

## **EXCOM 2022**

### **STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE GHANA REFUGEE BOARD** **PROF. KENNETH AGYEMANG ATTAFAH**

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

I have the honour to deliver Ghana's Statement on this agenda item. Before I proceed, I wish to state that Ghana aligns itself fully with the Statement delivered by the Republic of Chad for and on behalf of the African Group. We reaffirm the need for stakeholders to effectively implement the commitments contained in the UN Secretary-General's Program of Action on Internal Displacement and the recommendations of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement.

#### **1. Inclusion of Refugees in Provision of Services**

Mr. Chairman, Ghana lives up to its responsibility of ensuring that refugees are not left behind. Our Government therefore has ensured that refugees will be registered and issued with the National Identity Card, also known as the Ghana Card. This has become a mandatory requirement for all nationals and residents in accessing various services and facilities such as banking and financial transactions, accessing social security, insurance and healthcare, paying taxes, applying for a driver's license, registering an interest in land, and registering a SIM card. The issuance of the Ghana Card to refugees is a major step aimed at guaranteeing social and financial inclusion for all refugees. Our policy is that whoever they are, wherever they come from, wherever they find themselves within Ghana and at whatever time, refugees must be able to access services at the same levels as their Ghanaian hosts. This is what we aim to achieve as a refugee-hosting country.

#### **2. Protecting the Safety and Dignity of Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

Mr. Chairman, Burkinabe nationals who have sought refuge in Ghana due to the security situation in their country are being accorded the needed protection by the State. Ghana continues to live up to its obligations in this regard. Notwithstanding the interrelationships that exist across our borders and the already frequent seasonal movements into Ghana by Burkinabes to engage in livelihood activities, Ghana will register Burkinabes nationals

and continue to guarantee international protection for those who have crossed into our country to seek asylum.

### **3. Durable Solutions for Protracted Caseloads**

Mr. Chairman, in the past year, Ghana has continued collaborating with UNHCR to find and implement durable solutions for Ivorian refugees. We have worked with our partners to repatriate former Ivorian refugees who chose to return home voluntarily by facilitating the transfer of such persons. Safe passage has been guaranteed for their return. We trust that UNHCR will conclude the voluntary repatriation of the over 800 remaining Ivoirians who would like to return home. We have also completed adjudication of applications for exemption from the effect of the Cessation Clause invoked in June 2022 for 1,349 individual Ivoirian refugees, up to the final appeal level.

Working with the Government of La Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana has instituted measures to ensure that the 955 former Ivorian refugees who opted to remain in Ghana will have an Alternative Legal Status (ALS) that is truly permanent. Our Government therefore decided to grant indefinite residence status to former Ivorian refugees who opted to stay in our country. This, we believe, constitutes a durable solution.

Mr. Chairman, Ghana has taken note of the special appeal to the UNHCR by the Government of Liberia to assist with the repatriation of Liberian refugees from Ghana. We note, however, that, as reported last year, the Ghana Refugee Board successfully intervened to stop the planned decommissioning of the Buduburam Refugee Camp in September 2021 which used to host Liberian refugees from 2003 but now serves as unauthorized home to some former Liberian refugees and Ghanaian nationals. Some of the Liberians had benefited from voluntary repatriation but have returned to Ghana and to the Buduburam Camp at their own accord. High-level meetings have since been held between Ghana and Liberia and a roadmap developed to repatriate the non-refugee Liberians from the former camp to Liberia.

Mr. Chairman, Ghana remains committed to ensuring that the former Liberian refugees are duly repatriated to Liberia in a safe and humane manner, subject to the availability of funding from the appropriate quarters. Ghana is also committed to ensuring that the camp is properly decommissioned in a safe, secure, humane and efficient manner consistent with domestic and international law and Ghana's human rights obligations.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Mr. Chairman, I cannot conclude without acknowledging the enormous contribution by UNHCR through the assistance it offers within and outside our country in ensuring that refugees and asylum seekers receive the desired international protection. Ghana will continue to collaborate with UNHCR and other partners to this end.

I thank you for your attention