

## Foreign Affairs Secretary Confirms Australia's Support for Region

Australia's parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs delivered words of reassurance during a visit to the East and Horn and Great Lakes region of Africa earlier this year. Addressing 40 national leaders at the 22nd African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, Secretary Richard Marles said, "Australia is committed to continue the support to countries in this region, particularly on development, humanitarian, commercial, peace and security issues."

Then Marles took a closer look at the humanitarian situation. At Kenya's Dadaab refugee camps, he discussed security and safety with refugee leaders and partners, and saw how Australia and other donors deliver aid. World Food Programme staff arranged a visit to a primary school in one of the five Dadaab sub-camps, Ifo, where they serve students a nutritional breakfast as part of a school feeding programme.

"Addressing the humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa remains a priority for Australia as it continues its longstanding efforts to support refugees in Kenya who have fled war and drought in the region," Marles said. At a refugee settlement in Yida, South Sudan, Marles visited the registration centre for new arrivals and said he was impressed by the scale of the operation there, where as many as 60,000 refugees live, and by the hard work of the humanitarian staff.

In Nairobi, the foreign affairs secretary joined the Australian ambassador and AusAID officials for a briefing on the most critical humanitarian challenges in the region by partners including WFP, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and UNHCR. Marles was especially interested in the Great Lakes region and the support the agencies provide to displaced people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to Congolese refugees in Uganda and Rwanda. Thanking Australia for its support to UNHCR in DRC, the Hub's Jane Muigai, senior regional liaison officer said both more money and awareness are needed to meet the challenges in the Great Lakes.