Finding Solutions
The Government of Mauritania maintains a firm position that voluntary repatriation has concluded in 2012. Consequently, local integration and resettlement are the viable durable solutions. Both countries of asylum provide favorable frameworks and environment for alternative legal status and naturalization.

Achievement
In Mali, 4 Mauritanian refugees were naturalized (of a total of 1,500 targeted refugees in 2018) and 1,161 children born in Mali were confirmed as Malian citizens in 2018. The Government also exempted criminal records from Mauritania as a required document for naturalization application.

In Senegal, 5 of 165 applicants for naturalization, who are spouses of Senegalese nationals, received nationality certificates in 2017. With UNHCR’s advocacy, the Senegalese authorities agreed to provide birth certificates to all refugees who do not possess them upon their requests to facilitate their local integration.

Development
In Mali, UNHCR aims to submit 1,500 naturalization applications for Mauritanian refugees by end of 2018.
In Senegal, 160 persons await for decisions on their naturalization applications.

Way Forward
UNHCR will continue advocating with the Mauritanian authorities to reopen voluntary repatriation for refugees wishing to return home. The possibility of dual citizenship in Mauritania will need to be clarified with the authorities. In Mali, UNHCR will continue to prepare applications for the next naturalization submissions. In Senegal, UNHCR will follow up with the authorities on finalizing the local integration guideline.

History
Between April 1989 and 1992, Mauritanians of Bambara, Peulh, Soninke, and Wolof ethnic groups sought refuge in communities in Mali and Senegal. Many were forced to surrender ID cards and nationality documents before fleeing, and left without any proof of Mauritanian nationality. Nearly 75,000 refugees were recognized on a prima-facie basis. In 1994, the Mauritanian those expelled had voluntarily returned to Mauritania. Between 2008 and 2012, UNHCR facilitated voluntary repatriation of nearly 25,000 refugees.