



STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE GHANA REFUGEE BOARD, PROF. KENNETH AGYEMANG ATTAFUAH, AT THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME (EXCOM) OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES HELD IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND
2ND – 6TH OCTOBER 2017

Your Excellency, Madam Chairperson of EXCOM, Mrs Rosemary McCarney

The High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

Current Trends And Future Outlook

Ghana's refugee programme, as elsewhere, consists mainly of pursuing measures to protect refugees and provide for their economic and psychosocial wellbeing. In this regard, we consistently carry out contingency planning to ensure that persons fleeing refugee-inducing situations in their countries of origin are adequately catered for in emergency situations.

Fortunately, the Ghana Refugee Board, with the active support of Government, is implementing novel refugee status determination processes including effective monitoring and supervision of the eligibility and reporting procedures, an expanded panel and fast-tracking system, and the engagement of additional eligibility and legal officers.

Madam Chairperson, the Government of Ghana strongly believes in the empowerment of refugees and has, in furtherance of that commitment, instituted a **Jobs Solutions Strategy** for the management of refugees in Ghana. The strategy aims at creating income-generating opportunities for refugees and host communities while reducing refugee dependency and despondency.

As part of this strategy, Ghana has over the past year, and with the support of UNHCR, strengthened our engagement with bilateral and multilateral

partners in an effort to obtain funding for livelihood activities for both refugees and host communities.

Sustaining Protection in a Complex Political Environment

Madam Chairperson, I am happy to report that Ghana has maintained very cordial bilateral relations with our neighbours, some of whose citizens constitute the bulk of Ghana's total refugee caseload. This has been achieved partly within the framework of existing bilateral arrangements between Ghana and her neighbours through *Joint Cooperation Commissions on Security*. Such cooperation undoubtedly inures to the benefit of the refugees we host.

Ghana has also taken full advantage of the Tripartite Commissions in ensuring that issues relating to the common interests of Ghana and her neighbouring countries are adequately and timeously addressed, while guaranteeing that the all-important subjects of safety, dignity and welfare of refugees are constantly kept in sharp focus.

Madam Chairperson, I trust that the foregoing actions and dispositions of the Government of Ghana assure you and the UNHCR of Ghana's commitment to NOT politicising refugee issues in the West African sub-region, and it is an assurance which I am specifically instructed by my Government to reiterate to this assembly as an enduring part of Ghana's Refugee Policy.

Burden Sharing

Madam Chairperson, in accordance with the spirit of the provisions of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (2016), Ghana is pursuing a policy of including refugees in the provision of social services customarily restricted to Ghanaians. As is probably well known, refugees in Ghana are also beneficiaries of governmental social interventions aimed at alleviating poverty and ameliorating the conditions of disadvantage of the less privileged in society. In addition to the enrolment of refugees under the National Health Insurance Scheme and the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education policy as previously reported, I am happy to announce, Madam Chairperson, that the Ghana Refugee Board is actively working on securing

the inclusion of refugee children in the new, highly-acclaimed Free Senior High School policy. Under this policy, Madam Chairperson, every child in Ghana attends secondary school absolutely free of cost – a development most welcome to parents and guardians of children entering secondary school from September 2017. Beyond these key social interventions, the responsibility of providing sanitation services at refugee camps and settlements is also covered by the national budget.

Madam Chairperson, Ghana is bearing her fair share of the burden of caring for refugees within her borders from around the world. Ghana's ability to sustain this burden will, however, depend on the extent of support which other critical partners in the refugee burden management process render to Ghana. Permit me, therefore, Madam Chairperson, to use this opportunity to request, on behalf of the Government of Ghana, that the UNHCR extends the requisite levels of funding to Ghana. In saying so, I also wish to place on record Ghana's appreciation of the dynamic role the UNHCR has played in supporting Ghana to manage the different waves of refugee inflows into the country and to improve the life circumstances of persons of concern.

Conclusion

Madam Chairperson, notwithstanding the significant constraints faced locally and globally in refugee management, Ghana remains committed to burden-sharing and ensuring that refugees in Ghana live in safety, dignity and peace.

It is our hope that this meeting will reemphasize the importance of sharing responsibilities for our common good. Ghana will continue to cooperate with UNHCR in implementing the Multi Year Multi Partner Strategy and count on UNHCR's continued support for our Jobs Solutions Strategy, to the benefit of all persons of concern.

Finally, Ghana wishes to state that it aligns itself with the Statement presented by Togo on behalf of the Africa Group.

Thank you most sincerely for your kind attention, Madam Chairperson.