



REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
**LIBERIA REFUGEE REPATRIATION AND
RESETTLEMENT COMMISSION**



Redemption Road,
Capitol Hill, Monrovia, Liberia

Office of the Executive Director

Website: www.lrrrc.org
Email: maimafestus2013@gmail.com
Contact +231776646957/+231886646957

**SPECIAL STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE LIBERIAN GOVERNMENT AT THE 71st
SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S
PROGRAMME IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

OCTOBER 5–9 2020

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 and gratified to be invited to the 71st 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 at large especially in the midst of the very life threatening COVID-19 pandemic.

We are again pleased to share with this extraordinary body our achievements in providing durable solutions especially in the midst of these difficult times in our history.

- **Overview of Refugee Regime in Liberia:**

Currently, the refugee population in Liberia stands at 8,235 from 8,329 in 2019 due to low volrep coverage as the result of COVID-19 pandemic. Of this population, 8,101 are Ivoirians which constitutes 98 percent while 134 are mixed nationals constituting 2 percent of refugee caseload in Liberia.

Your Excellency, early this year, the Government of Liberia with support from the UNHCR, trained sixteen (16) Asylum Committee members on Refugee Status Determination (RSD) Techniques and inducted by the Chairman of the Asylum Committee. This initiative was to strengthen the capacity of the already existing Asylum Committee of Liberia. During the period under review, the committee was able to adjudicate thirteen (13) claims out of twenty (20) and the remaining seven (7) are under assessment.

Also, the Government of Liberia continues to provide legal space to enhance the local integration process in Liberia. This is being supported by the issuance of eight (8) work permits to mixed nationals, five (5) naturalization documents and other legal/civil documents.

The Government of Liberia in 2019, conducted host community verification and identified over 2,500 Ivorian refugees who were deactivated from UNHCR database due to “No Shows” during the biometric verification of 2012 and 2014. This caseload needs urgent attention before the invocation of cessation.

The Government of Liberia in collaboration with UNHCR conducted field mission to Accra, Ghana for the renewal of Liberian Passports for former Liberian refugees residing in Accra, between January and February 2020. The team obtained 2,143 applicants in the categories of red coded, administration of oath of allegiance and new born of would-be qualified for Liberian passports.

- **Local Integration of Ivorian Refugees**

Currently, the total of 1,500 Ivorian refugees have opted for local integration in Liberia. In 2020, 164 refugees and host community members benefitted from livelihood grants in all of the refugees concentrated counties (Montserrado, Nimba, Grand Gedeh, River Gee and Maryland).

Also in April 2020, the Government of Liberia with UNHCR's support, negotiated, surveyed and deeded 1,113.1 acres of land in Grand Gedeh County in addition to the 315 acres acquired in Nimba County in 2019 totaling 1,428.1 acres of land for local integration purposes. This is in fulfilment of the one of the pledges made by the Government of Liberia during the last Global Refugee Forum held in 2019. The construction of the fifty seven (57) low cost family size housing units initiated in early 2019 were completed and the Government is making preparation to dedicate them before the end of the year.

Also, the construction of additional ten (10) units initiated by UNFPA under the Spotlight Initiatives in 2019 are completed and pending dedication as well.

For 2020, the 70 shelters expected to have been constructed was suspended due to the COVID 19 Pandemic but site identification and preparations are expected to be concluded before the end of year.

- **Revocation of Prima Facie Recognition granted to Ivorian nationals**

The Government of Liberia is presently working on the revocation of Prima Facie recognition granted to Ivorian nationals that fled Ivory Coast as a result of post-election violence in 2010. Currently these conditions no longer exist, and at such, the Government of Liberia is preparing to revoke the Prima Facie through an official Gazette.

- **COVID-19 Intervention**

On March 16, 2020, the President of Liberia, H.E. Dr. George Manneh Weah announced the first case of coronavirus in Liberia. Immediately after the pronouncement, the LRRRC

representing the Government of Liberia along with UNHCR organized a Joint Taskforce geared towards spreading the Anti COVID-19 messages, distributions of preventive materials and food items in the refugees' concentrated counties of Montserrado, Nimba, Grand Gedeh and River Gee and Maryland and hosting communities. These interventions were also made to various local authorities in refugee concentrated counties. Thanks to the UNHCR for the support.

- **Contingency Plans for Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire**

The Government of Liberia along with stakeholders and partner has developed contingency plans for Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire in preparation for possible refugee influx emanating from any post elections violence.

- In 2019, The Government of Liberia pledged and committed to the following at the UNHCR High Level Segment for implementation: We are pleased to report the following:
 - ❖ **(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...
 - ❖ **(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 Statelessness Conventions but have not domesticated the conventions.
 - ❖ **(Achievement)** This document has been submitted to cabinet for endorsement.
 - ❖ **(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)** After holding series of consultative meetings with UNFPA and relevant stakeholders, the Government of Liberia is pleased to announce the

inclusion of questions on statelessness in 2020 National Population and Housing Census.

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 the verified 2,500 Ivoirians in host communities deactivated due to “NO SHOW” during the verification exercise of 2012 to return home.

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 Excellency and Distinguished Members.