

NGO statement on Africa

Dear Chair,

This statement is delivered on behalf of a wide range of NGOs.

In 2023, displacement in the African continent has continued to increase.

In **Sudan**, there has been a rise in forced displacement, a deteriorating protection environment, and imminent danger of famine.

NGOs call for:

- Protection of civilians, a permanent ceasefire, and facilitation of humanitarian access.
- A political process leading to sustainable peace which includes the views of all stakeholders, especially women, and youth.
- Provision of integration support to Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries with a strong focus on MHPSS and alternative learning opportunities for children, delivered *with* RLOs.
- An equitable approach to be applied to Sudan's National Adaptation Plan and for the inclusion of meaningful participation and ownership of RLOs.

In **DRC**, there has been an increase in human rights abuses and continued waves of violence.

- NGOs call for intensified and targeted protection of specific groups such as women and girls.

The protection environment in the **Sahel region** has been particularly affected by violations of freedom of movement, restricted access to humanitarian aid and services for host and displaced communities.

- NGOs urge the AU, EU, and other international organizations to support the ECOWAS by providing a platform to mediate and resolve existing challenges to ease freedom of movement within the Sahel region.

The fragile situation in **Nigeria** is on-going and NGOs call for a coordinated response plan involving all stakeholders.

We wish to highlight thematic areas of importance:

Firstly, on partnerships:

Partnerships in refugee responses are a first step to address humanitarian and development challenges.

NGOs urge:

- UNHCR and States to seize the full potential of multi-stakeholder partnership models including those impacted by displacement and statelessness, based on the principles of partnership.
- Host governments to ease the restrictions on private sector partners to access displaced populations, especially refugees and IDPs in settlements and camps. This will help to support self-reliance through increased livelihood opportunities.

Secondly, on funding

The decline in funding disproportionately impacts the continent.

NGOs urge UNHCR to:

- Sustain advocacy on the urgency for funding.
- Ensure transparency in the use and allocation of funds, especially for protracted situations.

In view of discussions around ‘prioritization,’ NGOs urge UNHCR to ensure that programmes responding to the needs of children, people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations, do not run out of vital support.

Thirdly, regarding solutions

Solutions are limited, and more can be done in the prevention of conflicts and finding peaceful solutions, so refugees can return home in safety and dignity.

NGOs acknowledge efforts to improve facilitation for entry, protection and integration of refugees, their contributions to host communities must be recognised and celebrated.

- NGOs call on States to ensure that displaced populations can access rights through progressive refugee laws and policies. This will also create dividends for hosting communities in the long term and the promotion of local integration as a key durable solution.

NGOs ask for States and relevant stakeholders to increase third-country solutions.

Fourthly, on AGD

- LGBTIQ+ displaced persons are at increased risk and incur criminal penalties on account of their diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. NGOs seek enhanced and comprehensive advocacy and action to improve the situation.
- Displaced children face significant challenges and vulnerabilities; NGOs call for redoubled efforts to protect children.

Fifth, on climate change

NGOs applaud the implementation of green legacy projects in East Africa especially where environmental protection measures are taken through popular mobilization of host and displaced communities.

- NGOs recommend efforts be strengthened with specific funding allocated for climate action, and for local NGOs to access the Loss and Damage Compensation Funds.

In the Sahel, climate shocks displace and destroy livelihoods.

- NGOs recommend concrete steps are taken to reduce the adverse impacts of rainfall variability, land degradation, and desertification with specific funding allocated to climate action in the Sahel region.

The impacts of climate change in Southern Africa are increasing internal displacement.

- NGOs urge governments to be proactive by including forcibly displaced as key stakeholders in the development of National Adaptation Plans, adhering to AAP principles.

Finally, on statelessness:

Whilst commending progress on statelessness, NGOs urge governments to take steps to end statelessness, including by upholding citizens' equal right to confer nationality without discrimination.

Finally, NGOs were encouraged by the attention given to Africa at the Global Refugee Forum. Momentum and collective action will need to be sustained to protect and find durable solutions.

Further details are available on icvanetwork.org.

Thank you.