

**67TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH  
COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES- 3<sup>RD</sup> – 7<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2016**

**STATEMENT ON THE GENERAL DEBATE BY DR. VINCENT KOFI ANANI, EXECUTIVE  
SECRETARY OF THE GHANA REFUGEE BOARD OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA ON  
MONDAY, 3RD OCTOBER, 2016**

Your Excellency Chairperson,

Let me begin by commending you Mr Chairperson, for the able manner with which you have conducted this session so far. You can count on the support of Ghana towards the success of the session. Let me also congratulate Mr. Filippo Grandi for his appointment as the High Commissioner for Refugees.

**Durable Solutions**

Mr Chairman,

Ghana has made some notable strides in seeking durable solutions for her refugee populations which currently stands at almost 18,500. Activities leading to the Local Integration of Togolese and Liberian refugees have begun. The Government of Ghana is working through a tripartite arrangement with the respective authorities towards obtaining permanent solution on the legal aspect of *Local Integration*.

In the last quarter of 2015, steps were taken to prepare a strategic plan for refugee management in response to the continuing protracted nature of some refugee caseloads and the increasing adoption of local integration as the preferred solution. This plan leveraged and drew on the frontier innovations in the thinking and dialogue on tackling displacement as a major development challenge – a perspective which calls for building solid public-private sector alliances and pooling corresponding humanitarian and development knowledge, expertise and financial resources for human capital investments to generate new employment and livelihood opportunities for the displaced and host populations.

Ghana has joined other countries in search for ways to increase international cooperation for better responses based on the understanding that forced displacement is both a humanitarian and development issue. This led to the development of the “**Jobs Solutions Approach**” strategy which seeks to:

(a) Encourage the utilization of the available skills within the refugees and host communities with innovative business practices to maximize productivity for sustainable incomes and livelihood opportunities;

(b) Encourage participation of the refugees in host community local governance arrangements to deepen trust and ensure prolonged amicable relations and co-existence; and

(c) improve the quality of services targeting the most vulnerable among the refugees and host communities.

The thinking underlying our strategy, has recently been reinforced and validated by the New York Declaration adopted by the General Assembly two weeks ago. It is of utmost importance that we receive the necessary funding support to ensure the successful implementation of this strategy.

### **Integration of services into national systems**

Mr Chairman,

In collaboration with UNHCR, social amenities in most of the refugee hosting areas have been largely integrated into national systems. Education in all locations has been absorbed into the Ghana Education Service. Nearly all health services have been absorbed into the National Health Service Scheme and newly provided facilities will be handed over to the Ghana Health Service soon. Refugee children are considered for the school feeding program in the host communities. Refugees are registered on the National Health Insurance Scheme. Work is still on-going to absorb water and sanitation services into the national system.

### **Statelessness**

Mr Chairman,

On statelessness, the Government of Ghana is working assiduously towards the country's accession to the Statelessness Convention. A Memorandum has been submitted to Cabinet for onward transmission to Parliament for the ratification of the two Statelessness Conventions. With a strong collaboration among the UNHCR, the Ghana Births and Deaths Registry and the Ghana Refugee Board, civil documentations are issued to all refugee children born in Ghana in order to avoid any statelessness situation in the future.

### **Voluntary Repatriation**

Mr Chairman,

Ghana is working through the Tripartite arrangement towards encouraging Ivorian refugees who can return home to do so. The Ivorian Government indicates that a conducive environment to encourage voluntary return is being created. To this end, the two Governments have held consultations at the Presidential level. We continue to engage refugees and provide as much information as possible on conditions in the country of origin. More work however needs to be done to encourage dialogue in order to improve the desire for refugees to return voluntarily.

## **Conclusion**

Mr Chairman,

Regardless of the strides made, the strains of hosting refugees prevail. We may not have the numbers as our counterpart host countries on the continent and the strains differ in intensity and reach but equally deserve attention and support. These stretch from (a) the increasing protracted nature of displacement and mounting complexity of hosting challenges, (b) dwindling global resources, assistance and related support services, (c) the insufficiency of short term interventions and the corresponding elusiveness of desired results; (d) the compelling need for long term national and collective horizons to ensure more effective and sustained intervening impact; and (e) the persistence of the triggers and challenges which induce these phenomena.

Ghana's participation in this high level meeting would thus serve to reiterate the global call for shared responsibility geared towards lessening the burden of mounting complexity of challenges of hosting refugees. Ghana remains open to continue to engage with UNHCR in all areas of mutual interest including the issues that I have mentioned here.

Thank you for the attention