PEACE, PROSPERITY AND
REGIONAL INTEGRATION

NAIROBI DECLARATION ON DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR SOMALI REFUGEES AND REINTEGRATION OF RETURNEES IN SOMALIA

NAIROBI, KENYA, 25TH MARCH 2017

I. Preamble

We, the Heads of State and Government of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), convening in Nairobi, Kenya on 25th March 2017 at the Special Summit on protection and durable solutions for Somali refugees and reintegration of returnees in Somalia:

1. **Deeply concerned** that more than two million Somalis have been displaced in one of the world's most protracted displacement crises, that has now entered its third decade, with over a million internally displaced persons (IDPs), while nearly 900,000 are refugees in the region and Yemen, many of whom are women and children - most of them now third generation;

2. **Condemning** in the strongest terms all forms of sectarianism, tribalism, terrorism and extremism which constitute the root causes of refugee movements;

3. **Welcoming and applauding** the election in Somalia of a new Parliament in December 2016 and the election of President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed in February 2017 as major steps towards the stabilisation of the country;

4. **Further welcoming** the appointment of Ambassador Mohamed Affey as the UNHCR Special Envoy for the Somali Refugee Situation and appreciating the mandate and responsibilities of UNHCR to provide protection and seek durable solutions for refugees, and its contribution to collective efforts to support returnees and internally displaced persons;

5. **Noting with concern** the new influxes of Somali refugees into IGAD Member States and the suffering of IDPs in Somalia as a result of the on-going severe drought, aggravated by the effects of climate change;

6. **Recognizing** the role of Yemen in hosting Somali refugees, and taking note of the impact of the ongoing conflict and its effect on their safety and protection;

7. **Expressing grave concern** that Al-Shabaab and other terrorist groups continue to pose a serious threat to the security, peace and stability of Somalia and the region;

8. **Noting** the changing international environment and commitment to finding durable solutions for Somali refugees;

9. **Specifically recalling** relevant national, regional and international strategies, frameworks and initiatives, notably: the 2014 Addis Ababa Commitment towards Somali Refugees; the 2016 New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants, including its Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF); and the 2017 Mogadishu Declaration on Regional Cooperation on the Current Drought;

10. **Recognizing** the need for a comprehensive regional approach and strong co-operation between Somalia and countries of the region on a range of political, security, humanitarian, peace building, development, economic and trade issues to find lasting solutions to forced displacement;

11. **Cognizant** of the neglect of the Somali crisis in the past and calling upon the international community to increase engagement and support for Somalia;

12. **Commending** the visible stabilisation achievements made so far as Somalia moves into a new phase of consolidating peace and building a functioning federal State with the support of IGAD Member States and the international community;

13. **Applauding** the continuing work in Somalia to build functioning federal and state institutions, democratic governance and to strengthen the rule of law to meet the needs of the Somali population, in particular stimulating jobs and livelihoods, restoring vital public services and rehabilitating social infrastructure, in order to deliver socio-economic and peace dividends to local communities;

14. **Commending** the extraordinary efforts and sacrifice that IGAD Member States have made to protect and support refugees and their continuing initiatives and commitments on the same;

15. **Affirming** the new commitment by IGAD Member States to resolve the Somali refugee situation; and,

16. **Acknowledging** the efforts and initiatives of the international community and other stakeholders to support the delivery of durable solutions for Somali refugees, including the upcoming International Conference on Somalia to be held in London in May 2017 to accelerate progress on security and agree on the forthcoming international partnership to help Somalia remain on track towards increased peace and prosperity by 2020.

We now hereby solemnly declare as follows:

II. Objectives:

1. **Collectively pursue** a comprehensive regional approach to deliver durable solutions for Somali refugees, whilst maintaining protection and promoting self-reliance in the countries of asylum, with the support of the international community and consistent with international responsibility sharing as outlined in the New York Declaration's Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF);

2. **Adopt** the accompanying Nairobi Comprehensive Plan of Action for Durable Solutions for Somali refugees which, together with this declaration, represents our commitment to deliver a comprehensive regional response; and,

3. **Create** an enabling environment for safe, sustainable and voluntary return and reintegration of Somali refugees.

III. On Solutions for Somalia

1. **Facilitate** the voluntary return of Somali refugees in safety and dignity by addressing the root causes of displacement, violence and armed conflict in order to achieve the necessary political solutions and the peaceful settlement of disputes;

2. **Accelerate and scale-up** stabilisation and reconstruction efforts with the full and effective participation of women;

3. **Provide** support to the Federal Government of Somalia through increased and coordinated regional engagement in the development of its security institutions, specifically the Somali National Army and the Somali Police Force, to build its own capacity to deliver security and the rule of law through an effective, representative and accountable national security system and justice sector;

4. **Support** the strengthening of security and stability, by enhancing the discharge of the mandate of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and reinforce its capacity and that of the National Security Forces of Somalia to enable unimpeded humanitarian access and the delivery of assistance to the civilian population, as well as development-based engagements;

5. **Further support** accelerated socio-economic stabilisation, the provision of basic services and livelihoods in Somalia through increased planning and investment in development to facilitate the voluntary return and sustainable reintegration of returnees and IDPs in line with the National Development Plan (NDP);

6. **Undertake** a comprehensive survey of the skills of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons as a major step towards supporting and further strengthening the State-led Durable Solutions Initiative (DSI) for return and reintegration in Somalia in keeping with the National Development Plan (NDP); and,

7. **Create** enabling conditions for the Somali Diaspora to continue contributing to the recovery of the Somali economy and livelihoods through remittances, humanitarian and development assistance and participation in reconstruction efforts.

IV. On Solutions for Refugees

1. **Strengthen** the protection of refugees and respond effectively to the drought in the region to prevent new forced displacement;

2. **Mobilize** resources and coordinate the efforts of international agencies, host communities and refugees to prevent environmental degradation and rehabilitate degraded ecosystems in refugee hosting areas;

3. **Maintain** asylum space and, with the support of the international community, improve the living conditions of refugees and host communities;

4. **Enhance,** with the support of the international community, education, training and skills development for refugees to reduce their dependence on humanitarian assistance, and prepare them for gainful employment in host communities and upon return;

5. **Call upon** States to align domestic laws and policies, including civil documentation, in line with refugee status under the 1951 Refugee Convention obligations in order to enable refugees to access gainful employment and self-reliance;

6. **Progressively advance** alternative arrangements to refugee camps and facilitate the free movement of refugees and their integration into national development plans and access to services;

7. **Adopt** a 'whole of society' approach to refugee protection and assistance by enabling civil society, diaspora and private sector actors to support refugees, especially women, children and the vulnerable;

8. **Create** a better environment for Somali refugee women by mainstreaming gender in all instruments, policies, programs and action plans focused on bringing durable solutions for Somali refugees; and,

9. **Strengthen** the capacity of governments in host countries and Somalia for the delivery of services, prioritizing civil registration and documentation of refugees and returnees.

V. On Support to Host Countries to Protect and Assist Refugees

1. **Maintain** protection in countries of asylum and respond effectively to the drought affecting the region;

2. **Strengthen** the capacity of countries in the region to contribute to the protection and provision of assistance to Somali refugees;

3. **Commit** to continue enhancing security within refugee camps and out-of-camp refugee populations;

4. **Ensure** the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements; and,

5. **Promote** policies of national unity and social cohesion that strengthen peaceful co-existence between Somali refugees and host communities.

VI. On Regional Cooperation on Durable Solutions for Refugees

1. **Support** the commitment by the Federal Government of Somalia to organise a National Forum on refugees and IDP solutions in line with the National Development Plan;

2. **Maintain** the solidarity and generosity of States and communities in the region towards Somali refugees by committing to continue to provide asylum to persons in need of international protection and durable solutions;

3. **Strengthen** regional co-operation on durable solutions for Somali refugees through the creation of an IGAD Multi-Donor Trust Fund channelled through the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia to support and facilitate the creation of an enabling environment and the rolling out of durable solutions, including safe, sustainable and voluntary return of refugees;

4. **Mobilize** support and resources for the development of borderland areas and cross border co-operation, including trans-boundary resource management, cross border investment and trade, which contribute to regional stability and prosperity; and,

5. **Strengthen** the existing regional mechanisms, including the IGAD Ministerial Committee on refugees and migrants, and other sectoral ministerial committees to coordinate, implement and monitor commitments to durable solutions for Somali refugees.

VII. On International Sharing of Responsibility for Refugees

1. **Call upon** international actors to honour and translate pledges made into concrete support for Somalia;

2. **Further call upon** International Financial Institutions, bilateral, regional and international partners, to accelerate Somalia's debt relief process and provide access to financial assistance, concessionary loans and essential support to facilitate development inside the country;

3. **Encourage** increased involvement and engagement of development actors, including multilateral development banks to improve access to concessional development financing to support affected communities;

4. **Further encourage** the relocation of humanitarian and development actors to Somalia in order to further support assistance, stabilisation and recovery efforts, and as a confidence building measure;

5. **Call upon** the international community to demonstrate solidarity and responsibility sharing through enhancing resettlement for Somali refugees as well as expediting the opening of complementary pathways for third country admissions;

6. **Enhance** coordination and coherence between all actors, including, where possible, the integration of humanitarian and development responses, for the effective delivery of programmes in support of Somalia's peace building and state building processes;

7. **Request** UNHCR to work with IGAD Member States and the IGAD Secretariat and in partnership with other relevant humanitarian and development actors in fulfilment of the implementation of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the application of the CRRF at the national and regional level;

8. **Call upon,** in the spirit of responsibility sharing, the international community to provide the requisite resources to support IGAD Member States, humanitarian and development actors to implement the Nairobi Comprehensive Plan of Action for Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees;

9. **Request** development actors and multilateral donors to mobilize resources to promote alternatives to refugee camps and the socio-economic development for the mutual benefit of refugees and host communities; and,

10. **Invite** the humanitarian and development actors, including the private sector, Somali Diaspora, International Financial Institutions, regional development banks and bilateral donors, to combine their efforts, and strengthen collaboration and inter-linkages in support of durable solutions.

We commit to remain actively seized of the matter.