

Statement by the ECOWAS Commission Delivered on behalf of H.E. Dr Omar Alieu Touray, President of the ECOWAS Commission at the 76th Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme (ExCom), October 9th, 2025.

Your Excellency, High Commissioner Filippo Grandi, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the President of the ECOWAS Commission, H.E. Dr Omar Alieu Touray, I extend warm greetings to you, High Commissioner, and to all present at this 76th session of ExCom.

The ECOWAS Commission aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on behalf of the African Group.

West Africa continues to face deepening humanitarian challenges, particularly in the Sahel region. Armed violence against civilians, entrenched poverty, food insecurity, and climate change have triggered mass displacement. As of July 2025, the region hosts 7.6 million displaced persons. The insecurity in the Central Sahel has further pushed displaced populations into coastal states—Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo—placing immense pressure on host communities and weakening their resilience.

In line with the principle of burden and responsibility sharing, the ECOWAS Commission has increased financial support to Member States to assist displaced populations. Recognizing the strain on host communities and the dwindling resources available, we have prioritized regional solidarity and action.

We commend the generosity of national governments, host communities and acknowledge the burdens they bear. In 2024/2025, the ECOWAS Commission will disburse USD 9 million to support refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, stateless persons, migrants, and returnees across Member States. We are pleased to report ongoing collaboration with UNHCR to implement humanitarian interventions in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, and Senegal.

To advance durable solutions, ECOWAS—in collaboration with UNHCR—has conducted a regional study that led to the development of a draft regional asylum policy. This policy aims to strengthen protection and assistance for refugees and asylum-seekers, while promoting innovative practices that ease the burden on host communities.

The ECOWAS Commission, in partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross, continues to advance efforts across West Africa to strengthen the implementation of International Humanitarian Law. This collaboration stands as a powerful testament to our shared commitment to protecting civilians affected by armed conflict—not only as a binding international obligation, but as a profound moral responsibility embraced by all stakeholders.

Addressing displacement demands a proactive approach to its root causes. ECOWAS places a strong emphasis on conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and robust early warning systems. Through the ECOWAS Disaster Operations Centre, and in close collaboration with our partners, we monitor meteorological and hydrological patterns to anticipate risks. By providing timely guidance to Member States, we help mitigate the impact of disasters and curb climate-induced population movements across the region.

As we approach the Global Refugee Forum review in December, ECOWAS remains committed to fulfilling its pledges. We will leverage institutional frameworks, legal instruments, and diplomatic channels to promote democracy, human rights, and inclusive governance—addressing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and building resilience across the region.

We call on development partners to join us in delivering solutions that protect and empower displaced populations. The ECOWAS Commission remains steadfast in its commitment to durable solutions and will continue to work closely with UNHCR to prevent displacement and support Persons of Concern in West Africa.

On behalf of H.E. Dr Omar Alieu Touray, I express our sincere appreciation to UNHCR for its invaluable work in the region and encourage continued and enhanced engagement.

Thank you for your kind attention.