



CONCEPT NOTE

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF REFUGEES IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

5-7 March 2019

Speke Resort Munyonyo, Uganda

1. Currently over 4 million refugees and asylum seekers originate from the Great Lakes region¹ including from Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and South Sudan and Sudan.
2. Continued high levels of new forced displacement combined with the protracted presence of refugees in the region constitutes a source of tension and mistrust between neighboring countries. In line with the decision of the Eighth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism (ROM) of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region, the United Nations Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) together with UN partners and others have been conducting consultations on ways to raise attention regarding the scope and gravity of the displacement situation, and to agree and implement comprehensive and durable solutions, notably for cases of protracted displacement.
3. On 8 October 2018, the Ninth high-level meeting of the ROM held in Kampala, Uganda, encouraged the ongoing consultations between the UN Special Envoy and ICGLR towards the convening of a regional Ministerial level meeting to discuss concrete steps to find durable solutions for protracted displacement in the Great Lakes region, and endorsed H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda to lead efforts to address this issue.

¹ For this purpose of this consultation we define the Great Lakes region as the 13 signatory countries of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement (2013).

4. The high-level meeting of Ministers in charge of refugees in the Great Lakes region will be held in line with the Global Compact on Refugees adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2018 as a blueprint guiding refugee responses. The high-level meeting will also seek alignment to the 2019 African Union ‘Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement’.

Objectives

5. The objectives of the Ministerial meeting are as follows:
- a. Raise the visibility of the scale of the refugee crisis in the Great Lakes region and the need to address the most acute life-saving needs.
 - b. Seek commitment from the countries of the region:
 - 1. To prevent violence and armed conflict as a driver and root cause of forced displacement.
 - 2. To reinvigorate existing Tripartite Commissions for the voluntary safe and dignified repatriation of refugees.
 - 3. To implement local integration of protracted refugees and their progressive inclusion into national systems as a key and viable durable solution.
 - c. Request countries of the region, with the support of United Nations Country Teams, World Bank and partners, to develop socio-economic local integration plans benefiting host communities and protracted refugees creating a win-win situation focused on local development, self-reliance and resilience.
 - d. Seek agreement from the countries of the region to develop a regional strategy for durable solutions for refugees.

Format

6. On the first two days Government experts and participants will review the refugee situation in the Great Lakes region. Participants are expected to review and agree on concrete recommendations for comprehensive and durable solutions for protracted caseloads of refugees with a focus on local integration in line with the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).

7. On the third day the Ministers will review the refugee situation in the Great Lakes region, review the recommendations made by the experts and adopt an Outcome Document.

Organizing institutions

8. Under the lead of the Republic of Uganda, the Ministerial meeting will be co-organized by the Office of the Special Envoy and ICGLR.

Participants

9. The Ministerial meeting will host the following participants:

- Ministers in charge of refugees representing the 13 PSC Framework signatory countries to be accompanied by maximum three Government representatives with expertise in displacement matters;
- United Nations: Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the Great Lakes region; UNDP Administrator; UN High Commissioner for Refugees; UN Resident Coordinators of 13 PSC Framework signatory countries; Regional UN Directors; Regional Refugees Coordinators for the DRC, Burundi, and South Sudan situations;
- ICGLR Executive Secretary;
- Special Representative of the AU and Head of the AU Liaison Office for the Great Lakes Region,
- Members of the diplomatic corps;
- World Bank;
- Civil Society Organizations;

Output

10. At the end of the Ministerial meeting, an Outcome Document will be adopted setting out political commitments on implementing comprehensive and durable solutions for protracted displacement in the Great Lakes region.

Date and venue

11. The Ministerial meeting will take place on 7 March 2019 and will be preceded by an experts meeting from 5-6 March 2019. All meetings will take place in Speke Resort Munyonyo, Kampala, Uganda.