



**UNHCR fulfils promise to Counties hosting Ivorian refugees
- donates vehicles, earmarks US\$ 2M for projects**

Monrovia, Liberia, 16 May, 2012 - In fulfilment of a promise made during the Ivorian refugee influx into Liberia more than a year ago, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has donated six brand new vehicles, including two ambulances and four Toyota LC 200 Land Cruisers, to Liberia's border counties hosting Ivorian refugees.

The four Toyota vehicles were donated to the superintendents of Nimba, Grand Gedeh, Maryland and River Gee Counties while the two ambulances were donated to the Martha Tubman Hospital in Zwedru and to the J.J Dossen Hospital in Harper.

Handing over the vehicles worth about half a million United States dollars (US\$500,000) to the Minister of Internal Affairs on Friday, 11 May in Monrovia, the UNHCR Representative, Mr. Cosmas Chanda, said the donation was in fulfilment of the promise the High Commissioner, Mr. António Guterres, made to assist the local authorities with logistics during his visit to Liberia in March 2011 at the height of the Ivorian refugee emergency. Mr. Chanda lauded the Government of Liberia for providing international protection to the refugees and commended local communities for their generosity and hospitality.

"UNHCR cannot reward the people of Liberia for their kind gesture. What we are doing is only a token of our appreciation," noted the Representative. Thanking donors for their support to the UNHCR operation in Liberia, Mr. Chanda said in addition to the donation of vehicles and ongoing assistance to communities in areas such as the rehabilitation of bridges, schools and clinics, UNHCR has further earmarked two million United States dollars (US\$2M) to complement the efforts of the Government of Liberia in the implementation of Quick Impact Projects in refugee-hosting communities. Some of the priority projects jointly identified by the UNHCR, the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) and host communities include expansion of health and educational facilities, supply of school materials, rehabilitation of roads, bridges and markets.

Taking delivery of the vehicles, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Hon. Blamoh Nelson, expressed gratitude for the donation and thanked UNHCR for its continued support. He noted that the vehicles will go a long way in enabling the county authorities to better discharge their duties. The Minister hoped that preventive diplomacy be utilized more to prevent the unfortunate outflow of refugees between African countries. Liberia currently hosts more than 67,300 Ivorian refugees.

The handover ceremony was witnessed by the Executive Director for the LRRRC, Cllr. Wheatonia Y. Dixon Barnes and her deputy, Ms. Chara Cooper, superintendents of the four Counties, as well as government officials and some UNHCR staff.