



## Commitments To Eradicate Statelessness Delivered In The Great Lakes Region In The Context Of The High-Level Segment On Statelessness (HLS)<sup>1</sup> And The Global Refugee Forum (GRF)<sup>2</sup> in 2019

ICGLR Secretariat and UNHCR Regional Bureau for East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes, Nairobi  
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### **Background & Purpose:**

In the spirit of the [2019 Ministerial Conference on Eradication of Statelessness in the Great Lakes Region](#), ten ICGLR Member States have delivered **54 statelessness commitments, mostly submitted during the High-Level Segment on Statelessness in October 2019<sup>3</sup>**. Of relevance for the Great Lakes region, the ICGLR Secretariat and the AU Commission as well as a few civil society organisations from East of Africa submitted a total of 25 pledges. **In total 79 statelessness pledges were delivered so far by ICGLR Member States and organisations working in the Great Lakes Region.** The below provides an overview of statelessness pledges by pledging entities.

### **Statelessness pledges submitted by ICGLR Member States**

#### **Rwanda**





- \* Pledge No. 1: Establish a national taskforce on statelessness by Feb-2020.
- \* Pledge No. 2: Prepare and adopt of a national action to eradicate statelessness by May 2020.
- \* Pledge No. 3 (GAP<sup>4</sup> Action 6): Enact the nationality legislation to facilitate access to naturalization for stateless persons by June 2020.
- \* Pledge No. 4 (GAP Action 10): Include question on statelessness in the next national population & housing census so that results can be made available by 2023.
- \* Pledge No. 5 (GAP Actions 1 & 8): Grant or confirm the Rwandan nationality to all stateless persons and their descendants living in Rwanda no later than 2024
- \* Pledge No. 6 (GAP Action 7): Improve access to late birth registration for refugees born in Rwanda (*by 2020*)
- \* Pledge No. 7 (GAP Action 8): Ensure that former refugees of Rwandan origin who opted for local integration in their respective host country are issued with nationality documentation no later than 2024




<sup>1</sup> UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), High-Level Segment on Statelessness: Results and Highlights, May 2020, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=search&docid=5ec3e91b4&skip=0&query=hls>

<sup>2</sup> [UNHCR - Summary of participation and pledges at the Global Refugee Forum](#)




<sup>3</sup> Note that Burundi delivered its statelessness pledge in early 2022 in the context of the GRF, but the latter is still accounted in this overview of ICGLR statelessness pledges.


<sup>4</sup> UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Global Action Plan to End Statelessness, 4 November 2014, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/545b47d64.html>

	<p>* <u>Pledge No. 8</u>: Contribute to the adoption and subsequent ratification by Rwanda of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on Specific Aspects of the Right to Nationality and Eradication of statelessness in Africa</p>
<p><b>Kenya</b></p> 	<p>*<u>Pledge No. 1</u>: Re-establish a national taskforce on statelessness by 2019</p> <p>* <u>Pledge No. 2</u>: Validate a national action plan to eradicate statelessness by 2019</p> <p>* <u>Pledge No. 3 (GAP Action 1)</u>: By 2020, recognize and register Kenyan citizens members of the Shona community who qualify for citizenship under the law</p> <p>* <u>Pledge No. 4 (GAP Actions 2 and 7)</u>: By 2020, enact a new Birth and Deaths Registration Act that provides safeguards to prevent statelessness</p> <p>* <u>Pledge No. 5 (GAP Action 9)</u>: By 2021, accede to the 1954 and 1961 statelessness conventions</p> <p>* <u>Pledge No. 6 (GAP Action 1)</u>: By 2023, complete legal reforms to address and remedy statelessness in Kenya permanently</p> <p>* <u>Pledge No. 7 (GAP Action 6)</u>: Continue to provide protection to stateless persons and those at risk of statelessness to ensure that they enjoy their basic human rights (continuous)</p>
<p><b>South Sudan</b></p> 	<p>*<u>Pledge No. 1</u>: By December 2019, adopt a national action to eradicate statelessness in South Sudan</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 2 (GAP Action 9)</u>: By December 2020, accede to both statelessness conventions</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 3 (GAP Action 2)</u>: By December 2021, reform its nationality law to introduce safeguards to grant nationality to children born on the territory of South Sudan who otherwise would be stateless.</p> <p>* <u>Pledge No. 4 (GAP Action 7)</u>: By December 2021, ensure access to birth registration procedures for all born on the territory of South Sudan including simplified late birth registration in order to ensure free and universal birth registration.</p> <p>* <u>Pledge No. 5 (GAP Action 8)</u>: By December 2022, ensure that particular groups identified as being at risk of statelessness and which are entitled to nationality under the nationality law, but are not able to acquire documentary proof of their nationality are able to do so by improving access to nationality documentation services.</p>
<p><b>Uganda</b></p>	<p>*<u>Pledge No. 1 (GAP Action 9)</u>: Accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness by 2020</p>

	<p>*<u>Pledge No. 2</u>: By the end of 2019, finalize and approve the National Action Plan to serve as the national strategy to eradicate statelessness in the country by 2024</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 3 (GAP Action 10)</u>: By 2021, complete a legal study on statelessness and citizenship in order to better understand and address the factors leaving certain populations stateless or at risk of statelessness and to support comprehensive legal and constitutional reform.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 4 (GAP Action 2)</u>: By 2024, introduce and implement safeguard in its nationality law to grant nationality to children born on the territory who would otherwise be stateless.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 5 (GAP Action 4)</u>: By 2024, introduce a law reform to prevent denial or attribution of nationality at birth on discriminatory grounds.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 6 (GAP Action 8)</u>: By 2024, ensure that the Maragoli, Benet, Ugandan-Asian and other unrecognized communities present in Uganda since before 1926 are recognized as citizens of Uganda in order to ensure they are issued with the nationality documentation).</p>
<p><b>Burundi</b></p> 	<p><u>Pledge No. 1</u>: Elaborate and adopt a national action plan to eradicate statelessness before the end of the #Ibelong Campaign (2024)<sup>5</sup></p>
<p><b>Republic of Congo (Brazzaville)</b></p> 	<p>*<u>Pledge No. 1 (GAP Action 9)</u>: By end of 2019, to finalize the process of accession to the Convention of 28 September 1954 Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention of 30 August 1961 on the Reduction of Statelessness.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 2 (GAP Actions 2,3 &amp; 4)</u>: By 2021, to complete the legislative reform started on 30 May 2016 on the Persons and Family Law in order to eliminate all discriminatory provisions and other articles that may cause statelessness.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 3 (GAP Action 6)</u>: By 2022, to set up a national body for the status determination and protection of stateless persons.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 4</u>: By 2022, to support the process of adoption, signature and ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Specific Aspects of the Right to Nationality and the Eradication of Statelessness in Africa.</p>

<sup>5</sup> Note that Burundi delivered its statelessness pledge in early 2022 in the context of the GRF, but the latter is still accounted in this overview of ICGLR statelessness pledges.

	<p>*<u>Pledge No. 5 (GAP -Action 7)</u>: By 2019, to ensure that any person identified without a birth certificate in the national census for civil registry purpose obtain a birth certificate.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 6 (GAP -Action 7)</u>: By 2022, to ensure that there is zero child in the Republic of the Congo without a birth certificate by 2022.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 7 (GAP -Action 7)</u>: To pursue awareness-raising activities among the population to encourage the registration of every birth.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 8 (GAP -Action 10)</u>: By 2021, to undertake a quantitative and qualitative study to gain a better understanding of the situation of groups and individuals living on its territory who are stateless or at risk of becoming stateless, with a view to have reliable data on these population and to find a solution to their situation.</p>
<p><b>Democratic Republic of Congo</b></p> 	<p>*<u>Pledge No. 1 (GAP Action 10)</u>: By 2019, to accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 2 (GAP Actions 10, 7 and 8)</u> : By 2024, to reform the system of civil registry and production of statistics on vital events, take initiatives such as identifying cases of statelessness and persons at risk of statelessness, institutionalize the collection of data on stateless persons and persons at risk, and prevent statelessness through the establishment of national mechanisms, including civil registration/ issuance of national identity documents.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 3</u>: By 2021, to bring its legal framework in line with the provisions of the above-mentioned statelessness conventions and ensure compliance with the international standards and principles on nationality and the prevention of statelessness.</p>
<p><b>Angola</b></p> 	<p>*<u>Pledge No. 1</u>: To broaden the basis of civil status registration for nationals born in Angola, irrespective of their nationality, as well as for Angolans living abroad.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 2</u>: To establish a Technical Group for the Eradication of Statelessness and a National Action Plan.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 3</u>: to sensitize the local population and the implementation of the two United Nations Conventions on statelessness from 1954 and 1961.</p>
<p><b>Zambia</b></p> 	<p>*<u>Pledge No. 1 (GAP Action 9)</u>: By 2020, to ensure the accession to the 1961 UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 2</u>: By 2021, to complete the issuance of the residence permits to all former refugees who have opted to locally integrate in Zambia, and to facilitate their naturalization.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 3 (GAP Action 6)</u>: By 2023, facilitate the naturalization procedures for stateless persons and their children to acquire nationality.</p>

	<p><u>*Pledge No. 4 (GAP Action 7):</u> By 2023, to simplify and improve access to birth registration and certification, for persons born in Zambia, including late birth registration, to ensure universal birth registration for all children, including refugees and asylum seekers born on the territory.</p> <p><u>*Pledge No. 5:</u> By 2023, to support the adoption of the draft Regional Action Plan to end statelessness in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region so that the region moves in tandem with the rest of the world.</p>
<p><b>Statelessness commitments submitted by regional intergovernmental bodies (working in ICGLR region)</b></p>	
<p><b>AU Commission<sup>6</sup></b></p> 	<p><u>*Pledge No. 1 (GAP Action 10):</u> to continue mainstreaming statelessness into the AU Commission’s work until the end of 2024 by collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data on statelessness and groups at risk through the implementation of the Nouakchott Declaration and the operationalization of programs such as the Africa Programme for Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS).</p> <p><u>*Pledge No. 2:</u> No later than by the end of 2020, to submit the draft Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on Specific Aspects of the Right to Nationality and Eradication of Statelessness in Africa for adoption by the AU Assembly.</p> <p><u>*Pledge No. 3:</u> Throughout 2020 and no later than by end of 2024, to support further research on the nexus between forced displacement, protracted refugee situation, and statelessness in Africa in continuation with the African Union theme of the year for 2019 “Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa”.</p> <p><u>*Pledge No. 4:</u> In 2019 and beyond, to strengthen the African Union’s capacity building and training initiatives on statelessness by fully integrating statelessness issues in its capacity building and training initiative named “Livingstone Syllabus”.</p> <p><u>*Pledge No. 5:</u> Throughout 2019 and beyond, and in cooperation with the AU Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, particularly the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Refugees, IDPs and Migrants and the Pan-African Parliament, to advocate for AU Member State ratification and implementation of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on Specific Aspects of the Right to Nationality and Eradication of Statelessness in Africa (once adopted) and other relevant international conventions on statelessness.</p>
<p><b>ICGLR Secretariat</b></p>	<p><u>*Pledge No. 1:</u> Support and submit at the next ICGLR Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee (RIMC) the draft consolidated draft action plan of ICGLR on the eradication of statelessness in the Great Lakes Region (2017-2024) for its final adoption by end of 2020.</p>

<sup>6</sup> The AUC Commission is based in Addis and covers all AU Member States including the 12 ICGLR Member States.



\*Pledge No. 2 (GAP Action 10): Support research on people at risk of statelessness and stateless persons in the Great Lakes Region to improve the availability of data on statelessness and nationality issues by 2021


\*Pledge No. 3 (GAP Action 7): Steer the development and the operationalization of a regional policy and programmatic framework on civil registration including birth registration for the prevention of statelessness by 2023.

\*Pledge No. 4: By June 2021 and in the spirit of the Declaration of International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Member States on the Eradication of Statelessness signed in Brazzaville on 16 October 2017, the ICGLR Secretariat commits to carry out a regional inception study to inform a Regional Comprehensive Strategy on Durable Solutions for the displaced to address protracted refugee situations and risks of statelessness in the Great Lakes Region in close collaboration with UNHCR.

\*Pledge No 5: “ By June 2022 and in the spirit of Paragraph 29 of the 2019 Outcome Document on the High-Level Meeting of Ministers in charge of refugees in the Great Lakes Region adopted on 7 March 2019 at Munonyo in Uganda, the ICGLR Secretariat commits to complete a Comprehensive Durable Solutions Strategy in the Great Lakes Region and develop a Regional Action Plan to implement this Strategy.”

**Statelessness commitments submitted by Civil Society Organizations (working in ICGLR region)**

**International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI) – Uganda**





\*Pledge No. 1 (GAP Action 10): By 2021, engaging the government-led Statelessness Taskforce in the identification of groups affected by or at risk of statelessness in Uganda, including those with challenges to obtaining legal identification such as birth registration and nationality documentation.

\*Pledge No. 2: By 2023, supporting efforts by the government of Uganda to commit to and implement international and continental legal and policy frameworks, domesticate them in national law and apply them in practice at the national level to resolve current cases of statelessness and prevent future cases.

\*Pledge No. 3 (GAP Action 4): By 2024, continuing to work with indigenous communities in Uganda excluded from the Third Schedule of the 1995 Constitution, such as the Maragoli, Benet and others by supporting self-identification mechanisms, sensitization and awareness-raising on the importance of proof of legal identity, including birth registration and nationality documentation, and support their quest for citizenship.

\*Pledge No. 4: Until end of the campaign, highlighting the issue of statelessness at the continental level, through continuing to facilitate information sharing and exchange on issues of statelessness, through our contribution to the Citizenship Rights in Africa website and work of the Right to Nationality Coalition.



<p><b>Kenya Human Right Commission (KHRC)</b> Kenya</p> 	<p>*<u>Pledge No. 1 (GAP Action 1)</u>: Mobilize, organize and support all the stateless communities and persons to submit their application to the government taskforce in order to resolve their statelessness situation by 2021</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 2 (GAP Action 1)</u>: Provide support and advice to the parliament of Kenya and the ministry responsible for registration of stateless persons to review and amend existing laws so as to eliminate unequal treatment of stateless persons and create stronger guarantees for facilitated nationality pathways for stateless persons as a form of redress for historical injustices of non-recognition by 2022.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 3</u>: Until 2024, continue creating public awareness on statelessness and providing oversight and technical support to all government agencies in the interventions and strategies to identify, reduce, and prevent statelessness.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 4 (GAP Action 2)</u>: Until 2023, advocate and provide legal support to reform the nationality law to insert a safeguard to ensure that a child born in Kenya that would otherwise be stateless would be attributed Kenyan nationality at birth in line with the constitution of Kenya which gives every child a right to a name and a nationality from birth and the ACWRC to which Kenya is party.</p>
<p><b>Dignity Kwanza</b> Tanzania</p> 	<p>*<u>Pledge No. 1</u>: to advocate for the protection of stateless people and those at risks by supporting the adoption and implementation of the National Action Plan to Eradicate Statelessness in Tanzania which aims at, among other things, resolving existing issue of non-refugee stateless people, ending childhood statelessness, ending gender discrimination on the nationality laws, ensuring birth registration for the prevention of statelessness and creating qualitative and quantitative data of stateless population in Tanzania by 2024.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 2</u>: to advocate for the ratification and domestication of the 1954 and 1961 UN Conventions on Statelessness to ensure protection and eradication of statelessness in Tanzania by 2024.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 3</u>: to continue to raise awareness and enhance capacity of stateless people or at risk to become stateless, government officials, member of civil society and public at large on laws, realities of stateless persons and measures to prevent and ultimately eradicate statelessness by 2024.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 4</u>: to advocate for Tanzania’s support to the adoption of Draft Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Specific Aspect of the Right to a Nationality and the Eradication of Statelessness in Africa by 2024.</p>
<p><b>East Africa Nationality Network (EANN)<sup>7</sup> –</b></p>	<p>*<u>Pledge No. 1</u>: Until end of 2024, advocating for prompt adoption of the “Draft Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Specific Aspects on the Right to a Nationality and the Eradication of Statelessness in Africa” and promote full implementation and domestication of provisions by Member States.</p>

<sup>7</sup> Regional Platform of NGOs engaged on statelessness comprising Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania.



	<p>*<u>Pledge No. 2 (GAP Actions 7 and 8)</u>: Until end of 2024, supporting the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) in implementation and monitoring of its Action Plan to eradicate statelessness, including by supporting identification, helping groups with difficulties in accessing legal identity documents, such as birth certificates, national IDs and passports.</p> <p>*<u>Pledge No. 3</u>: Until 2023, supporting continued awareness-raising and training of relevant stakeholders, such as affected communities, civil society organisations and governments on international, continental, and sub-regional frameworks to eradicate statelessness.</p>
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