

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR RAMSES JOSEPH CLELAND, GHANA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICES IN
GENEVA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIRST GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM TO
BE HELD IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, DECEMBER 17TH – 18TH 2019**

Your Excellency the Chairperson of the Global Refugee Forum,

Distinguished Head of Delegations,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Since this is the first time Ghana is taking the floor let me begin by commending you for steering this session so successfully thus far, and to assure you of Ghana's full support. Mr Chairman, as you aware Ghana has a long history of hosting refugees and as part of the hospitable nature of the Ghanaian, Ghana will continue to welcome with open arms people in distress within the sub region and afar.

The aspiration of the government and people of Ghana under the leadership of His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic, is for Ghana to become an optimistic, self-confident, self-reliant and a prosperous nation with a strong democratic credentials and institutions backed by a vibrant economy which will create opportunities for all including refugees.

Consequently, the Government of Ghana has put in place concrete measures that ensure that every child within the country enjoys free education up to the senior high school level. I am happy to inform you that refugee children are included in the Free Education Policy. Furthermore, the government has revamped the national health insurance scheme to provide primary health care and universal coverage for all including refugees.

In line with our international commitment to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, the Ghana Refugee Board (GRB) and the National Identification Authority (NIA) are working to ensure that refugees are also included in the Governments policy to issue the national biometric identity card, known as the "Ghana Card", to all its nationals. The Government of Ghana aims to implement this policy in a coordinated, timely, effective and efficient manner, which would ensure the inclusion of refugees in the social and economic activities of the country. This would enhance their daily transactions and access to services and facilities available to nationals of Ghana.

In order to promote a forward looking approach to refugee inclusion, the following five key incentive packages are being considered at the highest level of government,

to encourage the Ghanaian private sector, to support host communities to play a meaningful role in the economic transformation in the lives of refugees.

1) Policy declaration of all refugee-hosting communities as economic zones with upfront zero-tolerance policy on patronage, rent seeking, corruption and tax evasion.

(2) Secured operational space with the necessary facilitative governance arrangements - institutional, administrative and enforcement mechanisms beyond words to ensure hassle free and nimble operations.

(3) Employment Subsidy Schemes of 1:2 ratio targeting one refugee, one woman and one youth from the refugee and host communities to be employed by the signatory private company, financed partly by the international community.

(4) Product Certification and Preferential Access to the Global Markets, and

(5) Knowledge Management platforms for enhancing engagement and operations in the zones, and serving as a tool for advocacy, sensitization and public awareness on the essence of refugee protection.

Your Excellency Ladies and Gentlemen, these incentives refer to supra fall within the context of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) based on the principles of burden sharing and collective responsibilities for the hosting, integration and sustained livelihoods of refugees. It is envisaged that this policy (Government private partnership initiative) will provide the blueprint for a common purpose, expertise and the availability of resources to the various actors such as the displaced population, host communities, and civil society organizations. It will also provide the government, private sector, and bilateral and governmental actors to provide technical and financial resources, which would enable the government to implement wholly the Global Compact on Refugees.

Ghana wishes to call on all member states of the UNHCR to support the policy outcomes of this forum to help eradicate the root causes of the factors that lead to the movement of people within and across borders in search of protection in human dignity. Since we are in the festive period I wish to take this opportunity to wish you Mr Chairman and everyone here a Merry Christmas and a prosperous new year.

Thank you, Chairperson.