

Mr. Chairperson

High Commissioner

I have the honour to deliver Ghana's statement on this agenda item. Before I proceed, however, I wish to align fully with the statement delivered by Burkina Faso on behalf of the African Group.

1. Inclusion of Refugees in Health Delivery Activities

Your Excellency, Ghana continues to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers are not left out of interventions to cushion citizens from the adverse effects of COVID-19. All persons resident in Ghana, including refugees, have been given the opportunity to access vaccines made available to Ghanaian nationals in our fight against the virus. We hope that as more vaccines become available to Ghana, more refugees will take advantage and protect themselves from the novel Coronavirus. It is imperative therefore, as a matter of vaccine equity, that more vaccines are made available to enable us offer protection for all residents, including persons of concern.

2. Durable Solutions for Protracted Caseloads

Mr. Chairperson, as you know, Ghana has a number of protracted refugee situations. We congratulate UNHCR for the steps taken so far, to help bring durable solutions to these caseloads. Ghana remains committed to working with the UNHCR to ensure that these programmes are implemented successfully. To this end, Ghana was a part of the working group of countries in the subregion that updated the "Roadmap for Comprehensive Solutions for Ivorian Refugees" at the recent Abidjan Ministerial meeting. Working through the Tripartite framework, Ghana will fulfill its obligations in order to ensure that the roadmap's timetable is adhered to.

Government has encouraged voluntary repatriation of refugees even in the mist of the pandemic. Safe passage has been granted to refugees by land even though our country's borders are closed. This has been done while ensuring that all the health protocols are adhered to. We shall continue to ensure that all refugees opting for voluntary repatriation are given access to our land border crossings, under the auspices of the Tripartite Commission, if they so require to travel by land.

3. Protecting the Safety and Dignity of Refugees

Your Excellency, the Buduburam Settlement in Ghana which hosts a small number of refugees was earmarked for redevelopment recently. This would have meant some refugees losing their dwellings. Our government, being sensitive to the plight of refugees, stepped in to make sure that the planned removal of structures on the settlement was suspended.

The Ghana Refugee Board has been tasked to ensure that the affected refugees are transported to a different location in safety and in dignity, prior to any demolition of structures. Refugees will be given alternative shelter, and assisted to settle into their new homes safely. We assure you, Mr. Chairman, that the Board will always safeguard the rights of refugees and asylum seekers.

4. Your Excellency, Ghana is committed to implementing the Multi-Year Programming Strategy and will continue to cooperate with UNHCR in this regard. We hope also that the few remaining points of divergence in the negotiations for an ExCom Conclusion on 'International Protection and Durable Solutions in the context of a Public Health Emergency' would soon be addressed. As the first of the series of proposed conclusions in the multi-year plan, we maintain that its endorsement will provide the necessary impetus for future negotiations on the remaining topics.

I thank you for your attention