



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

Executive Director of UN-Habitat speech at the World Refugee Day celebrations at Kakuma-Kalobeyei in Kenya

Date: 19 June 2023

- **Excellencies,**
- **Kenya National Government Delegation – Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Department of Refugee Services,**
- **Turkana County Governor - Jeremiah Ekamais Lomorukai Napotikan,**
- **High Commissioner for Refugees - Filippo Grandi,**
- **Camp Manager,**
- **Honourable Guests,**
- **Host and Refugee Leaders and Representatives**

A very good morning to all of you!

I would first like to thank the County Government of Turkana and the High Commissioner of the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), who have invited me to co-host this year's World Refugee Day celebrations in Kakuma-Kalobeyei. It gives us a good opportunity to highlight the good collaboration between the two agencies so far.

In Africa, the number of refugees has grown rapidly over the last three decades and currently stands close to 24.2 million people. Kenya has continued to receive a high number of refugees and is currently one of the top three refugee-hosting countries in Africa. Kenya is now home to over 600,000 refugees and several thousand stateless persons. The phenomenon is driven by conflict, spatial inequalities, and crises. Climate change has also increasingly become a key driver for displacement and increases vulnerability for those forced to flee.

As you know, it is now five years since the adoption of the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) by most of the UN Member States. This provides Member States

with guidance to address the main drivers and challenges of migration and forced displacement. UN-Habitat is committed to implementing the Global Compact in partnership with the Government, and humanitarian and development actors, to ensure that we provide coherent and place-specific support to national authorities, city leaders, and communities. We believe the guidelines are important to help us improve refugee settlements and refugee hosting cities to make them liveable for all inhabitants.

Since 2016, UN-Habitat has been honoured to play the role of a bridge between humanitarian and development partners, supporting the Turkana County Government, UNHCR, and the communities we serve. We have supported the process of developing a knowledgeable community empowered to be innovative, self-sustaining, and resilient to challenges, adhering to the principles of sustained equitable, and prosperous development.

The model of settlement established here in Kalobeyei Settlement has created a precedent for the transformation of refugee camps into settlements. The move demonstrates how refugees and the host community can settle in an accessible, vibrant, and functional urban settlement with adequate social and physical infrastructure and diverse economic opportunities.

The possibilities of supporting refugee inclusion in national and local development and municipal plans have proven to be a significant contributor to Kenya's economic performance mainly because of the role that cities and urban areas play in the provision of public services, business growth, and the related issue of expansion of opportunities for employment for both communities.

We would like to applaud the National Government for taking the step to promote enabling policies that support refugee inclusion. Additionally, we also thank and congratulate the County Government of Turkana and particularly His Excellency the Governor for supporting planned urbanization in areas hosting refugees which has been demonstrated by the chartering of Kakuma Municipality.

As I conclude, I would like to say that we have made commendable progress towards refugee inclusion; however, we still have challenges that we need to address to achieve sustainable development to 'Leave No One Behind'. We must take advantage of the opportunities presented by urbanization as an engine of sustained and inclusive economic growth, social and cultural development, and environmental protection and of its potential contributions to the achievement of transformative and sustainable development.

I would like to assure you that UN-Habitat is committed to working with all partners to use sustainable urbanization as a driver of development to improve the urban environment and living conditions for all. I wish you a fruitful celebration for World Refugee Day, and we look forward to working with all the partners and the Government to ensure that both hosts and refugees are included in the urban development agenda.

Thank you!

Asante Sana!