



**Declaration of International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Member States on the Eradication of Statelessness**

We, Member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), assembled in Kinshasa (DRC) from 27<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017, for the first Regional Conference on Statelessness in ICGLR Member States, facilitated by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and ICGLR, in the framework of UNHCR #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024:

**Noting** that millions of people around the world, including many in the ICGLR Member States are stateless, of undetermined nationality or at risk of statelessness, which limits their enjoyment of the full range of human rights enumerated in, amongst other instruments, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights;

**Recalling** that the right to nationality is a fundamental human right, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in other international and regional human rights instruments to which we ICGLR Member States are party, including the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;

**Underlining** the importance of the principles of equality and non-discrimination, particularly as they relate to the transmission of nationality to a spouse or child;

**Considering** UNHCR's mandate from the UN General Assembly to prevent and reduce statelessness as well as to protect and identify stateless persons around the world;

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**Expressing** our support for UNHCR's #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024;

**Noting** the Draft Declaration of the Third Conference of African Ministers in charge of Civil Registration, which affirms the commitment of States to improve civil registration and vital statistics;

**Welcoming** the accession to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and/ or the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness by certain ICGLR Member States;

**Welcoming** the commitments made by a number of ICGLR Member States under the 2004 Dar-es-Salaam Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region, to "adopt a common regional approach for the ratification and implementation of the UN Conventions on Statelessness, harmonize related national laws and standards, and provide refugees and displaced persons with identification documents enabling them to have access to basic services and exercise their rights";

**Welcoming** the initiative of the AU to adopt the draft Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the right to nationality and the eradication of statelessness in Africa;

**Mindful** of the need to satisfy the assistance and protection of stateless persons and to seek durable solutions in collaboration with ICGLR Member States and UNHCR support to address the root causes of statelessness and develop national laws that are in accordance with international law; and

**Convinced** that the enjoyment of the right to nationality contributes to the peace and security of the region as well as to social and economic development;

**Declare** the following:

1. **Reaffirm** the commitment of ICGLR Member States to end statelessness in our respective States in support of the UNHCR's in support of the UNHCR's #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024;

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2. **Encourage** ICGLR Member States that have not yet done so to accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Stateless Persons ;
3. **Call upon** all ICGLR Member States, with the support of UNHCR, to review their nationality laws and related legislation to bring them in line with the Conventions mentioned above;
4. **Reaffirm** our commitment to implement the relevant international and regional legal instruments on the rights of women to ensure that women and men have equal rights to acquire, change, and retain their nationality and to confer their nationality to their children and spouses ;
5. **Commit** to prevent and eradicate statelessness by reforming laws and policies related to nationality in order to include appropriate safeguards against statelessness, in particular to ensure that every child acquires a nationality at birth and that all foundlings are assisted by Member States to acquire the nationality of the State in which they are found;
6. **Recognize** the importance and urgency of obtaining concrete information on the causes of statelessness and the number and profile of stateless persons in ICGLR Member States in order to design and implement appropriate strategies to address the issue. In this effort, we encourage relevant institutions to actively participate and call upon the international community, in particular UNHCR, to support us;
7. **Reaffirm** our commitment to reduce risks of statelessness by reinforcing civil registration mechanisms, in particular to ensure that every child is registered immediately after birth, and that late birth registration procedures are accessible to all unregistered individuals born in the territory;

8. **Undertake** to ensure that all individuals entitled to nationality under domestic law are able to acquire documentary proof of their nationality;
9. **Support and encourage** the African Union to conclude the draft protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the right to nationality and the eradication of statelessness in Africa ;
10. **Commit** to designating a Focal Point on statelessness in each ICGLR Member State to meet regularly under the auspices of the ICGLR, and in collaboration with UNHCR, in order to assess progress in the implementation of the commitments outlined in this Declaration; and
11. **Commit** to develop and implement national action plans in line with the ICRGL regional plan of action to end statelessness in support of the UNHCR's #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024.

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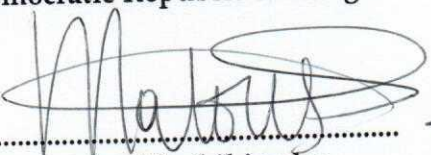


Done in Brazzaville, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017

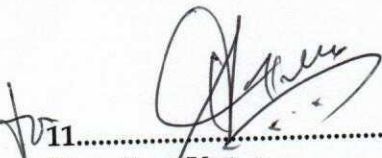
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**H.E. MANUEL DOMINGOS AUGUSTO**  
Minister of External Relations  
Republic of Angola


3.....  
  
**H.E. Mr. Charles Armel Doubane**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs, and  
Central Africans abroad  
Central Africa Republic

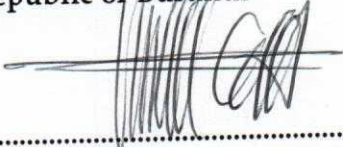
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*P.O. Ambassador Message*  
  
**H.E. Mr. Léonard She Okitindu**  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister  
of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration  
and International Cooperation  
Democratic Republic of Congo

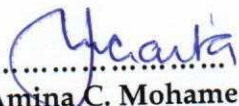
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**Hon. Louise Mushikiwabo**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation  
and East African Community  
Republic of Rwanda


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**Hon. Deng Alor Kuol**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
and International Cooperation  
Republic of South Sudan

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**Hon. Sam Kutesa**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Republic of Uganda


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**H.E. Mr. Alain-Aimé Nyamitwe**  
Minister of External Relations  
and International Cooperation  
Republic of Burundi

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**H.E. Mr. Jean Claude Gakosso**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs,  
Cooperation and Congolese abroad  
Republic of Congo

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**H.E. Amina C. Mohamed**  
Cabinet Secretary for Foreign  
Affairs  
Republic of Kenya

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**Hon. Prof. Ibrahim Ghandour**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Republic of the Sudan

10.....  
  
**Hon. Dr. Augustine P. Mahiga**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs and  
East African Cooperation  
United Republic of Tanzania

12.....  
  
**Hon. Harry Kalaba**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Republic of Zambia