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STATEMENT

BY

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DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

AT THE

THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ON AGENDA ITEM 62: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH
COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO
REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND
HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS

NEW YORK, 06TH NOVEMBER, 2013
Mr. Chairman,

Nigeria welcomes the opportunity to share its views on Agenda Item 62: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions. Nigeria commends the effort of the Secretary-General for putting together detailed reports on this agenda item.

2. The last year has witnessed a number of crises that have resulted in increased displacement of refugees globally. Since January 2013, the situation of refugees and asylum seekers in Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Somali and in my own country, Nigeria, has increased our concern for refugee protection.

3. Political instability, natural disasters, climate change and armed conflicts have all contributed in creating a difficult environment for the survival of vulnerable people across the globe. Since the beginning of the year, several Member States have witnessed displacement of persons thereby raising challenges of hunger, starvation and involuntary movement of people around the world.

4. We note with high praise however, the UNHCR has risen to the task and brought the situation, as much as possible, under control. We thank the UNHCR for its activities in Africa, Middle East and the rest of the world and for creating opportunities, in collaboration with other stakeholders, to mobilize resources and support for refugees and internally displaced persons. We thank UNHCR staff for their commitment and working in difficult situations to save lives, and in some cases, paying the ultimate price.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Nigeria notes that without the support of the international community, particularly the donor States, the work of UNHCR could not proceed without hindrance. The contribution of donor States to humanitarian needs have gone a long way in bringing the refugees situation under control. We therefore, appreciate the noble action of donors and their steadfast support to UNHCR which helps to ensure a conducive environment for the operation of humanitarian workers as well as increased protection.
6. We also thank the refugee hosting States for their sacrifice in keeping their borders open at the most critical moments of need, sometimes at the expense of their own security. Nigeria has over years, played host to refugees from several countries and is aware of the problems such situations give rise to.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Today, acts of terrorism have become a major cause of displacement of persons both within nations and across borders. This constitutes a major threat to global peace and security and undermines the capacity of countries for sustained development. The reign of terror anywhere is an assault on our collective security which calls for a collective response. We therefore, strongly condemn the perpetration of terrorist acts anywhere, and by any one, as this leads to displacement and death of innocent persons including women and children.

8. Over the past two years, Nigeria has been fighting the terrorist group called Boko Haram whose attacks on communities in the country have created problems of displacement. The Government has expended substantial resources to restore peace and stability and avert displacement of persons and create room for peace. We can report that the efforts are beginning to pay off, and we will continue to solicit for the usual understanding and support of the International Community to defeat terrorism.

9. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons is currently prevalent in Africa and poses a grave threat to the peace and security of the region. The trade in arms exacerbates displacement, reduces protection, and creates more refugees among the population already devastated by poverty, hunger and malnutrition. This makes more urgent the need to bring illicit arms trade in Africa under control. Nigeria therefore calls on the international community to do all that is necessary to halt illicit transfer of arms to Africa and adhere to the recently adopted Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

10. Durable solution to refugee problems revolves around voluntary repatriation, integration and resettlement. These three options constitute the elements of international protection anchored on UNHCR instruments. The 1961 Convention on the Status of Refugees and the 1954 Convention on
the Reduction of Statelessness remain sacrosanct and provide succor to the various challenges of protection and caring for refugees and asylum seekers worldwide.

11. Finally Mr. Chairman, Nigeria acknowledges the importance of these two Conventions as basis for collective action and calls for maximum utilization of the instruments to address the mounting problems of refugees worldwide.

12. I thank you.