



**UNHCR**

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

UNHCR Djibouti  
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**UNHCR and Djibouti Ministry of Education & Vocational Training Sign  
Landmark Memorandum of Understanding**

After months of dedication and hard work, UNHCR and Djibouti's Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (*Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Formation Professionnelle—MENFOP*) held a ceremony today to sign a Memorandum of Understanding, which opens the doors for refugee children in the country to receive the same quality education as Djiboutian children. The event, held at the Kempinski hotel, was attended by the Minister of Education and Vocational Training, the Minister of Interior, the Director of Multilateral Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Chargé d'Affairs of U.S. Embassy, the UN Resident Coordinator in Djibouti, and several Government officials, including those of the Ministry of Environment, ONARS (the Government department in charge of the well-being of refugees—*l'Office National d'Assistance aux Réfugiés et Sinistrés*), the Djiboutian Agency for Social Development as well as representatives of UN agencies present in the country, the World Bank, key donors (U.S., Japan, and the European Union), and refugee representatives. National media were present to cover the event, including *Radio Television Djibouti* and the national newspaper *La Nation*, as well as *Voice of America*.

The ceremony opened with Omar Yacin, a refugee leader, expressing gratitude for the initiative finally coming into fruition. "A dream come true," he stated that the refugee community in Djibouti had waited many years for their diplomas to be recognized.

UNHCR Senior CRRF Officer and Officer-in-Charge, Albert Katumba, then took to the stage, extending thanks and recognition to MENFOP, the Djiboutian Government, the U.S. Embassy, as well as the sister agencies of UNICEF and UNESCO, in contributing to the realization of this milestone. The OIC lauded Djibouti's commitment to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), which leverages the integration of refugees in the national system. In acknowledging donors for their operational and financial support, he urged their continued cooperation in giving Djiboutian children access to good education.

UNCT Resident Coordinator, Barbara Manzi followed, stating that this was a progressive step for Djibouti in providing a fundamental right to refugees and was also well aligned with the Geneva Convention of 1951. She also extended the assistance of the UN

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agencies in jointly addressing development challenges in the country. She commended the Djiboutian Government of being in line with the CRRF approach by supporting the signing the MOU on education with UNHCR to include refugees into the national education system.

UNHCR and MENFOP had been in close collaboration with the U.S. Embassy in coordinating the education plan. As major donors to UNHCR Djibouti, the U.S. has heavily invested in the area of education and sponsored many self-reliance programs and activities. Chargé d’Affaires, J. Alexander Hamilton applauded the Djiboutian Government for their response to a vital need and for giving refugee children access to decent and quality education.

Minister of Interior Hassan Omar reminded the audience of Djibouti’s history of welcoming and taking care of refugees. He asserted the Government’s steadfast support of UNHCR and MENFOP in guaranteeing the inclusion of refugees in the national system.

Lastly, Minister of Education Moustapha Mohamed recalled Djibouti’s pledge during the New York Summit of September 2016, reiterating President Guelleh’s promise to integrate the refugee children into the national education system and to offer quality curricula. He reaffirmed the state’s commitment to upholding refugee welfare, which is at the heart of the National Refugee Law promulgated in January of this year. The Education Action Plan (*Plan d’Action de l’Éducation*), which covers 2017–19, is an extension of this Law and is a strategy to bolster refugee inclusion.

With the new academic year in the horizon on September 10, the partnership will leverage the implementation of MENFOP’s education plan for refugees. UNHCR’s country operation in Djibouti stands committed to helping refugees and host communities turn challenges into opportunities.

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