Permanent Mission of the United Republic of Tanzania
to the United Nations

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

STATEMENT BY

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

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

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Chairperson
Allow me to begin by thanking Mr. Antonio Guterres, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for his elaborative and informative statement. We commend him for his leadership as well as the staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for their dedication in offering protection, assistance and hope to refugees around the world. We pay particular tribute to the commitment of UNHCR staff to the important mission of their Agency.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Zambia on behalf of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC).

Chairperson
My delegation welcomes the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and takes note of the recommended institutional reforms for more effective delivery.

My delegation notes with concern the increase of refugees at the end of 2012, when there were 2.8 million refugees in Africa, more than the previous year, representing one quarter of the global refugee population. This is due to the eruption of violence in some parts of Africa including a resurgence of fighting in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic and ongoing conflict in the South Kordofan and Blue Nile States in the Sudan forcing hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes in search of safety.

Chairperson
As a host state, we wish to share the experience of Tanzania in resolving and finding solutions to refugee issues. The United Republic of Tanzania with the assistance and co-operation of the office of the High Commissioner currently hosts refugees mostly from DRC and Burundi.

It is imperative to note that, despite the rise in the numbers and scales of conflicts reported worldwide, some parts of Africa, notably the Great Lakes Region (*with an exception of Eastern DRC*), have seen and experienced relative stability in the last decade, compelling to sustainable voluntary repatriation. Where conditions improve and when circumstances permit, refugees need to be encouraged to return to their countries of origin.
Chairperson, Dear delegates

On behalf of the United Republic of Tanzania, I wish to extend our sincere appreciation, for the commitment, determination and the general support provided by the International Donor Community in finding a durable and a lasting solution to the protracted situation involving some 35,000 Burundian Refugees, who had lived in exile in Tanzania for almost two decades.

The successful and orderly return conducted in conditions of safety and dignity and in line with International norms and standards and the eventual closure of Mtabila refugee camp in Tanzania in December, 2012, will remain a milestone achievement for many years to come. The closure of Mtabila refugee camp is a rare reflection of what the International community, can achieve and indeed has given the International Community an opportunity to open a new chapter on lessons learnt in addressing humanitarian interventions, especially on issues partnering to orderly returns.

Chairperson, Dear delegates

The naturalization of the 1972 caseload involving 162,000 Burundians refugees, which was suspended in 2010, has been a moot subject, both at local and International level. Due to its sensitivity and the coverage, we cannot remain silent.

Over the years, the United Republic of Tanzania, has remained and continues to be an icon of African’s generosity and hospitality to refugees. As a nation we are committed to safeguard that reputation, and indeed we remain committed and determined to solving the 1972 caseload issue in the most transparent way, and in a manner that will safeguarding the interests of the parties involved. While to some, this issue might be seen to have taken long, it is nonetheless imperative to underscore the need to involve all relevant stakeholders in the decision making process, for the outcome to be socially desirable and implementable.

Chairperson,

The United Republic of Tanzania continues with total dedication in pursuing her International obligation in hosting the needy refugees. In the pursuit of this noble and humanitarian cause, we remain focused and guided by the need for finding durable and lasting solution to the refugee problem.
On the *Somali Refugee Problem*, to which the High Commissioner has repeatedly alluded to over the years, the United Republic of Tanzania, is in the final stage of concluding the naturalization and integrating for all Somali refugees who had applied for citizenship.

**Chairperson,**

In conclusion, let me reiterate the United Republic of Tanzania’s continued commitment in upholding her International obligations, in line with the various conventions to which we are party. We will continue to keep our doors open to genuine and credible asylum seekers and refugees, seeking sanctuary in Tanzania, and will continue to engage the International Donor Community in seeking durable and lasting solutions to the refugee cause.

*I thank you for your attention.*