

UK SPEECH : UNHCR EXCOM – OCT 2016

Mr Chairman, High Commissioner, distinguished colleagues ,

With over 65 million people currently displaced globally, there has never been a more important time to focus on the vital work, and role, of UNHCR.

For this reason the UK believes the 1951 Convention (and the 1967 Protocol) and UNHCR's role, must be upheld and refugees supported and protected, as well as their host communities. We must broaden the sense of responsibility-sharing and remain true to the 'universal values' that we share together.

This is why at UNGA recently, Prime Minister, Theresa May set out our abiding commitment to spend 0.7% of our Gross National Income on international development and to drive forward the implementation of the SDGs.

At President Obama's Refugee Summit [which raised \$4.5bn in additional funding and doubled global resettlement places] the Prime Minister explained that the UK will increase of the UK's total annual humanitarian assistance, by nearly \$1 billion in 2016/17 to over \$2 billion.

The Prime Minister discussed the expansion of the 'compact' approach used in Jordan and Lebanon, to Ethiopia where the UK will contribute \$104 million to a 'Jobs Compact' with the Ethiopian government, the World Bank, the EU and the European Investment Bank that will create 100 000 jobs and allow refugees to work outside camps. To foster better global responsibility sharing, the UK will also support a new Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism, to assist new countries to take in refugees.

At the UN's meeting on Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants which adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants [which recognises the need to address the root causes of these flows], the UK Prime Minister called for better support for refugee-hosting countries, so that refugees can access education and employment and live as close as possible to their home countries without making dangerous onward journeys. She also set out three fundamental principles for a new approach to managing people flows :

Firstly, Refugees should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach and not need to undertake dangerous onward movement;

Secondly, The need collectively to improve our ability to distinguish between economic migrants and refugees fleeing persecution, to ensure refugees receive the assistance they require;

And third, The right of all countries to control borders and protect their own citizens, and the responsibility of states to accept return of their nationals when they have no right to remain elsewhere.

On 21 September at UNGA the UK's Secretary of State for International Development, Priti Patel [and the co-hosts of the 4 February 2016 'Supporting Syria and the Region' Conference] reported on the substantial progress made since February. \$4.7bn has now been delivered, 80% of the \$6bn pledged for 2016.

However, more is urgently needed. The \$12 billion pledged at the London Conference has to translate urgently into delivery at scale and all donors need to deliver their remaining pledged money quickly now, as needs continue to escalate. The UN Syria appeal remains only 43% funded with over \$7.7 billion needed for 2016 alone.

Inside Syria : the bombing of aid convoys and hospitals and the denial of the delivery of basic aid to civilians in besieged areas continues and cannot be either hidden or excused. We urgently need to see an end to attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, especially hospitals and medical facilities; an end to inhumane siege tactics, and the provision of safe and sustained access for humanitarian agencies. A real return to a cessation of hostilities leading to the resumption of political talks and commitment to finding a political solution is in the end the only way to stem the flows of vulnerable displaced people both internally and across international borders.

Mr Chairman

UNHCR will have a critical role to play as the international community takes forward the commitments outlined in the New York Declaration for two new Global Compacts on Refugees and Migrants. Your expertise will ensure that the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, agreed by the UN General Assembly as a new approach to large scale movements, is tested effectively over the coming

months. This will be vitally important as we look to identify any areas for improvement in preparation for consultations on the Global Compact.

The UK remains fully committed to championing the protection and support of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, we commend [UNHCR](#) for its continued role at the forefront of this work and look forward to continuing and deepening our partnership on this over the coming year.

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