

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR THE INTERIOR
OF GHANA, MS. NAANA EYIAH**

Chairperson
High Commissioner
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honoured to deliver Ghana's Statement on the agenda item. Ghana aligns itself fully with the Statement delivered by the Republic of the Congo for and on behalf of the African Group.

Current Emergency Situation

Madam Chairperson, Ghana lends her support to the High Commissioner's appeal to donor governments to maintain or increase their levels of funding given the proliferation of emergencies worldwide. Indeed, the Global Compact on Refugees espouses the principle of responsibility-sharing to ensure that refugee-receiving countries do not bear the burden alone.

Ghana is currently dealing with an emergency influx of Burkinabe nationals fleeing from extremist violence in their home country. They are entering through multiple entry points along the 200 km-long border thereby challenging reception mechanisms in place and our national security.

Government of Ghana, UNHCR and our partners are striving to improve the absorption capacity of host communities who have provided land for the construction of reception centres and settlements in both the Upper East and Upper West Regions, to position them to better receive the incoming asylum seekers. In addition, we are immediately working with UNHCR to implement livelihood activities in order to reduce the dependence on donor funding and maintain the dignity of asylum seekers, refugees and their host communities. We are not waiting for an end to the emergency phase. As a matter of fact, the

emergency is still unfolding. Evidently, this requires significant resources to enhance Ghana's coping capacity.

Madam Chairperson, all these come at a time when, unfortunately, UNHCR is downsizing its operations in Ghana and reducing funding for our refugee programme. The Government of Ghana is very concerned about this development. This is the time when more resources and support should be made available to augment our efforts. Indeed, apart from the humanitarian effort, huge resources are also required to enhance security in order to protect the asylum seekers and the host communities alike.

Madam Chairperson, the widespread nature of the refugee emergencies worldwide and the attention and resources they demand do not diminish in any way the seriousness of Ghana's situation; this is not the time for a comparative analysis of a tale of woes; it is a time to appreciate the highly challenging emergency facing Ghana, and to continue with the response that is warranted. We are therefore making an urgent plea to both UNHCR and donors to sustain the levels of badly needed assistance that will enable us to effectively provide the maintenance and care that persons seeking asylum so desperately need.

Ghana remains committed to meeting its obligation of ensuring that refugees and asylum seekers within its borders live in safety and dignity. We are also ensuring that refugees and asylum seekers are not left behind in development initiatives. International solidarity in this respect will be appreciated.

Durable Solutions

Madam Chairperson, Ghana believes that finding durable solutions to protracted refugee situations is a sure way of maintaining and guaranteeing the dignity of persons who seek international protection. Last year we stated that Ghana had instituted measures to ensure that former Ivorian refugees would be accorded an alternative legal status, by issuing them with indefinite residence permits that will facilitate their inclusion in social and economic life within Ghana.

I am happy to report that this week, our partner, the Ghana Immigration Service, has commenced the registration of the former Ivorian refugees and to issue them with indefinite residence permits which will allow them and their dependents to live and work in Ghana for as long as they desire. We will strive to ensure that other protracted situations are concluded satisfactorily. Ghana stands by its commitment to finding true durable solutions to refugee situations.

Madam Chairperson, we are continuing with the programme to issue the Ghana Card which is the mandatory form of identification for virtually all persons living in Ghana, without which refugees would not be able to engage in many socioeconomic activities. We believe in empowering refugees to be self-reliant and contribute towards building the society in which they live.

Conclusion

Madam Chairperson, I would like to conclude by acknowledging the enormous contribution by UNHCR to the refugee effort in Ghana. The collaboration with the country and regional offices is par excellence. We reiterate our commitment to upholding the rights of the persons we serve and to enable them live in Ghana in safety and dignity.

I thank you for your attention.