



REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
Liberia Refugee Repatriation and
Resettlement Commission



SPECIAL STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE LIBERIAN GOVERNMENT AT THE 70th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

OCTOBER 7 – 11, 2019

Your Excellency:

We bring you greetings from H.E. the President of the Republic of Liberia, Dr. George Manneh Weah, and congratulate you for the warm hospitality in handling this very important meeting.

The Government and People of Liberia are honored to be invited to the 70th Session of the Executive Committee Meeting (EXCOM) which is essential to finding durable solutions for all refugees and other persons of concern (PoCs) in Liberia, the sub-region and the world over.

We are again pleased to share with this extraordinary body our achievements in providing durable solutions:

1. As of September 2019, about 987 Ivoirian refugees have been assisted to return in safety and dignity against the planning figure of 1,500 refugees in 2018; leaving a total refugee population of 8,529 living in 5 (five) counties of Liberia. By December 2019, we expect to have approximately 5,000 Ivoirian refugees in Liberia by the end of 2020. With the increase in the return

package and the “Go and See” and “Come and Tell” missions from Liberia and Cote d’Ivoire as well as the organization of joint information campaign in camps and host communities, stable and peaceful security environment, the Liberia operation is requesting further support and advocacy for continued Voluntary Repatriation of refugees who may opt for that;

2.

3. The Government of Liberia conducted host community verification and identified over 2,500 Ivorian refugees who were deactivated from UNHCR database due to “No Show” during the biometric verification of 2012 and 2014. The caseload needs urgent attention before the invocation of cessation.

4. Up to date, we have conducted RSD sittings for all outstanding asylum applicants. However, there are 9 (nine) new asylum claims which are currently being processed by the asylum eligibility committee headed by Liberia Refugee Repatriation & Resettlement Commission (LRRRC). The UNHCR Liberia has already taken steps to strengthen the capacities of the LRRRC to improve the RSD process in Liberia.

5. The Government of Liberia has shown 100% goodwill to support Durable Solutions, including Local Integration, for all refugees living in Liberia. This has resulted in the following positive steps;

- ❖ In November 2018, the Government of Liberia in collaboration with UNHCR Liberia along with relevant MACs developed a Strategic Local Integration Roadmap Document for Ivorian Refugees who had opted for Local Integration into the Liberian society. This Document has been

validated by the Board of Commissioners and is with the Cabinet for endorsement.

- ❖ The provision of 315 acres of land in one of the refugee hosting areas to support the local integration program for refugees opting to live in Liberia.

❖ Currently the LRRRC and UNHCR along with its implementing partners have dedicated and handed over 13 durable shelters to Ivoirian refugees in Bahn Settlement, Nimba County and 55 more units are under construction and will be dedicated soon.

6. The Government of Liberia has pledged and committed to the following at the UNHCR High Level Segment for implementation:

- ❖ (Pledge - 1) Work with key parliamentary members for the passage of the amended Alien and Nationality Law to address the issues of gender discrimination in Liberia. As it is, the Alien and Nationality Laws of Liberia (ANL) discriminate against Liberian women who have children with foreign nationals from passing their nationality automatically to their children like their male counterparts. This portion of the ANL (section 20) has to be aligned with the Liberian Constitution (Article 28).

- ❖ (Achievement) Regular stakeholders interactions continue and preparation is ongoing for passage into law;

- ❖ (Pledge - 2) Adoption of the National Action Plan: The government of Liberia is a signatory to the 2 Statelessness Conventions but have not domesticated the conventions. Albeit, in 2015, the LRRRC and UNHCR jointly organized series of key stakeholders (including government and civil societies & NGO and UN actors) consultative meetings and drafted a National Action Plan on the eradication of Statelessness. This document has been submitted to cabinet for endorsement.

❖ (Achievement) The Executive Director of LRRRC has already communicated with the Minister of State and Internal Affairs for the endorsement of the NAP of Liberia;

❖ (Pledge - 3) To work with the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo – Information Services (LISGIS) and UNFPA on inclusion of questions on statelessness in the 2020 National Population and Housing Census questionnaire;

❖ (Achievement) Series of consultative meeting ongoing with UNFPA and LISGIS authorities for the inclusion of statelessness in 2020 census questionnaire.

Honorable distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of Liberia, I am pleased to use this medium to call on the world body and the comity of nations to continue to listen to the plight of refugees across Africa and the world as large.

We will need all necessary support as we promote voluntary repatriation of our Ivorian brothers and sisters back home in safety and dignity and also provide local integration for those opting to remain in Liberia.

Thank you Excellencies and Distinguished Members