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

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INTRODUCTION

1. The report gives an account of the activities of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons including the collaboration and cooperation with other AU partners and humanitarian agencies working in the field covering the period from July 2016 to June 2017.

I. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN AFRICA

2. The African continent has been severely affected by the effects of El Nino and La Nina especially in the eastern and southern regions, most of which most parts was hit by severe and unprecedented drought, which has been followed by heavy floods. The consequences of all these have translated into loss of lives and livelihoods, displacement of persons; decimation of crops and farm land, properties and a prolonged famine due to the food insecurity associated with the vagaries of the changing weather phenomenon. All these have translated into increased humanitarian needs, creating additional resource gaps with negative impacts on the economy and development of affected African countries.

3. Prolonged and continued conflicts and insecurity in Central African Republic, South Sudan, Somalia, Libya, DRC, and the Lake Chad Basin Countries all resulting in forced displacements, with tens of thousands of people fleeing their homes. Terrorist attacks continue to be a source of insecurity thereby deepening the fragility of many African countries and increasing the levels of instability in many of them.

II. ACTIVITIES: HUMANITARIAN ASSESSMENT MISSIONS

4. The Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons carried out activities for the second half of the year in accordance with the approved work plan of 2016/2017. These activities are:

- Conduct assessment missions to assess, and analyze the situation of refugees, displaced persons and returnees and recommend to the Executive Council;
- Participate in convening the Fourth Annual Humanitarian Symposium to sensitize Member States and the entire international community on the problems of refugees, displaced persons and returnees with a view to enlisting their assistance to these people and their effective contribution to a lasting solution of the issues;
- Participate in the Statutory meeting in Geneva (UNHCR EXCOM) to sensitize Member States and the entire international community on the problems of refugees, displaced persons and returnees with a view to

enlisting their assistance to these people and their effective contribution to a lasting solution of the issues;

- Participate in the Conference of State Parties of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention)
- Participate in meetings with the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) to strengthen the partnership and enhance cooperation on the humanitarian issues in the continent with a view to enlisting effective assistance and solutions;
- Participate in the joint high-level partnership mission to the horn of Africa organized and co-led by the **African Union**, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (**OCHA**) and the UN **Secretary-General's Humanitarian Envoy** to raise awareness of the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Horn of Africa and to support resource mobilization to accelerate response to drought and prevent famines.

BENIN

5. The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons conducted a humanitarian assessment mission to the Republic of Benin from 15 to 21 December 2016. The mission was led by His Excellency, Mr Claude Nyamugabo, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The assessment was in response to the flooding that occurred in the northern part of the Republic in September 2015 and re-occurred in September 2016 which also left several people displaced in the affected part of the country.

6. The delegation met and discussed with government officials and other relevant humanitarian agencies to discuss the natural disaster situation affecting the country. The delegation assessed the affected communities in the north of the country.

7. It is pertinent to note that the extreme north of Benin is a pastoral region where cattle breeding is the livelihood. Therefore, flooding and excessive precipitation is inimical to cattle rearing while properties were also destroyed and population displaced. It is also noteworthy to point out that the flooding also recurred within twelve months of the previous occurrence. More than 21,500 hectares of crops were washed away, about 1,250 houses destroyed, and nearly 280 submerged ponds. In total, about 5,800 households were affected. Over 25,000 people, including old people, nursing mothers and about 5,200 children, aged 0 to 5 years were affected.

8. In response to the recurring floods in the communes of Malanville and Karimama, the Government of Benin, in collaboration with its partners, supported health awareness programmes and offered assistance in the area of provision of shelter, food assistance and agricultural products. The Mayors of affected cities channelled the humanitarian assistance through the Communal Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction and Adaptation to Climate Change.

9. By way of support from the African Union to the efforts of the Government of Benin in its fight against the consequences of natural disasters and the management of crises due to the floods in the communities visited in the north of the country, a grant from the African Union in the amount of 100,000 USD (one hundred thousand US dollars) was donated to the Government of Benin.

LAKE CHAD BASIN REGION

10. The humanitarian assessment mission to the Lake Chad Basin Region was conducted from 18 October - 03 November 2016. The mission spanned through three countries of the Lake Chad Region which are most affected by the Boko Haram insurgency, namely, the Republic of Chad, the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Republic of Cameroon. The African Union delegation was led by H.E. Mr. Albert Francis YANKEY, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ghana to the African Union and was accompanied by two Officers from the Department of Political Affairs.

11. The delegation held discussions with government officials, heads of international and local organizations based in the Lake Chad Region and other relevant humanitarian actors to discuss the humanitarian situation resulting from the Boko Haram insurgency in the region and all other matters directly or indirectly related to the consequences of the insurgency in the region. The delegation also visited camps to assess the conditions and the wellness of the refugees and the internally displaced. At the end, the mission pledged a total sum of 300,000 \$US (Three hundred thousand US dollars) as a gesture of solidarity of the African Union to the affected populations in the region which aimed at supporting the ongoing food assistance programs in the affected parts of the Lake Chad Basin region.

12. The Humanitarian impact of Boko Haram crisis remains critical. Boko Haram insurgents continue to carry out attacks against civilians and military targets, with about 90 deadly attacks reported between May and August 2016 in Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon. Alongside the deadly attacks, local population lives in volatile and insecure conditions, fleeing their homes to look for safer places to live in the affected regions of the three countries visited. The continued insecurity, as well as difficult weather conditions and limited humanitarian access have resulted in a huge displacement of about 2.4 million IDP persons in the region. Despite the fact that some IDPs, refugees and migrants have started to return home, the situation on the ground however still remains dire in the three countries - Chad, Nigeria and Cameroon.

13. In Chad the assessment mission involved meetings with government officials, UN agencies and personnel of the Multinational Joint Task Force Against Boko Haram (MNJTF) in N'Djamena. It also visited the **Dar es Salam camps in Baga Sola** where around 4,000 Nigerian refugees have been sheltered since 2015. The camp also includes refugees from Niger. The Camps are located about an hour by flight from Ndjamen, on the receded area of Lake Chad, testimony to the degradation of the Lake over time. Majority of the camp residents complained of the need to regain their livelihoods. Many were also desirous of returning to their areas of habitual abode.

14. In Nigeria, the delegation was received by the Nigerian Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). The Agency gave an overview of the current

displacement situation in the northeast of Nigeria. The mission travelled to the most affected city in the northeastern part of Nigeria, Maiduguri, the State capital of Borno. Three IDP Camps were visited. They were, the **Gubio IDP camp**, **Teachers village camp** and the **Bakasi camp** all located near the city of Maiduguri in Borno State. It is perhaps pertinent to point out that the northeastern part of Nigeria is currently hosting more than 1.4 million IDPs. Apart from Borno State, two other states of the Nigerian federation affected by the Boko Haram insurgency are Yobe and Adamawa States but Borno State remains the most affected by the Boko Haram insurgency and military counter-insurgency operations.

15. **Gubio** camp has 400 housing units donated by the Local Government. The camp was opened on 11th May 2015 as a result of returnees from Niger. Men, women, the youth, orphans and unaccompanied children make up the population. The camp hosts 13,935 IDPs. The **Teachers village camp** hosts 9,304 IDPs and **Bakasi camp** hosts 21,202 IDPs. Food security and livelihood support are the priority needs among the IDP population in the camp. Since August 2016 about 162,000 IDPs have returned to the State and continue to return. However, the majority of both IDP and refugee returnees are not returning to their towns or villages of origin, but rather to the seat of the Local Government Area (LGA), meaning they remain in a situation of displacement.

16. The AU Humanitarian mission arrived in Yaoundé, the capital city of Cameroon to gather and crosscheck information with the local humanitarian field workers including the Cameroonian Red Cross. The assessment of the situation in the Far North of Cameroon reveals that there are about 81,700 IDPs and 74,000 Nigerian refugees in Far North of the region. The main camps in the region, the Minawao camps which host 37,000 refugees continue to receive the population from Nigeria. According to an assessment conducted by humanitarian field workers in the region, displaced populations are in need of food security, and livelihoods.

17. The delegation also met with officers from the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram, in Ndjamena at the Headquarters of the force and on the ground in the Lake Chad Region to discuss the work of the MNJTF in the area of civil-military coordination and the protection of civilians. The commandant of the force informed the delegation that the ongoing operation by the Nigerian military, the regional MNJTF and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) over 2016 have weakened Boko Haram capacity to hold territory. The forces in coordination with humanitarian workers are involved in relief distribution and other humanitarian assistance to civilians.

18. At the end of the mission, the delegation announced the donation of USD 200,000.00 (Two hundred thousand US dollars) to the World Food Program to support nutrition programs in the Lake Chad both at Chadian and Cameroonian sides. While a supplementary sum of USD 100, 000.00 (one hundred thousand US dollars) was also pledged to the Government of Borno State as a contribution towards the nutrition program in the three camps visited in Maiduguri.

LESOTHO

19. The Sub-Committee's assessment mission to Lesotho was conducted from 20 - 22 October 2016. The Chair of The Permanent Representative Committee, Sub-

Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa and the Permanent Representative of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, H.E Lamine Yahiaoui, led the mission supported by an officer from the Department of Political Affairs.

20. It will be recalled that Lesotho has been affected by series of drought since 2012 and the situation was compounded by the El Niño related extreme climatic condition which aggravated the vulnerability of the situation. As a result, Lesotho declared a State of Emergency on 22 December 2015. The total number of food insecure people was estimated to be 757,000. On 04 January 2016, the government allocated M155 million (Maloti) shared among the various sectors. The government thereafter, developed a response plan, which was estimated to cost M584, 079,131.00 (approximately US\$42,540,359.14). On 5 February 2016, a humanitarian appeal was launched due to resource gap of M429, 079,131.00 (approximately US\$ 31,251,211.29). In June 2016, as part of measures to alleviate the dire situation, the government introduced a 30% subsidy on the price of staple foods such as maize mill, sugar beans and split peas. The food subsidy is expected to last until May 2017.

21. During the Mission, the delegation attended the launching ceremony of the Cost of Hunger in Africa Lesotho Report by **His Majesty King Letsie III**, King of Lesotho. The delegation was also received by the Chief Executive Officer of the Disaster Management Authority and the National Relief Coordinator, Mr. Haretsebe Mahosi and held meetings with relevant government authorities in the presence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Honorable Mr. Tlohang Sekhamane. The discussions highlighted the multifaceted effects of the El Nino on the various sectors of the economy. It was pointed out that the drought situation created by the El Nino phenomenon, severely affected crop and livestock farming, created water shortage due to low/depleted river, reduced water tables and dam levels. As a result, people even in most towns queued to collect water at distribution points. The livestock production suffered heavy losses as grazing areas are dry, rangelands depleted, and resulting in shortage of fodder. The health sector is over stretched by the re-emergence of diseases, which were eradicated in the last 10 years, such as anthrax, rabies and bollworm. Health clinics are overwhelmed and some are forced to stop service delivery as a result of dearth of resources, a situation, which has exacerbated the situation.

22. The delegation also met with various development partners during which they expressed their appreciation of the vital lead the government took from the onset and the prompt coordinated response of development partners to the national disaster. The role of the Lesotho Red Cross, UN agencies, other partners in saving lives and supporting the government initiatives were also highlighted.

23. The delegation visited Katse dam site, which revealed the magnitude of the severity of water shortage in the country. The Katse Dam, which is Africa's second largest dam on the **Malibamat'so River in Lesotho**. The dam supplies water to the Val dam - Halo industrial zone of South Africa in Gauteng province. In addition it is also source of hydroelectric power and clean potable water to Lesotho. During the visit, the delegation observed that the water level of the dam has critically reduced.

24. At the end of the assessment mission H.E Amb. Lamine Yahiaoui presented cheque of US\$100,000.00 donation on behalf of the African Union to H.E Mr. Kimetso

Mathaba, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office. The Honourable Minister, expressed the gratitude and appreciation of the government and people of Lesotho to the support of the African Union in the dire times.

NAMIBIA

25. The mission was led by The Permanent Representative of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, H.E Lamine Yahiaoui, supported by an officer from the Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees and Displaced Persons Division, Department of Political Affairs. The assessment mission to Namibia was conducted from 24-27 October 2016.

26. The delegation paid courtesy call on Amb. Lineekela J. Mboti – Deputy Permanent Secretary of Multilateral Affairs Department and met with the Mr. Japhet Litengo, Director of the Disaster Risk Management Directorate under the Office of the Prime Minister (DDRM). The delegation also held meetings with various government bodies active in emergency response to the drought situation occasioned by the El Nino phenomenon. Furthermore, it met with representatives of the International Community and Development partners, which included Ambassadors of Japan, Charge d'Affaires of China and the UN Resident Coordinator. It also visited Kunene Region, which is about 900 km from Windhoek, meeting with the regional council representatives and visited affected communities and residents in Opuwo District.

27. In June 2016, the government of Namibia declared a State of National Emergency, which was prompted by the most severe drought in more than 25 years. The drought hit hard the population both in the rural and urban areas as crops failed, livestock perished, water became scarce, food prices escalated and livelihoods and the economy were severely impacted. A total of **729.314** people have been affected out of which about **595,839** rural residents require direct food assistance. In Windhoek, businesses were ordered to cut water use by 30%, affecting small and micro businesses along with big companies. Windhoek residents were also asked to limit daily water usage to no more than 90 litres per person. In fact, Namibia is recognized for beef production and many depend for their livelihoods from meat production and it is second major contributor to the GDP after mining. The scarcity of water and fodder therefor, continue to challenge livestock production.

28. The government highlighted some of the main effects of the drought. It pointed to the response plan, which focused on nutrition, water provision and sanitation, livestock (destocking and eventual restocking) as measures aimed at mitigating the situation. Accordingly, it embarked on distribution for food relief, which included maize mill, tinned fish and cooking oil to the affected population. It also embarked on school feeding programs.

29. The meeting with representatives of the International Community and Development partners underscored the food relief pledges from various governments and the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI) which aims to enable the UN to support Governments build and implement a coherent framework for developing national capacities for disaster risk reduction, including preparedness for emergency response.

30. On behalf of the African Union, H.E Amb. Lamine Yahiaoui the Permanent Representative of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and the Chair of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons presented cheque of **US\$100,000.00** to Honorable Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia. The Prime minister thanked the African Union for the humanitarian contribution and said Namibia highly values and appreciates the initiative of the African Union to support fellow Member States who are currently undergoing humanitarian emergencies.

NIGER

31. A delegation led by H.E. Dieudonné NDABARUSHIMANA, Ambassador of the Republic of Burundi and Chairman of the PRC Sub-committee on the Special Emergency Assistance Fund for Famine and Drought in Africa carried out a humanitarian assessment mission on 11 - 17 December 2016, to assess the impacts of floods that have recently affected the country.

32. It is important to note that Niger periodically suffers from prolonged droughts alternating with large floods. In 2012, half a million people were affected by heavy rains. In 2015, as many as **103,000** people were affected by floods and in 2016, more than 75% of flood victims were located in the Agadez, Maradi and Tahoua regions. It is estimated that in 2017 about 106,679 people could be affected by the recurrent floods again. An estimated amount of 58 billion CFA francs is still needed to meet the needs of **109,007** populations in all of the regions affected by these floods. On 12 August 2016, the Government reported that heavy rains, especially in arid desert regions killed 14 people and left more than **46,000** homeless with an estimated **1,693** homes damaged by floods in the country since June. Local authorities recorded significant material damage and the loss of 19,536 heads of cattle (cows, goats, sheep and camel). On 2 August, the Niger Basin Authority reported that as at the end of July, levels of the Gorouol River at Alcongui were at its highest in over 50 years.

33. The delegation was received by Government authorities of the Republic of Niger, in particular the Prime Minister, H.E Mr. Brigi Rafini, the Minister of Humanitarian Action and Disaster Management and the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The delegation also conducted field visits to see the affected areas and have first-hand observation of the effects of these floods and to meet the communities affected by the disasters.

34. The delegation met with the Governor of the Region of Maradi, the Governor of the Region Urban of Niamey as well as the various municipal authorities of these two regions. Discussions with the affected populations in the sites of these two regions revealed the level of damage, and the nature and impact of responses. The response and resilience structures put in place by the Government of Niger, in particular local committees include the rehabilitation of the dike around the Niger River which began in April 2016.

35. In support of the efforts already deployed by the Government of the Republic of Niger, Ambassador NDABARUSHIMANA presented on behalf of the African Union a financial donation of USD100,000.00 (one hundred thousand US dollars) to the Government of Niger. He noted that the African Union will continue to advocate for the

support of affected countries in situation to strengthen their resilience and build appropriate coping mechanisms.

RWANDA

36. The humanitarian assessment mission to Rwanda was conducted from 15 - 20 December 2016. The African Union delegation was led by the H.E Amb. Mr. Lamine Yahiaoui, Chair of the Sub-Committee and Permanent Representative of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, supported by two officers from the Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees and Displaced Persons Division, Department of Political Affairs.

37. Rwanda is currently hosting **157,117** refugees of which **83,150** are Burundians. The majority of the refugees are from Burundi (52%) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (48%) with a small percentage from other nationalities. About **53,150** of these refugees live in Mahama Camp in South eastern border of Rwanda whilst around **31,000** are urban refugees residing mainly in Kigali and other towns. The Government has maintained open borders and recognized the Burundian refugees on a *prima facie* basis in order to facilitate their assistance.

38. During the assessment mission the delegation met with Hon. Minister, Mrs. Mukantabana, Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (MIDIMAR); paid courtesy call to the Director General, Multi-Lateral Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Mrs. Diyana Gitera; met with Mrs. Uwamariya Odette, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC); and Mrs. Umutoni Gatsinzi Nadine Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion.

39. In addition to the above meetings, the mission paid a field visit to Mahama refugee camp hosting Burundian refugees since the end of April 2015. The camp is now the largest refugee camp in Rwanda with a land size of 100 hectares and has **18,886** households out of which 44% are single headed families. Of these 36% are male headed families. The camp has almost the same number of female 48% and 51% males; however **52%** of the refugee population comprises of children including unaccompanied minors and separated children.

40. The camp provides semi-permanent shelters made from mud blocks and corrugated iron sheet roofs to refugees allowing them to live in dignity. However, there are still families sheltered in tents as construction of the semi-permanent structures are ongoing. The camp has modern water filtration and processing facilities and hospital with medical isolation centers serving both refugees and host communities, day care centers, primary and secondary schools also for refugees and host communities, child development centers, play grounds, green areas for cultivating vegetables including home gardens. In addition to primary and secondary schools, tertiary level refugee students who qualify to enter tertiary level higher education are supported to continue their education by enrolling in various colleges in Rwanda.

41. Gihembe camp, which has been used by the DRC refugees since 1997. Currently, there are **12,698** refugees with around **2,941** families in the camp. Some of the refugees through the years have been resettled in a third country; the recent one is the USA, which has resettled **1,914** refugees since January 2016. The camp has

hospital, primary school whilst secondary school students are integrated in local schools. Unlike the Mahama camp, the family shelters are old and require repair and replacement. Due to financial constraints and the rising food prices, the cash based assistance to refugees is said to be barely sufficient. Refugees are also encouraged to benefit from employment within and outside the camp by engaging in farming and other activities.

42. During the visit the delegation had the opportunity to deliberate with camp coordinators, as well as members of the executive committee of the refugee representatives who expressed their sincere gratitude and appreciation they are receiving from the Government of Rwanda, UNHCR and other partners and most of all host communities. Refugees strongly and appealed to the African Union to increase its efforts in finding durable solutions to the conflict and instability that has driven them out of their respective countries.

43. On the final day of the mission, H.E Amb. Lamine Yahiaoui, on behalf of the African Union presented the financial donation of **USD 100,000.00** (USD One Hundred Thousand) to the Resident Representative of UNHCR in the presence of Hon. Min. of MIDIMAR. The financial donation was made to support the interventions geared towards the Burundian refugees in the country. The donation was warmly received and valued as a manifestation of sharing the burden of Rwanda and strengthen the combined efforts of the UNHCR and the Government and its partners in assisting refugees.

SOUTH SUDAN

44. The Humanitarian assessment mission to South Sudan took place on the 9th – 16th May 2017. The mission was led by H.E Ambassador Dieudonné Ndabarushimana, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Burundi to the African Union. Other members of the delegation included three officers from Department of Political Affairs, Department of Social Affairs and Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture.

45. The mission engaged with a wide range of stakeholders including the civil society and various partners including the United Nations level and humanitarian actors. The mission also visited the biggest protection of civilian camp within the premises of the United Nations Mission to South Sudan (UNMISS) where there are 30,000 internally displaced persons are cantoned.

46. The humanitarian situation in South Sudan is not only dire but equally escalating rapidly. The worsening situation is due to the persistent conflict which has been on-going in the last three years. About 7.5 million people or roughly about half the estimated population of the country requires humanitarian assistance. Displacement is prevalent as fresh crises are erupting constantly in the different parts of the country, further making the conflict situation more complex and plural in nature. The situation therefore, translates into increased displacement both internally and across the border to neighbouring countries. To this end the leader of the mission of the PRC subcommittee on refugee, his Excellency Dieudonné Ndabarushimana made a solidarity gesture by announcing a modest donation of USD 100,000 to support the humanitarian need in the country.

47. At the moment about 3.6 million or a third of the estimated population of South Sudan are displaced. 1.9 million Persons are internally displaced while about 1.69 million are refugees in neighbouring countries. Uganda is host to majority of South Sudan refugee population followed by Ethiopia and Kenya respectively. The situation has further escalated since the beginning of 2017 with about 161,800 people arriving in Uganda alone, thus bringing the total number of South Sudan refugees in Uganda to about 801,800 persons. Of these persons about 58 % are children and 56 % women and girls.

48. In the area of food insecurity and malnutrition, this has reached unprecedented levels across the country, with two counties declaring localized famine. It was reported that about 100,000 persons faced starvation in these two areas. Indeed, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission visited one of the counties and what he witnessed prompted the solidarity gesture of the donation of US\$ 200,000.00 to assist in alleviating the situation.

49. The situation as at now has also affected gravely, the protection environment in South Sudan amongst the population, particularly, those in displacement. Civilians continue to be killed indiscriminately and are often victims of horrendous violations including sexual and gender –based violence. In 2016 alone, over 2600 cases of sexual and gender-based violence were reported. This is about 62% increase over such violations in 2015. 97% of these reported cases were women and girls. It was also noted by several interlocutors that rape continues to be used as a weapon of war.

50. The current situation in South Sudan makes the operating environment for humanitarian workers extremely difficult if not impossible. Both humanitarian relief and workers are unable to access affected population in most parts of the country. Humanitarians therefore, are faced with the constant challenge of reaching population in severe needs due to the constant clashes between government forces and other militants as well as between belligerent non-state actors in different parts of the country.

51. It is instructive to note that South Sudan has recorded more deaths of aid workers than in any other conflict situation globally. Aid workers continue to be killed with over 80 killed since the beginning of the crises in 2013, while 12 aid workers have so far been killed in the first third of 2017 alone. Constant attack on humanitarian relief convoys makes delivery of vital supplies impossible.

52. There are about 1.97 million persons that are internally displaced in South Sudan. In the month of April 2017 alone, about 200,000 persons were forced to flee their homes due to the escalation of conflict in several locations across the country alone. Renewed fighting by government forces displaced about 100,000 persons alone in parts of Jonglei State. Fighting in other parts of Upper Nile have resulted in the further displacement of another 25,000 persons. Government offensive in Western Bahar El Ghaza caused an additional Displacement of 24,000 persons. For the moment displacement of persons within the borders of the country continues with no abatement in sight.

53. Amidst all these, the government is embarking on a voluntary repatriation programme. The government has facilitated the return programme of about 6,800 persons from the Protection of Civilians Camp of the United Nations back to their states of origin. Nonetheless, the persistent conflicts in different parts of the country remain the major drivers of displacement and constitute a huge impediment to a more robust and sustained return programme.

54. The fact of the matter is that the solution to the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan is for the guns to be silenced. As put rather succinctly by the Humanitarian Coordinator in South Sudan **'you cannot continue to mop the floor while the tap is on'** seems to capture the sense of the moment. The dire humanitarian situation is human induced and as long the conflict continues and total cease fire is not achieved, the humanitarian situation will continue to worsen.

III. THE FOURTH ANNUAL HUMANITARIAN SYMPOSIUM

55. The fourth annual humanitarian symposium was held from 28-20 November in Nairobi, Kenya. The symposium provided the opportunity to dialogue and engage with stakeholders to identify necessary areas of synergies in current local, regional and international initiatives that could support achievement of the objectives of AU humanitarian agenda in the next 10 years. In this regard, the symposium aimed to identify critical elements of the proposed 10 year AU Plan of Action on humanitarian effectiveness in Africa. It also aimed to identify common trends in humanitarian action with a view to developing a comprehensive strategy and approach for their effective implementation.

56. The symposium provided the opportunity to define the AU humanitarian agenda in the next 10 years through action plan. The dialogue helped shape the detailed and articulated key issues such as preparedness, transition from relief to recovery and resilience amongst others. It also focused on capacity development at all levels to better address humanitarian action. Furthermore, the symposium stressed the vital need to harmonize AU frameworks, processes and documents in preparation for the establishment of the African Humanitarian Agency (AHA) which will serve as a depository of information on humanitarian action, data on first responders, as well as activity of dissemination of information. Finally, the symposium recommended that the action plan, when concluded should reflect the voice of affected populations and civil society and media

IV. COMMEMORATION OF THE 43RD WORLD REFUGEE DAY 20 JUNE 2017

Visit of Nguenyiel Refugee Camp in Gambella, Ethiopia

57. The World Refugee Day was observed under the theme of *'We Stand Together with Refugees'*, on 20 June 2017 in Nguenyiel South Sudanese Refugee Camp in Gambella Western Ethiopia. The event was celebrated in the presence of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, H.E. Dr. Filippo Grandi, The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia H.E Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu and H.E Amb. Simeon Oyono Esono Angué the Chairperson of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and IDPs, and the Ambassador of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

58. While at the refugee camp, the Chairperson of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees announced a pledge of USD100, 000 (one hundred thousand USD) to UNHCR to support the activities of the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs of Ethiopia (ARRA). This camp was chosen because it hosts refugees from South Sudan.

59. The refugee crisis in South Sudan is considered one of the most devastating crisis in recent times. The commemoration was marked by appeal for a durable solution with a view to attain sustainable peace, democratic governance and inclusive socio-economic development in South Sudan.

Open Session of the AU Peace and Security Council on Responses to Humanitarian Emergencies in Africa.

60. Under the leadership of H.E. Amb. Susan Sikaneta, Ambassador of the Republic of Zambia and Chair of the PSC for the Month of June, the Peace and Security Council in commemoration of the World Refugee Day, held the Open Session on Policy Responses to Humanitarian Emergencies in Africa on Wednesday, 21 June 2017. The Session was attended by H. E Dr. Filipo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, who addressed Council and presented the refugee situation in Africa.

61. He highlighted the situation in South Sudan, Somalia, DRC, Mali and the Great Lakes Region. The protracted humanitarian situation of Saharawi Arab Republic was also highlighted at the meeting. The need to deal with proximate causes including conflicts, terrorism and violent extremism as well as deep-seated structural causes including governance deficit, insecurity, poverty and underdevelopment were discussed. The 2016 New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants and the development of a Global Compact on Refugees as well as the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) were discussed at length.

62. The Peace and Security Council supported the development of the new framework as it aims at addressing large-scale movements of refugees and protracted refugee situations through 1) Easing pressure on host countries and communities; 2) Enhancing refugee self-reliance; 3) Expanding third-country solutions; and 4) Supporting conditions in countries of origin for return of refugees in safety and dignity. The PSC requested UNHCR to engage the African Union in the development of the Global Compact on Refugees and Comprehensive Refugee Response Frame Work taking into consideration the AU's Common African Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness, which highlights the centrality of the State in the Humanitarian space in Africa.

Uganda Solidarity Summit on Refugees 22 - 23 June 2017

63. The Solidarity Summit on Refugees is jointly organized by Government of Uganda, the Office of the United Nations Secretary - General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The Solidarity Summit is aimed at soliciting support for the 2 million South Sudanese displaced in Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya, DRC, and CAR and for the 2 million South Sudanese displaced internally in South Sudan.

The African Union is being represented at this historic Refugee Summit by H.E. Madam Minata Samate Cessouma, the Commissioner for Political Affairs and H.E. Amb. Simeon Oyono Esono Angué the Chairperson of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and IDPs.

64. The year 2019 will mark the 50th Anniversary of The 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Situation in Africa and the 10th Anniversary of African Union Convention on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. These two Conventions constitute the most comprehensive treatise of how the African Union and its Member States commit to address and redress the plight of refugee and internally displaced persons through solidarity, humaneness, burden-sharing, the spirit of Pan-Africanism and Ubuntu. Therefore, 2019 is an important year as we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Kampala Convention and the 50th anniversary of the Refugee Convention and the PRC Sub-Committee on refugees.

V. CONCLUSION

65. In spite of its funding challenges, the PRC Sub-Committee of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons, successfully carried out most of the activities it set out in the roadmap for the year 2016. The Sub-Committee in 2017, is already embarking on its activities which began with the assessment mission to South Sudan. It is instructive to note that of the three looming famine situations that have been identified on the continent, a common thread that run through all the situations is the unpleasant role played by persistent conflicts in driving further these dire humanitarian situations. The protracted conflicts in Somalia, South Sudan and North East Nigeria serve as drivers. The drought situations in Somalia and North East Nigeria is further deepened by the decreasing humanitarian space which disallows humanitarian action in the form of distribution of relief materials and other supplies including humanitarian workers. In South Sudan, the ongoing conflict in the country has not allowed for an unfettered humanitarian access to be created.

66. In conclusion, it is hoped that efforts will be redoubled to ensure a speedy resolution of these conflicts to allow resilience to be built in order to create appropriate coping mechanisms at the community level and rebuild the livelihoods of affected populations.

67. The PRC Sub Committee delegations would also like to seize the opportunity to sincerely thank the governments and people of all the Member States in which humanitarian assessment missions were conducted, namely, the Republic of Benin, the Republic of Chad, Kingdom of Lesotho, The Republic of Namibia, the Republic of Niger, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Republic of Rwanda, and the Republic of South Sudan for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded the various assessment missions. The Sub-committee will also like thank the UN Agencies and other partners which facilitated the assessment missions in the various countries for the support given during the exercise.

68. ~~68.~~ The PRC Subcommittee will ensure that all the assessment mission that were not undertaken in 2016 will be become part of the planned missions for 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- From the foregoing it is recommended that, the Commission work in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in implementing the New York Declaration on Large Scale Movement of Refugees particularly with regard to implementing the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework;
- The Commission to work together with the Office of the United Nations Secretary General and the UNHCR to organize an activity that will bring global visibility to forced displacements in Africa.
- Recommends that, the newly adopted humanitarian architecture be implemented and should be supported by a 10 year Plan of Action;
- Recommends that the Harare Plan of Action which emanated from the Conference of State Parties to the Kampala Convention be implemented;
- Recommends that, a Donor/Pledging Conference be organized to raise resources to replenish the Special Emergency Assistance Fund (SEAF);
- Recommends that the Commission organize a Return exercise for stranded African Migrants in transit and destination countries in collaboration with International Organization for Migration.
- Recommends that 2019 be adopted as the Year of Refugees, Returnees and IDPs;

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