

AFRICAN UNION

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 INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS**

REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons supported by the African Union Commission and in collaboration with AU Partners implemented the below activities in accordance with its work plan for 2014 which was adopted by the PRC Sub-Committee on 13 March 2014.

II. ACTIVITIES

Regular Meetings of the Sub-Committee

2. The Bureau of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons held its first meeting of the year on 6th March 2014 to work on the programme of work of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and IDPS.

3. The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons comprising of all Member States held its first regular meeting of the year on 13 March 2014, as part of its on-going activities and to consider and adopt the Programme of Activities for the Sub-Committee for 2014.

4. The Bureau of the PRC Sub-Committee met on 11 June 2014 in a working session to consider the work programme of the meeting of the PRC as a whole.

5. Meeting of the PRC Sub-Committee of the whole on 13 June 2014 to assess its progress since the adoption of its programme of work in March 2014 and deliberate on the way forward.

Participation in the Activities of the Commission

6. In February 2014, in line with Kampala Plan of Action and the strategic priority of the Department of Political Affairs working towards durable solutions to displacement, the African Union Commission, in partnership with the Norwegian Refugee Council, organized a High-Level Roundtable on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees in Kenya based on the tripartite agreement between the Kenya Government, Somali Government and UNHCR. The roundtable was attended by representatives of the Government of Kenya, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, the Chair of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees, and Displaced Persons, the Inter-governmental Authority for Development (IGAD), the African Development Bank, and key humanitarian actors

involved in the design and implementation of durable solutions for displaced populations. Discussions at the roundtable laid emphasis on three broad themes: conditions for return of refugees; structural support for sustainable returns; and innovative practices for durable solutions. The High Level Roundtable proposed a need for similar meeting in search of durable solutions especially for other protracted caseloads such as DRC, CAR and South Sudan, taking into consideration the specificity of their situations.

7. During this mission, the Chair of the PRC Sub-Committee accompanied the Commissioner for Political Affairs to officiate the opening ceremony of the AU hospital in Dadaab refugee camp in Northern Kenya. During the 2011 AU pledging conference on the Horn of Africa Region, the Kenya National Red Cross was given USD One Million to deal with the drought and they constructed a hospital for the local community in the Dadaab region. The PRC Sub-Committee approved its contribution of Usd 100,000 to equip the hospital as it also caters for refugees within the region. It was noted that the Kenya Red Cross had achieved a lot with minimal resources an example of what the AU token assistance can be used to achieve in the future especially if the targets are to be project related.

8. In March 2014, the Commission, in partnership with International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA), organized a Disaster Response Dialogue for National Disaster Management Agencies to raise awareness on global and regional coordination systems for disaster response, disaster management law, and issues of accountability and quality with regard to disaster response. This served as a forum for disaster affected countries, humanitarian partners, and regional institutions to identify current gaps in disaster response and programs of action to raise national and local capacities as well as enhance coordination. The Chair of the PRC Sub-Committee participated in this Dialogue.

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

9. Various humanitarian assessment missions were undertaken by members of the PRC Sub-Committee in the said period with the support of from the Division of Humanitarian Affairs, Department of Political Affairs. These missions fall under the decision of the PRC Sub-committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons which requested the Commission to initiate a series of activities for 2014 including among other things, field missions to AU member states that are most affected by the problem of displacement and other humanitarian challenges. Humanitarian assessment missions were carried out in the following Member States:

- Democratic Republic of Congo;
- Republic of the Seychelles;
- Republic of Chad;
- Republic of Burundi.

a) Mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo

10. The mission of the PRC Sub-Committee visited the Democratic Republic of Congo from the 3rd to the 10th of February 2014. The mission was led by His Excellency, Mr. Manuel Gonçalves, Ambassador of the Republic of Mozambique in Ethiopia and to the African Union, and Chair of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons.

11. After meeting the relevant government authorities in charge of social and humanitarian affairs, civil society, and United Nations agencies in Kinshasa, the mission traveled to the east of the country, specifically Goma in the Kivu Northern Province, to visit internally displaced populations in Mugunga III camp, located ten kilometers west of Goma.

12. The Mugunga III camps consist of persons internally displaced due to attacks in early 2013 of the M23 Movement and other armed forces from Massissi. Despite the victory of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Congo (FARDC) backed by the forces of the United Nations Mission for Stabilization in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) over the main armed group, the M23 in November 2013, civilians in the camps still refuse to return to their homes for fear of further attacks.

13. Mugunga III site currently comprises of 8,500 displaced households, of which, approximately 42,000 are Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). In response to the humanitarian emergency in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the African Union has made a symbolic donation of two hundred thousand dollars (\$ 200,000 USD) to the country through the UNHCR as a contribution to the work of welcoming the displaced and the management of the displaced persons sites.

b) Mission to the Republic of Seychelles

14. The mission of the PRC Sub-Committee visited the Republic of Seychelles from the 4th to the 6th of February 2014 as a result of damages caused to the archipelago by tropical storm "Felleng" in January 2013.

15. This mission was led by Her Excellency Mrs. Josephine Mmamosadinyana Molefe, Ambassador of the Republic of Botswana in Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union and the Economic Commission for Africa

16. Tropical Storm "Felleng" had caused extensive damage to the Seychelles, leading the authorities to declare a state of emergency and call for international assistance. This storm was accompanied by heavy rainfall which caused severe flooding in three districts, namely: Anse aux Pins, In Cap, and Point Larue that had all been declared disaster areas. Two other districts Cascade and Digue Island were also significantly affected.

17. In solidarity with the Government and people of Seychelles, the African Union donated a symbolic sum of one hundred thousand U.S. dollars (U.S. \$ 100,000) as a contribution to the efforts of the Government.

c) Mission to the Republic of Chad

18. The mission of the PRC Sub-Committee visited the Republic of Chad from the 21st to the 25th of May 2014 under the leadership of Her Excellency Mrs. Amoko Virginie Kouvahe, Ambassador of the Republic of Togo in Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union. The humanitarian situation in Chad is dominated by flows of returnees and refugees into Chad from the Central African Republic where the violence took an ethnic-religious connotation.

19. Approximately 150,000 people, comprised of both Chadian returnees and refugees, have entered Chadian territory due to the crisis in Central African Republic and are currently accommodated in transit sites and host communities. The mission of the African Union visited one of the camps of returnees. The Zafaye camp is 15 kilometers from the capital, N'Djamena, and hosts approximately 2,000 Chadian returnees from the Central African Republic. In solidarity with the Government and the people of Chad, the African Union made a symbolic donation of one hundred thousand dollars (\$ 100,000 USD) to the local Office of the International Organization of Migration (IOM) to support their work of movement, profiling and settlement of displaced populations from CAR into Chad.

d) Mission to the Republic of Burundi

20. The mission of the Sub-Committee visited the Republic of Burundi from the 27th to the 31st of May 2014 to conduct an assessment of the humanitarian disaster caused by torrential rains of February 2014.

21. This mission was led by His Excellency Mr. Naim Akibou, Ambassador of the Republic of Benin in Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union and the Economic Commission for Africa

22. Two experts specialized in the management of natural disasters from the Nigerian National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Mozambican National Institute for Disaster Management (INGC) respectively were involved in the mission in order to exchange experiences with the Burundian authorities in charge of managing disasters and to jointly find solutions for enhancing future humanitarian preparedness and response.

23. Torrential rains of February 9th, 2014 caused flooding that affected more than 220,000 people and caused the death of about 107 people in the capital city of Bujumbura. The mission of the African Union visited the affected camps Kinama 1 and Buterere and announced a donation of the African Union of one hundred thousand dollars (\$ 100,000 USD) for the benefit of affected populations

III. CONCLUSION

24. The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees has so far covered a lot on its work plan and will continue to implement its Programme of Activities for the rest of the year. Given the various humanitarian challenges facing the continent, the Sub-Committee will concentrate on the following activities highlighted in its work plan:

1. *Continue to undertake missions to countries most affected by the problem of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons to **Uganda, Madagascar, Central Africa Republic, Sahrawi Arab Republic, South Sudan and Zimbabwe;***
2. *Look for opportunities for advocacy for adequate responses to early warnings on humanitarian crisis emanating from both conflicts and natural disasters;*
3. *Consult and work with the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees and the PRC Sub-Committee on Special Emergency Assistance for Natural Disasters in Africa, with a view of rationalizing their respective roles and mandates– July 2014*
4. *Work with the PRC Sub-Committee on Budgets to develop a roadmap for implementation of the Executive Council decision Ex. CL/Dec 567 (XVII) on*

a 2% to 4% increment to allocations for the humanitarian work of the Commission with a view for implementation by 2016.

5. Attend the following meetings:

- *STC on Migration, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons – **Abuja, Nigeria, 2014** (Dates to be mutually decided upon between Government of Nigeria and AUC);*
- *Preparations for World Humanitarian Summit **2016, Istanbul, Turkey** (details on African process to be planned out by the Bureau and Political Affairs Department);*
- *United Nations High Commissioner’s Executive Committee Meeting in **October 2014, Geneva, Switzerland;***
- *Annual AU Humanitarian Symposium – **September 2014, Nairobi Kenya;***
- *Annual African Governance Platform (AGA) on Strengthening Governance in Resolving Conflicts in Africa - **October 2014, Dakar, Senegal.***

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