



ABIDJAN JOINT DECLARATION ON THE UPDATED ROADMAP FOR COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTIONS FOR IVORIAN REFUGEES

ABIDJAN, COTE D'IVOIRE, 7 SEPTEMBER 2021

I. Preamble

We, Ministers, representing the Governments of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, the Republic of Ghana, the Republic of Guinea, the Republic of Liberia, the Republic of Mali, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the Republic of Togo and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, convening in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire on 7 September 2021 at the Regional Conference on the Roadmap for the Comprehensive Solutions for Ivorian Refugees:

1. **Cognizant** of the Roadmap for Comprehensive solutions for Ivorian Refugees adopted in November 2018 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire and the follow-up meeting held in Accra, Ghana in October 2019;
2. **Recognizing** the commitment and extraordinary efforts of countries of asylum to protect and assist refugees for more than two decades;
3. **Commending** all the Governments signatories of the Roadmap for the political, administrative, legal, security, humanitarian, development, economic measures adopted and implemented to find lasting solutions to forced displacement situations;
4. **Acknowledging** the reconciliation process that has been taking place in Côte d'Ivoire, including the law n° 2018-980 of 27 December 2018 ratifying the Ordinance n° 2018-669 of 6 August 2018 on amnesty, allowing for the return in safety and dignity of refugees and internally displaced persons;
5. **Noting** that since 2011, more than 274,000 Ivorians refugees have voluntarily repatriated and reintegrated in their country of origin, while some 87,000 Ivorian refugees and asylum-seekers remain in exile in several countries around the world;
6. **Assessing** that the circumstances that caused Ivorians to seek asylum have fundamentally changed, warranting consideration of the implementation of refugee status cessation;
7. **Reaffirming** our mutual commitment to implement durable solutions for all Ivorian refugees and asylum-seekers;

Solemnly declare as follows:

II. Objectives:

1



1. **Endorse** the *Updated Roadmap for Comprehensive Solutions for Ivorian Refugees* which aims to achieve durable solutions for all Ivorian refugees through the promotion of voluntary repatriation, local integration through the acquisition of permanent resident status and nationality;
2. **Recommend** the application of the cessation clause of their refugee status, in accordance with paragraphs 6 (A) (e) and (f) of the UNHCR Statute, Article 1C (5) and (6) of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and Article 1 (4)(e) of the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, to be announced at the 72nd session of the UNHCR Executive Committee;
3. **Agree** on the following accompanying measures and timelines to facilitate the implementation of the Roadmap, and allow the cessation of refugee status to enter into force on 30th June 2022;

III. On measures to facilitate Voluntary Repatriation and reintegration

1. **Promote** the voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees remaining in exile, with a view to complete it by 31 July 2022, as well as their effective reintegration in their country of origin;
2. **Agree** to organize information campaigns to provide the refugees with objective and accurate information relevant to their voluntary repatriation and reintegration in Côte d'Ivoire;
3. **Reinforce** administrative, judicial and security measures in order to ensure that return of refugees takes place voluntarily in safety and dignity and that reintegration is sustainable;
4. **Recognize** the Voluntary Repatriation Forms (VRFs), as valid temporary identity documents for the purpose of return to final destination and effective reintegration of returnees until the issuance of national identity documents;
5. **Enhance** conducive conditions to the sustainable return in taking necessary measures to promote social cohesion and allow for repatriation without fear of discrimination, persecution or prosecution, in accordance with the law n° 2018-980 of 27 December 2018 ratifying the Ordinance n° 2018-669 of 6 August 2018 on amnesty;

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6. **Facilitate** access to and restitution of land and other movable and immovable property, in accordance with the existing laws, regulations and practices;
7. **Ensure** the equal enjoyment of all civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights to all returnees including spontaneous returnees and their access to the different national public services available to all citizens.
8. **Issue** returnees with all necessary documents for the enjoyment and exercise of their civil rights, such as passports, identity and civil documentation such as birth, marriage, divorce, adoption and death certificates as well as land deeds.
9. **Ensure** recognition of birth, death, adoption, marriage and divorce certificates issued by authorities in countries of asylum.
10. **Promote** returnees' reintegration into the national education system in Côte d'Ivoire and **ensure** the recognition and equivalence of academic, technical and vocational training diplomas and certificates obtained by refugees in countries of asylum.

IV. On measures to facilitate permanent residency for Ivorians opting to stay in host countries

1. **Facilitate** the timely issuance of national passports and civil documentation through embassies to Ivorian citizens willing to establish in host countries and who meet the legal requirements, in respect of the timelines agreed upon in the Updated Roadmap;
2. **Ensure** that Ivorian citizens who opt to establish in their host countries and meet the conditions, benefit from a legal status, preferably permanent residency permit;
3. **Ensure** that the issuance of national passports and residence permits is undertaken in accordance with the timeframe of the Roadmap to allow for the application of the cessation clause by 30th June 2022;
4. **Take into account** the specific situation of refugees to facilitate the issuance of the required documentation at reduced fees through simplified administrative procedures;
5. **Support** access to naturalization to refugees who meet the legal conditions & requirements;





V. On the application of the Cessation clause

1. **Contribute** to the elaboration of a common workplan leading to the cessation of refugee status, including the establishment of exemption procedures for persons who remain in need of international protection;
2. **Undertake** a fair, transparent and efficient review of all cases of persons seeking an exemption to cessation within the timeframe of the Roadmap;
3. **Extend** refugee status of persons who have compelling reasons to maintain their refugee status; and preserve access to territory and asylum to persons who are in need of international protection;

VI. On Technical Committee to support implementation

1. **Agree** to set up a Technical Committee whose role is to ensure full implementation of the Updated Roadmap, to support the translation into concrete actions of the Conclusions that resulted from the Technical meeting on 6 September, to measure progress and report to the Governments at ministerial level.

We commit to remain actively seized of the matter.

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Abidjan, 7th September 2021

For Government of Republic of Côte d'Ivoire:

Madam Kandia KAMISSOKO CAMARA
Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs
of African Integration and Diaspora

For Government of Republic of Ghana:

Honorable Naana EYIAH
Deputy Minister of Interior

For Government of Republic of Liberia:

Honorable Varney A. SIRLEAF
Minister Ministry of Internal Affairs &
Chairman of the Board of Commissioners
Liberia Refugee Repatriation & Resettlement
Commission (LRRRC)

For Government of Republic of Guinea:

For Government of Republic of Mali:

Mister Haminy Belco MAIGA
Head of Cabinet of the Minister of Territorial
Administration and Decentralization

For Government of Islamic Republic of Mauritania:

Mister Monsieur Hamed MAHI,
Director General of Territorial Administration at
the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization

For Government of Republic of Togo:

Madam Adjovi Lolonyo APEDOH-ANAKOMA
Minister of Social Action, Promotion of Women
and Literacy

**For the United Nations High Commissioner
for Refugees (UNHCR)**

Mister Raouf MAZOU
Assistant High Commissioner for Operations