



The ICGLR with support from UNHCR takes a meaningful step toward eradicating statelessness in the Great Lakes Region

11 November 2020 - The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) have taken a significant step toward eradicating statelessness within the Great Lakes Region as UNHCR marks the 6th anniversary of the Global Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024.

During the Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee meeting of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) held in Brazzaville on 7 November 2020, the Consolidated Action Plan of CGLR on the eradication of statelessness in the Great Lakes Region was validated by its Member States.

Three years ago, the IGCLR issued the Brazzaville Declaration on the Eradication of Statelessness in the Great Lakes Region along with its Regional Plan of Action 2017-2019. With their acceptance of this new plan, the ICGLR now has a more ambitious common framework for the eradication of statelessness in the Great Lakes Region. This includes a new strategic objective to guarantee access to proof of legal identity such a national identity documents as well as a further specific aim to strengthen universal birth registration in order to prevent statelessness. The validated plan of action will run through 2024, in line with the Global Campaign to End Statelessness.

“With the approval of this new regional programmatic framework, the ICGLR Secretariat has a key tool for implementing actions to eradicate statelessness in collaboration with the ICGLR Member States with the technical support of UNHCR for the remaining years of the Global Campaign,” said the ICGLR Deputy Executive Secretary Ambassador Yasir Mohammed. “Building on this common statelessness framework, the ICGLR Secretariat will play a catalytic role in stimulating the full implementation of the 58 commitments made in October 2019 during the High-Level Segment on Statelessness in Geneva by its Member States and the ICGLR Secretariat,” he added.

A stateless person is someone who does not have the nationality of any country. Statelessness affects millions of people around the world and the Great Lakes region is no exception: thousands of people living in the region cannot establish their nationality, with devastating consequences on the effective enjoyment of their human rights, leaving them marginalized and not able to access services such as education and health.

“We welcome this new development undertaken by the ICGLR which is a clear indication of the commitment of the its Member States on addressing statelessness,” said Clementine Nkweta Salami, UNHCR’s Director of UNHCR’s Regional Bureau for East Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region, adding “civil and birth registration is essential to prevent statelessness.”

Since the adoption of the Brazzaville Declaration in 2017, ICGLR Member States have made key progress towards the eradication of statelessness in the Great Lakes Region, including the appointment and training of government focal points on statelessness from each of the twelve ICGLR Member States, the adoption of three national action plans to end statelessness (Southern Sudan, Republic of Congo, and CAR) the establishment of government taskforces or inter-ministerial governmental committees on Statelessness in six countries (Rwanda, Kenya, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and South Sudan), and the publication of a regional study on statelessness for East African countries (half of the ICGLR) in 2018.

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