

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER FOR
THE INTERIOR OF GHANA, MR. HENRY QUARTEY**

AGENDA ITEM 3- GENERAL DEBATE

**Madam Chairperson
High Commissioner
Excellencies
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

I am honoured to deliver Ghana's statement under this agenda item. I wish to state that Ghana aligns itself fully with the statement delivered by the Republic of Congo for and on behalf of the African Group. We reaffirm a whole of Government and a whole of society approach and to express same hope of a continuous broader consultation on equal level to ensure Ghana delivers on its mandate.

Ghana is striving towards completely fulfilling her pledges made during the second Global Refugee Forum. Indeed, Madam Chair, Ghana is the pioneer in implementing the ideals that the Global Compact for Refugees espouses. The inclusion of refugees in our national agenda has always been the principle in refugee management. Refugees have long had access to work, access to health services, and access to education at the same levels as our own nationals - long before the adoption of the GCR and related GRF pledging events.

Ghana ought to be acknowledged for its pioneering role in social inclusion. Both Refugees and Ghanaians largely enjoy the same level of access to social services. Our country is a pioneer in guaranteeing access to documentation, including our National Identity system, to refugees. This, as you know Madam Chair, is one critical means of reducing the risk of statelessness and entrenches refugee protection and access to social services.

The High Commissioner's emphasis on the increasingly complex nature of displacement is very much the case in northern Ghana and the West African subregion. The sacrifices made by host communities cannot be overstated. This indeed shows how committed we are to alleviating the sufferings of the asylum seekers and their host communities. In all this mix, the security of our country cannot be compromised, so that we can continue to provide international protection and humanitarian assistance to persons who require it.

Madam Chair, Ghana has long adopted the lofty approach to focus on cultural affinity and the dignity of the persons we serve to support asylum seekers in host communities, including in northern Ghana, despite the sheer spread and complexities associated with this approach in achieving our protection mandate. We acknowledge the interventions of the UN and other developmental actors in communities hosting asylum seekers in the north of Ghana. However, a lot more must be done to cushion the already stretched social structures in the affected areas to build the resilience of the host communities and to strengthen a true partnership.

This approach adopted by the Government to manage the asylum situation in northern Ghana aligns with UNHCR's out-of-camp policy on refugee protection. While the Government continues to show its commitment towards addressing the daunting complexities of the emerging refugee situations in Ghana and the rest of the region, we call on UNHCR's continuous support and advocacy through sister UN agencies, developmental actors, the private sector and particularly, donors like the world bank, to extend their support to host communities so as to promote refugee inclusion, particularly in places like Ghana where we have demonstrated goodwill towards the refugees and asylum seekers.

Madam Chair, given the unpredictability of humanitarian funding, our government with renewed support from the UNHCR Country Office, is sensitizing local private sector players on the needs of refugees and the benefits of contributing to their well-being. These sensitization campaigns we believe will start bearing fruit having listened to us and appreciating the need to STAND WITH REFUGEES.

Ghana continues to focus on solutions for refugee situations. To this end, we shall work with the UNHCR to bring protracted caseloads to a close. We are committed to ensuring that suitable durable solutions are made available. We must emphasise however, that there is the need for increased support from development partners to build the resilience of host communities. This is our foremost concern.

Madam Chair, I conclude by acknowledging the effort and excellent collaboration we enjoy from the Regional, Multi-Country, and National Offices of UNHCR and assure you that Ghana will continue to honour her obligations in order to ensure that no one is left behind.

Thank you for your attention.