Yaounde Declaration on Solutions in the context of Forced Displacement related to the Central African Republic Crisis

I. Preamble

We, the Governments of Republic of Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Republic of Congo, the Republic of Chad, the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan, in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), convening in Yaoundé, Cameroon on 27 April 2022 at the Ministerial Conference on **"Solutions in the Context of Forced Displacement related to the Central African Republic Crisis":**

Reaffirming the permanent commitment of States to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention of 1969 governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, that all governments signatories of this declaration are parties to;

Emphasizing the importance of adhesion and ratification of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Displaced Persons in Africa adopted on 23 October 2009 (Kampala Convention);

Commending the significant efforts by the Central African Republic to implement the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (APPR), signed in Bangui on 6 February 2019, and the recommendations resulting from the National "*Dialogue Républicain"* held between 21-27 March 2022 in view to strengthen its capacity to ensure peace, stability, security and reconciliation;

Noting with great concern that over one million Central Africans have been displaced in one of the most protracted crisis with more than 600,000 internally displaced persons, and nearly 700,000 refugees;

Applauding the commendable hospitality of countries that have welcomed Central African refugees on their territories to protect and support them, as well as their ongoing initiatives and commitments in this regard;

Praising the efforts and initiatives of the international community and other stakeholders to support the delivery of protection and solutions for refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees;

Appreciating the continuous and constant support from the international community to Central African refugees hosted in the neighboring countries;

Underlining that voluntary return and reintegration must be based on objective and updated information about the situation prevailing in the country of origin and must be conducted in safety and in dignity, as part of a comprehensive and durable solutions strategy;

Acknowledging the need for increased cooperation between the Central African Republic and the main hosting countries on security, humanitarian, peacebuilding, and economic development aspects in order to find durable solutions to forced displacement;

Hereby solemnly declare as follows:

II. Objectives

1. **Collectively pursue** a regional approach to deliver solutions for refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees from the Central African Republic, whilst maintaining protection and promoting self-reliance, with the support of the international community and in accordance with the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR);

2. **Support** the ongoing reconciliation process in the Central African Republic and urge for the effective participation of forcibly displaced persons and returnees;

3. **Establish** a regional cooperation framework to strengthen protection and the search for solutions for persons forcibly displaced by the Central African crisis, with the support of the international community.

III. On strengthening the institutional and normative framework for the protection of refugees, asylum seekers, returnees and internally displaced persons

1. **Ensure** compliance of national laws, regulations and policies regulating the management of forcibly displaced populations with existing international legal frameworks and ensure their implementation, in order to guarantee the full enjoyment of the associated rights;

2. **Guarantee** the autonomy of national institutions in charge of managing refugees and internally displaced persons through the allocation of adequate resources in national budgets;

3. **Integrate** refugee registration and documentation in national registration systems, including biometric systems, in accordance with applicable data protection regulations, to facilitate the issuance of civil documentation, as well as identity and travel documents by governments agencies; and to ensure their recognition by public and private services, including financial institutions;

4. **Facilitate** access to the right to stay, in accordance with bilateral and regional agreements and under the terms of applicable laws in the countries of asylum;

5. **Ensure** protection guarantees throughout the voluntary repatriation process through Tripartite agreements or simplified arrangements governing the practical modalities of voluntary repatriation.

IV. On the promotion of socio-economic inclusion, resilience and empowerment of refugees from the Central African Republic and host communities

1. **Continue** to offer international protection to those in need and actively move towards the harmonization of public policies, standards and procedures through the exchange of good practices for the protection and solutions of Central African refugees;

2. **Ensure** that the needs of Central African refugees are included in local and national development plans, particularly in the areas of health, education, employment and social protection, and increase efforts to guarantee the enjoyment of socio-economic rights in order to promote their resilience;

3. **Facilitate** access to decent employment, arable land for agriculture and livestock, financial services, and enjoyment of rights to property for refugees under the terms of national legislations;

4. **Reinforce** self-reliance mechanisms for refugees and host communities through partnerships with the public and private sectors and development actors to provide livelihood funding for refugees and host communities in reception areas.

V. On the promotion of conducive conditions to the sustainable return and the effective reintegration of forcibly displaced persons (returnees an internally displaced persons)

1. **Support** the Central African Republic in its efforts towards the consolidation of peace, security and stability, in addressing the root causes of displacement, to foster favorable conditions for voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons in safety and dignity;

2. **Contribute** to socio-economic stabilization, inclusion of returnees, internally displaced persons and the host community in national systems including health, education, housing and livelihoods in the Central African Republic through increased investment in development areas with the support of the international community;

3. **Assist** the Central African Republic in fostering intercommunal exchanges, as well as existing initiatives in favour of peacebuilding, national reconciliation with the participation of forcibly displaced persons in order to strengthen the climate of trust;

4. **Support** the Central African Republic in its efforts to mobilize all government institutions, donors, and the private sector to ensure that returnees and internally displaced persons enjoy their civil, political, socioeconomic and cultural rights including access to basic public and social services in areas of return and displacement on par with all citizens.

VI. On establishing a regional coordination mechanism

1. **Establish** a solutions-oriented follow-up and coordination mechanism for countries affected by the Central African crisis, under the leadership of concerned States, with the support of regional institutions, UN agencies, development actors, financial institutions, the private sector, civil society and with the involvement of forcibly displaced persons and the international community in a spirit of shared responsibility and solidarity, in accordance with the commitments made in the framework of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR);

2. **Provide** this mechanism with: (i) a steering committee that includes the seven countries directly affected by the Central African crisis (with a rotating co-presidency on an annual basis, while the Central African Republic remains statutory co-president); (ii) a secretariat with UNHCR's technical support; (iii) one or several support entities such as development actors, donors, regional organizations, and UN agencies ;

3. **Give** mandate to UNHCR, in consultation with the Central African Republic, to lead the necessary consultations to determine the dates and venues of future ministerial conferences as well as the modalities for the implementation of the steering committee;

4. **Solicit** financial support for the implementation of this mechanism, including from national, regional and international partners, to ensure an adequate response to the needs of people affected by the Central African crisis and their host communities.

Yaounde, 27 April 2022

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