



# New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants

On September 19, 2016 the United Nations (UN) General Assembly (GA) adopted a set of commitments to enhance the protection of refugees and migrants. These commitments are known as the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*.<sup>1</sup> The following sets out the main elements of the New York Declaration and why they are important for UNHCR and those we seek to protect.

© UNHCR/Mark Henley

The New York Declaration is based on the recognition that the world is facing an unprecedented level of human mobility: most of it positive, enriching and voluntary. It recognizes, however, that the number of persons who are forcibly displaced from their homes is at a historically high level. Increasing numbers of refugees and migrants are moving in circumstances where their lives are at risk and their reception is overwhelming for countries on the front lines.

In adopting the Declaration, the 193 States who are members of the UN: declared profound solidarity with persons who are forced to flee; reaffirmed their obligations to fully respect the human rights of refugees and migrants; and, pledged robust support to countries affected by large movements of refugees and migrants.

1. The NY Declaration adopted at UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants can be found at [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/71/L.1/](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/71/L.1/)

## Significance for refugee protection

- States reaffirm the importance of adhering to the international protection regime (1951 Convention, human rights and humanitarian law).
- They specifically acknowledge that protection of refugees and assistance to host States are a shared international responsibility (important given that this notion has been contested in recent years).
- They pledge to strengthen and facilitate a well-funded emergency response and a smooth transition to sustainable approaches that invest in resilience of both refugees and local communities.
- They commit to providing additional and predictable humanitarian funding and development support.
- They commit to wider avenues for refugees to be admitted to third countries, including through increased resettlement.
- They pledge to support the development and application of a comprehensive refugee response framework for large refugee movements including protracted ones.
- They commit to working towards the adoption of a global compact on refugees in 2018.

## Comprehensive Refugee Response (CRR) framework

The New York Declaration outlines elements for a comprehensive response to refugee displacement based on principles of international cooperation and burden sharing. Rather than responding to refugee displacement through a purely, and often underfunded, humanitarian lens, the elements of the CRR framework are designed to provide a more systematic and sustainable response that benefits both refugees and their hosts. So for example, its scope is expansive and designed to ensure: rapid and well-supported reception and admission measures;

support for immediate and ongoing needs (e.g. protection, health, education); assistance to national/local institutions and communities receiving refugees; and expanded opportunities for durable solutions.

The Declaration calls upon UNHCR to develop and initiate application of the framework to particular situations, in close coordination with relevant States and involving other UN agencies and stakeholders and assess its impact with a view to refining it further.

## New elements

A CRR is broader than a typical refugee response in the following ways:

### Engages a wide array of stakeholders

- national and local authorities;
- international and regional organisations and financial institutions;
- civil society partners (including faith-based, academia, media, and private sector); and,
- refugees.

### Embraces investment and innovation

- through private sector engagement;
- diverse forms of investment; and,
- innovative humanitarian delivery.

### Is inclusive of, but not limited to, a UN refugee operational plan and funding appeal

- includes both humanitarian responses and development actions early on to strengthen the overall response;
- supports local service provision in areas hosting refugees;
- links national and local humanitarian and development strategies; and,
- promotes resilience of refugees and local communities to address poverty and lessen aid dependence.

### Initiates long-term planning for solutions

- sets out specific responsibilities of countries of origin, host countries, and third countries and international support required.



## Global Refugee Compact

Based on the experiences of the application of the CRR framework, the GA commits to adopting a global compact on refugees (GCR) in 2018. While the content of a GCR is not specified, it will be based on the CRR framework set out in the New York Declaration and will have as its overarching objectives:

- easing pressures on host countries;
- enhancing refugee self-reliance;
- expanding third-country solutions; and,
- supporting conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

The High Commissioner is specifically requested to propose such a GCR in his 2018 annual report to the GA. States will then consider the proposed GCR as part of their annual resolution on the Office.

## Implementation

The commitments of the New York Declaration are operational as of the date of its adoption. In regard to the application of the CRR framework to particular situations, UNHCR is taking that forward in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. The experience of applying the CRR framework, will inform the discussions leading to a proposed GCR, which UNHCR will propose as part of the High Commissioner's report to the GA in November 2018.

The decision to adopt this new way of working is an opportunity and a challenge. The time frame is short, as UNHCR must be able to assess results of several CRRs by early 2018 engaging Member States and consulting with stakeholders.

## Migrant dimension<sup>2</sup>

The New York Declaration has commitments that apply equally to migrants and refugees including those aimed at saving lives; addressing specific needs; countering racism and xenophobia, combatting human trafficking; ensuring equal recognition and protection before the law; and ensuring inclusion in national development plans.

In addition, the New York Declaration commits States to addressing the drivers of irregular migration; ensuring migration is a choice and not a necessity; assisting, on

the basis of needs, migrants in countries facing conflict or natural disasters; reducing the costs of labour migration; promoting ethical recruitment policies; and applying minimum labour standards.

States pledge to consider the development of non-binding guiding principles for migrants in vulnerable situations; and engage in intergovernmental negotiations for the adoption of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in 2018. UNHCR will contribute its expertise to both efforts.

2. For more on the New York Declaration and migration see <http://refugeesmigrants.un.org/frequently-asked-questions> and/or <http://www.iom.int>