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## **“Towards a global compact on refugees”**

### **Thematic discussion five:**

#### **Issues that cut across all four substantive sections of the comprehensive refugee response framework, and overarching issues**

15 November 2017

#### **Panel one: How can we address the root causes of large movements of refugees?**

##### *Summary*

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The panel benefitted from a rich and multifaceted discussion of this perennial issue, and particularly from the voices of refugees and young people.

One overarching theme was the acceptance that root causes are numerous and complex and that the international community must do a better job of identifying root causes and the relationship between them. The international community must also work to address root causes in a manner that ensures policy coherence and integrates the work of humanitarian, development, environmental, and peace and security actors. The recent UN-World Bank Group joint report, “Pathways for peace”<sup>1</sup>, provides some excellent analysis and ideas that the international community can draw on.

Some of the key root causes that the discussion focused on included:

- patterns of exclusion and institutional failure that lead to violence;
- the absence of the rule of law and non-compliance with relevant bodies of international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law;
- displacement caused by the use of explosive weapons, particularly in densely populated areas, which not only kills and maims, but also causes trauma and destroys homes and vital infrastructure;
- statelessness, which – if left unaddressed – can undermine social cohesion and lead to marginalization, discrimination, and displacement;
- climate change and disasters, which can act as “threat multipliers” that fuel other threats; and
- sexual and gender-based violence, which can be a root cause of displacement and, all too often, a consequence of it as well.

Participants discussed numerous ways to address root causes, such as:

- preventing root causes from materializing, including through preventative diplomacy and the Secretary-General’s prevention agenda building on the evidence and findings in “Pathways for peace”;
- early warning and early action when root causes do materialize, starting with a better articulation of what this means in practice;
- action towards the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals and – in particular – SDG16 on peace and justice, and target 16.9 on legal identity and birth registration; and

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<sup>1</sup> Available via <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28337>

- the use of existing international processes, such as – in relation to disaster displacement and climate change – the Nansen Agenda and the Sendai Framework.

Participants also discussed the importance of:

- quality education at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, which were described a number of times as investments in the future of countries that support social cohesion and self-reliance;
- ensuring access to decent work, economic empowerment and expanded livelihood opportunities;
- ensuring that the gender and age dimensions are integrated at all times, including by ensuring that women and youth are included in conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes; and
- ensuring that all relevant actors adopt a rights-based approach to their work.

The proposals for the programme of action in the concept paper were broadly welcomed, with many additional suggestions being put forward for consideration.

Ultimately, however, the success of any of these proposals will depend on the political will of all involved, a point that was also made by a number of participants.

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*UNHCR*  
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