



# **DJIBOUTI**

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***Statement of H.E  
ISMAÏL OMAR GUELLEH  
President of the Republic of Djibouti***

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***Summit on Refugees***

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***Praise with God that peace and blessing are on the  
Prophet, his family and his companions!***

***Tuesday Sept 20, 2016***

**Mister President,  
Excellencies, Distinguished Heads of State and Government,  
Secretary General Bank-Ki Moon,**

At the outset, I would like to express Djibouti's gratitude to President Obama and the Co-hosts, Secretary-General Bank Ki-moon, as well as Canada, Ethiopia, Germany, Jordan, Mexico and Sweden for convening this Leaders' Summit on Refugees.

We are, indeed, witnessing an unprecedented rise in the numbers of refugees in the world. The figures are staggering and the challenges enormous. Host countries are stunned by the magnitude of the task, and the few global institutions dedicated to supporting these vulnerable groups face complex operational challenges and paralyzing funding shortfalls.

This is why your initiative, Excellency, is timely.

The overreaching goals that we set for ourselves are achievable if only we are successful in developing a fair and coordinated burden sharing mechanism.

No single country can effectively tackle this problem by itself. Accepting, feeding, providing shelter, health care, immunizing and resettling such a large number of people can only be done at an institutional level.

We must all rise up to the challenge! And as we urgently rededicate ourselves to the protection of the increasing number of refugees in the world, we must also reflect on how to energize our collective efforts to end the extended conflicts and factors that caused so many people to flee their homes.

Since its independence, my country, the Republic of Djibouti has continuously hosted a large number of refugees from neighboring countries fleeing the horrors of war or the devastating effects of drought. In Africa in general and in our region, the Horn of Africa in particular, natural events, human actions, climate change and environmental degradation acted as a threat multiplier compounding displacement.

Indeed, despite our limited resources, we have been unwavering in our commitment to help those seeking refuge. We have generously opened our homes and our hearts, extended assistance in a humane way. We consistently demonstrated solidarity with our brothers and sisters and this is in line with the values we cherish as a country and as people.

In this regard, we have set up an agency dedicated exclusively to providing assistance to refugees and disaster victims, as the humanitarian crises affecting the Horn of Africa are at once acute and durable.

Taking into account the Geneva Convention on Refugees, we have adopted in 1977 major legal provisions to ensure respect for refugee rights. These provisions were afterwards enhanced by the establishment of a National Eligibility Committee for Refugee Status which, through fair and affective procedures, allow us to make decisions in strict compliance with the rights of the people and fundamental freedoms.

This refugee legislation and mechanisms helped us regulate the asylum and refugee status determination process and provide various privileges to all refugees, including protection and non-refoulement.

As we are engaged in a continued effort to upgrade and strengthen our legal framework, we recently drafted, examined and approved a comprehensive refugee legislation that is in line with the provisions of the relevant refugee and Human Rights instruments signed by Djibouti.

We also deem it important that these refugees, in particular children in protracted refugee situations, and with no immediate prospect of finding a durable solution, be given an opportunity to continue to learn and acquire the educational tools that will help them integrate. We are currently engaged in an effort to identify solutions aimed at

achieving a better coordination and coherence between the educational system and the curricula used in the Camp.

The Government of Djibouti, also through the Ministry of Health, has engaged consultations with UNHCR Office in Djibouti and various stake-holders to make health insurance available to the refugees in the camp.

It is obvious that such endeavors would require adequate level of support from our partners as we wrestle with so many challenges. We are facing competing priorities and we have invested a lot of resources to improve access to basic social services, expand opportunities and enhance environment management for communities hosting refugees.

To conclude, Mr. President, allow me again to renew my appreciation to you for giving us an opportunity to contribute in alleviating the plight of millions of refugees.

**Thank you for your attention.**