin, Issue 6, 2014

This is coupled with locust infestations that continue to be a threat to food security and livelihoods.

39. The food security situation in most of Southern Africa was relatively stable during the second half of this year, although some parts of the region faced acute food insecurity. The 2014 national vulnerability assessments findings released in July by FEWS NET point to decreasing levels of food insecurity across the region, depicting that the number of food insecure households has declined significantly from last year and the five-year average by 52 and 45 percent respectively mostly attributed to increased production across the region²⁷. Humanitarian assistance needs are expected to be minimal throughout the region. However, emergency food assistance distributions are expected to continue in flood and cyclone affected parts of the region, especially in Madagascar and several districts in Mozambique's main river basins.

Addressing Statelessness

40. The AUC, in collaboration with the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights, UNHCR and the Open Society Foundation (OSF), has launched the development of a Protocol on the Right to Nationality. In addition, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child adopted a General Comment on Article 6 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, relating to birth registration, ensuring that issues such as the birth registration of refugees and nationality are included. The Africa Union is also presently leading a Civil Registration and Vital Statistics process highlighting the importance of the civil registration and the need to modernize the process of civil registration processes, such as birth registration. This will ensure children's access to basic human rights including, but not limited to, the right to a nationality, education and health care.

IV. AU COMMISSION'S FIELD VISITS

41. In November, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Dr Aisha Abdullahi, jointly led a High Level Partnership mission to Chad to raise awareness for the human suffering and call for more engagement in Chad by the international community. The mission was co-led by the African Union Commission and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and coordinated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The mission was comprised of a broad coalition of Member States (Kuwait, Qatar, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Azerbaijan, Germany and USA), regional organizations (League of Arab States), and partners from Non-governmental Organizations and charities from various different Gulf States. The objective of the mission was to raise awareness about human suffering caused by food insecurity and malnutrition in the Sahel zone, as well as the devastating impact of population movements due to violence in the Central African Republic (CAR), and other neighboring countries. The effects of food insecurity and the impact of population movement due to violence are clearly depicted in Chad. Early in 2014, an estimated 150,000 people fled to Chad as a result of violence in CAR, and continue to need assistance²⁸. Moreover, in Chad,

²⁷ FEWS NET Report, July- December 2014

²⁸ UNOCHA, November 2014

2.6 million people – a quarter of the population- are living in food insecurity, and over 63,000 children are malnourished²⁹. The mission was also an opportunity to understand the on-going unsupported multilateral humanitarian activities in Coordination with national and local stakeholders; explore avenues of collaboration and support in partnership with the Government of Chad, the multilateral humanitarian coordination structures and beyond; stimulate greater resource mobilization for the unmet needs in Chad.

V. CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

42. The report focused on the various humanitarian challenges in Africa, including increasingly frequent and destructive disasters; sudden onset major disasters- such as the Ebola epidemic, continued instability and armed conflict preventing returns; eroding resilience; and generating repeated and new displacements; continued food insecurity; exposure to multiple and compounded hazards; dangerous irregular migration movements; as well as post-conflict reconstruction and development.

43. In Africa, the right to seek and enjoy asylum is largely respected with some three million refugees having found, in exile, the safety and protection that was inaccessible at home. The generosity of hosting countries in Africa is outstanding, with long standing traditions of hospitality and generosity. Nonetheless, in recent years some core values have been challenged, with instances of 'refoulement', as well as difficult access of humanitarian agencies to persons of concern.

44. Member States have to forge ahead to tackle these pressing humanitarian challenges, including that of forced displacement, with African Union Partners and relevant humanitarian agencies and in collaboration with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Civil Society Organizations. In addition to the short-term imperative of effective humanitarian action, focus on addressing root causes and implementing holistic solutions is key.

45. Priorities should include:

- The development of the African Union Protocol on Statelessness which is in the general interest of the people of the continent Africa to recognize, guarantee and facilitate the right to nationality of every person on the continent and to ensure that no one is exposed to statelessness.
- The adoption of the Humanitarian Policy Framework that establishes strategic approach and guidelines in support of the core aims of humanitarian action: to preserve, protect and save lives, alleviate suffering and enhance physical security and human dignity. The Framework complements and supports the humanitarian policies of AU member states, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the international community, UN agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, national and international NGOs and other humanitarian actors and stakeholders.

²⁹ UNOCHA, July 2014

- The adoption of the Africa Disaster Management Framework which seeks to establish the guiding principles and architecture for disaster management in Africa by presenting the institutional structures, roles, responsibilities, authorities and key processes required to achieve a coordinated, coherent and consistent approach the management of disasters in Africa. It is to provide effective mechanisms that achieve substantial reduction of disaster losses in lives and in social economic and environmental assets in Africa.
- Africa Disaster Managers Platform (ADMAP) initiative is a collective endeavor of the Africa Union, RECs, Regional Disaster Managers Platforms and National Disaster Managers in Africa. While it's noted that a number of regions have established their platforms, others have not. The platform will provide specialized continental scope for Disaster Early Warning, Early Action and Rapid Response and contribute to the Operationalization of the AU Disaster Management Policy (DMP)
- A common position for Africa on its humanitarian priorities for presentation during the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, Turkey 2016.

2015

Report of the sub-committee on refugees, returnees and Idps (July - December 2014)

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