

STATEMENT DELIVERED BY HON. HENRY QUARTEY, (MP) DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERIOR AT THE REGIONAL MINISTERIAL MEETING OF ECOWAS MEMBER STATES FOR THE VALIDATION AND ADOPTION OF REGIONAL PLAN OF ACTION TO ERADICATE STATELESSNESS IN WEST AFRICA FROM 7TH TO 9TH MAY, 2017 IN BANJUL, GAMBIA

- MR. CHAIRMAN
- H.E THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR WEST AFRICA
- H.E. THE ASSISTANT HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES
- EXCELLENCIES FROM VARIOUS UN, AU AND EU AGENCIES
- HON. MINISTERS
- HEADS OF GOVERNMENT DELEGATIONS
- GOVERNMENT FOCAL POINT PERSONS
- INVITED GUESTS
- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I bring you warm felicitations from H.E President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the Government and people

of Ghana. I wish to state that Ghana is happy to be part of this meeting.

Let me also take this opportunity to express my personal appreciation to our host and the organizers for the wonderful organization of this meeting. This demonstrates the good nature and experience of our brothers in the promotion of tourism. We in Ghana would take a leaf from your knowledge, skills and experiences in this regard.

Statelessness is an issue which has come to the fore in the subregion following UNHCR's active advocacy in the area as well as its collaboration with ECOWAS member states in its 10 year Global Campaign to eradicate Statelessness by 2024.

Statelessness is fundamentally a human rights issue and which further poses security challenges to ECOWAS member states.

It is therefore gratifying to note that member states have joined forces in their fight to eradicate it.

The high level and spread of representation at this meeting further highlights the interest and importance member states attach to the issues of statelessness.

Mr. Chairman, we in Ghana can readily recall the endorsement of the Abidjan Ministerial Declaration in Accra by the Heads of the Economic Community of West Africa States in May 2015.

The process of acceding to the Conventions started but was truncated because the year 2016 was an election year in Ghana. The election subsequently led to a change in Government with the new Government assuming office in January 2017.

Government has started reviewing the documents needed and it is expected that the legal process will be started again soon.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to confirm that the Government of Ghana has developed a National Plan of Action which would subsequently be adopted by Cabinet to guide our

operations regarding issues of Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Stateless persons.

We have also observed that Ghana does not have credible data on the nature, form and extent of statelessness in Ghana. Ghana has accordingly initiated baseline studies to establish the nature, form and extent of statelessness, in Ghana which would form the basis and guide for future decisions. We hope to share our experiences and findings in due course.

Mr. Chairman, let me assure this august gathering that the Government of Ghana is committed to the implementation of the final Regional Plan of Action on Statelessness.

Finally, I wish this meeting success in all deliberations.

Thank you.