

“Towards a global compact on refugees”

Thematic discussion four:

Measures to be taken in pursuit of solutions

– and –

Thematic discussion five:

Issues that cut across all four substantive sections of the comprehensive refugee responses, and overarching issues

Palais des Nations (room XIX), Geneva, 14 – 15 November 2017

Concept paper

I. Background

1. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2016,¹ called for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in consultation with States and other stakeholders, to develop a global compact on refugees for inclusion in his annual report to the General Assembly in 2018.
2. The global compact on refugees will consist of two parts: (i) the comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF), contained in annex I to the New York Declaration; and (ii) a programme of action, which will underpin the CRRF and facilitate its implementation by building a platform of cooperation to enable more equitable and predictable burden- and responsibility-sharing.²
3. It is the purpose of these thematic discussions to develop proposals for the programme of action in a manner that ensures that the perspectives of all States and relevant stakeholders are heard and taken into account.
4. Following thematic discussion one, two, and three,³ thematic discussion four (14 November 2017) will focus on pillar four of the CRRF (“measures to be taken in pursuit of solutions”). Thematic discussion five (15 November 2017) will explore issues that cut across all four pillars of the CRRF and overarching issues.⁴
5. This paper sets out background information for thematic discussions four and five. It also contains some preliminary suggestions for the programme of action for discussion, drawing on the contributions of a wide range of stakeholders, as well as experiences in the roll-out of the CRRF to date. The suggestions are not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive, but rather to inspire the process of reflection.
6. Participants are invited to provide feedback on these preliminary suggestions and to make new proposals, both during the thematic discussions and in the form of written contributions. UNHCR also invites suggestions regarding who might

¹ New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 September 2016, A/RES/71/1 (New York Declaration). For further information see: <http://www.unhcr.org/newyorkdeclaration>.

² UNHCR, “Towards a global compact on refugees: a roadmap”, 17 May 2017, available via: <http://www.unhcr.org/regugeecomcompact>.

³ Concept paper and summary conclusions for previous thematic discussions are available from: <http://www.unhcr.org/thematicdiscussions>.

⁴ Following the conclusion of the thematic discussions, a stocktaking period will take place which will culminate in the High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges on 12 and 13 December 2017. Formal consultations on a draft compact will commence in February 2018.

contribute to actionable commitments. Some specific actors have been proposed in the following examples, but they are intended to be illustrative only.

II. Thematic discussion four: measures to be taken in pursuit of solutions (14 November 2017)

(a) *Panel one: how can we support voluntary and sustainable return?*

7. Voluntary repatriation remains the preferred solution of many refugees.⁵ In the New York Declaration, States committed themselves to working on solutions from the outset of a refugee situation, including a focus on sustainable return in safety and dignity.⁶ The CRRF expressly includes among its four objectives “to support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.”⁷ In addition to fostering the re-establishment of conditions that would permit return in safety, international support can be critical to ensuring that return is sustainable, including through multi-year, multi-partner strategies to support development, peacebuilding and reconstruction.⁸

8. Against this background, this panel will consider ways in which the programme of action could ensure predictable and timely support to facilitate voluntary and sustainable return, including with respect to:

- (i) establishing conditions to enable return in safety and dignity;
- (ii) supporting the reintegration of refugees;
- (iii) participation of refugees in peace and political processes; and
- (iv) ensuring enjoyment of housing, land and property rights.

Possible suggestions for the programme of action

Support for tripartite agreements

The use of **tripartite agreements**, involving countries of asylum, countries of origin and UNHCR, has been established as a standard tool in the context of voluntary repatriation. Tripartite agreements have proved to facilitate official recognition of priorities and barriers to return, as well as to enable refugee participation in planning and, where appropriate, peace processes.⁹ By defining the core elements and modalities of voluntary repatriation, tripartite agreements also contribute to the sustainability of return and ensure continued support to host countries.

In this regard, a **support group** with a focus on contributing to improved conditions in return areas could be an important complement to tripartite agreements, linking to

⁵ See e.g. UNHCR Executive Committee (ExCom) Conclusions: No. 68 (XLIII) (1992); No. 99 (LV) (2004); No. 104 (LVI) (2005); and No. 109 (LXI) (2009).

⁶ See e.g. New York Declaration, para 75.

⁷ New York Declaration, para 18 of annex I.

⁸ To enable such conditions in countries of origin, the CRRF proposes, inter alia, funding for rehabilitation, reconstruction and development; the inclusion of returnees’ needs in national development planning, including basic service delivery and social protection mechanisms; and efforts to foster reconciliation and dialogues: New York Declaration, para 12 of annex I.

⁹ Issues normally covered under tripartite agreements are often of practical nature and may therefore differ from one context to another, depending on the population profile, availability of services and geographic issues. Issues that can be regulated in a tripartite agreement, brokered by UNHCR, include recognition of documents (notably identification and birth certificates), agreement on the accreditation of education and other skills gained during exile, mechanisms to prevent statelessness, issues resulting from mixed marriages or conflict of laws, agreement on public health and safety mechanisms in the return movement, and regulation on the import and export of personal property and other legal issues.

existing mechanisms for coordinating humanitarian, peacebuilding and development interventions in the affected country.

Specific attention to rebuilding, within countries of origin, conditions conducive to voluntary and sustainable return

As a part of a comprehensive regional response, targeted **technical, financial and other support** could be provided to countries of origin to re-establish conditions to enable sustainable return. Attention would be paid to:

- the functioning of State institutions and the establishment of the rule of law;
- the restoration of essential public services and social infrastructure; and
- development in areas of return that will benefit returnees and receiving communities alike.

Additional support in the context of return

Once voluntary repatriation is envisaged, affected countries would receive additional support, including **funding, resources and/or expertise**, including with respect to:

- identifying the barriers to sustainable return with the participation of refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees and the other residents of return areas;
- building institutional readiness and capacity to receive and reintegrate returnees (e.g. access to identification and travel documents, civil and voter registration, integrated service delivery, good governance at the local level, justice systems, including policing, and housing, land and property management);
- inclusion of returnees, and their reintegration, in national development plans, in United Nations Country Team Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), and other planning documents, as part of overall rehabilitation, reconstruction and development efforts;
- facilitating participation of refugees and returnees – in particular women and youth – in decision-making processes including peace treaty negotiations, planning for reconciliation processes and elections, repatriation and reintegration projects; and
- supporting livelihoods programming for returnees and other members of their local communities.

(b) Panel two: how can we expand access to resettlement?

9. In addition to being a recognized durable solution and an essential tool for providing protection to refugees who are particularly vulnerable, resettlement is a tangible form of burden- and responsibility-sharing with hosting countries. As part of its ongoing protection activities, UNHCR continuously identifies refugees who are most in need of resettlement.¹⁰ In line with the commitments made by States in the New York Declaration to aim to meet the resettlement needs identified by UNHCR,¹¹ a significant increase in resettlement places over time is an integral component of a comprehensive refugee response. This panel will consider ways in which the programme of action could facilitate:

- (i) expansion and strengthening of resettlement programmes;

¹⁰ See: <http://www.unhcr.org/resettlement.html>.

¹¹ New York Declaration, para 78 (urging States that had not yet established resettlement programmes to consider doing so at the earliest opportunity, while encouraging those who had already done to consider increasing the size of their programmes, with the aim of providing resettlement places and other legal pathways for admission on a scale that would enable the annual resettlement needs identified by UNHCR to be met). See also paras 15 and 16 of annex I.

- (ii) support to new and emerging resettlement countries;
- (iii) strengthened use of emergency transit mechanisms; and
- (iv) the active involvement of civil society in resettlement.

Possible suggestions for the programme of action

Expanding resettlement

- Resettlement States and other interested States, with the support of UNHCR and other partners such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), will **progressively increase the size of their annual global resettlement programmes** with the aim of meeting, by 2028, the annual global resettlement needs identified by UNHCR.
- UNHCR, in close collaboration with resettlement States, other interested States and relevant partners, including civil society and academia, will work towards establishing a **guide to encourage States to resettle a fair share of those refugees** who are in need of resettlement.
- UNHCR, resettlement States and other interested States and partners will support the establishment and expansion of resettlement programmes in new and emerging resettlement countries in a strategic and coordinated manner, including through the Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism (ERCM).

Supporting a coherent, strategic and quality resettlement response

Resettlement States, in cooperation with hosting States, other interested States, UNHCR and other partners, will:

- ensure that within host countries, resettlement priorities and strategies for refugees in need of resettlement are included as an element of a comprehensive response;
- ensure that resettlement programmes are flexible, responsive and anchored in UNHCR global, regional and national protection and solutions strategies and premised on predictable engagement, prioritizing multi-year commitments;
- include in resettlement programmes places for the resettlement of refugees from **at least three priority situations** as identified by UNHCR in its annual global projected refugee resettlement needs;¹² and
- engage in an open and transparent **multi-year resettlement pledging process** with a view to ensuring a coherent and strategic global resettlement response.

¹² See further: <http://www.unhcr.org/resettlement.html>.

Where appropriate, resettlement pledges could also be made as part of the *solidarity conferences*.¹³

Ensuring the responsiveness and timeliness of resettlement programmes

Resettlement States and other interested States, in collaboration with UNHCR and other partners, will:

- promptly resettle refugees, including through the use of flexible and fit-for-purpose processing modalities, with a view to resettling **at least 25 per cent** of annual targets within six months of UNHCR referral;
- dedicate **at least 10 per cent** of their resettlement programme to emergency cases identified by UNHCR, including those with urgent or serious medical needs;
- expand and strengthen the use of **platforms for emergency processing** for resettlement; and
- in situations of large-scale displacement and protracted situations, establish a **resettlement core group** to ensure a strategic and coordinated response (potentially in coordination with or as part of the *global refugee response group*¹⁴), as well as expedite processing and broaden selection criteria with due regard to protection needs as well as security considerations.

Expanding partnerships with other actors

UNHCR, resettlement States and other interested States will work with relevant stakeholders, in particular private sector partners and other private entities to:

- increase support for accommodation and medical assistance for resettled refugees;
- encourage the private sector to support the resettlement process; and
- explore other alternative and innovative models for financing resettlement.

(c) ***Panel three: how can we expand access to complementary pathways for admission***

10. As a complement to resettlement opportunities, safe and regulated pathways for the admission of refugees to third countries can facilitate access to protection and solutions, and are an important expression of burden- and responsibility-sharing. In line with the commitments contained in the New York Declaration,¹⁵ this panel will consider ways that the programme of action can support the establishment or expansion of complementary pathways as part of a comprehensive refugee response, including by:

- (i) expanding family reunification;
- (ii) leveraging private and community sponsorship;

¹³ See further: <http://www.unhcr.org/59dc8f317>, p. 3.

¹⁴ See further: <http://www.unhcr.org/59dc8f317>, p. 2.

¹⁵ New York Declaration, paras 77 and 79 (noting the intention to increase the number and range of legal pathways available for refugees to be admitted to or resettled in third countries, and to consider the expansion of existing humanitarian admission programmes, possible temporary evacuation programmes, flexible arrangements to assist family reunification, private sponsorship for individual refugees, opportunities for labour mobility for refugees including through private sector partnerships, and for education, such as scholarships and student visas). See also paras 14 and 16 of annex I. The panel will also provide an opportunity to take stock of progress made by States since the high-level meeting on global responsibility-sharing through pathways of admission for Syrian refugees of 30 March 2016, see further: <http://www.unhcr.org/pathways-for-admission-of-syrian-refugees.html>.

- (iii) increasing access to educational opportunities in third countries;
- (iv) facilitating labour mobility schemes; and
- (v) data collection on and overall monitoring of complementary pathways for admission.

Possible suggestions for the programme of action

Expanding complementary pathways for admission

As part of a comprehensive refugee response, States, with the support of other relevant stakeholders, **would commit to the timely establishment or expansion** of complementary pathways for admission of refugees. This could potentially be carried out in coordination with or as part of the *global refugee response group*.¹⁶

In addition to States, relevant stakeholders could variously include UNHCR, international and regional bodies such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), IOM, the African Union, the European Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), civil society, the private sector, employers, trade unions, academic institutions, and diaspora organizations.

Actions may include:

- expanding and supporting family reunification mechanisms for refugees with family links in third countries, including by broadening eligibility criteria, simplifying procedures and increasing capacity of service providers to ensure timely and efficient case processing;
- facilitating access to complementary pathways for refugees through educational opportunities, such as scholarships, apprenticeships and traineeship programmes;
- facilitating refugee access to labour migration schemes in a protection-sensitive manner;
- establishing or implementing regional mobility mechanisms;
- increasing private or community sponsorship programmes for refugees that are complementary and additional to regular resettlement, including through participation in the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative (GRSI); and
- expanding humanitarian visas, humanitarian admission schemes and medical evacuation for refugees, as appropriate.

In order to **facilitate the ability of refugees to take up these complementary pathways**, States, with the support of other stakeholders including UNHCR, will:

- adopt or adapt simplified visa or entry programmes for refugees benefiting from complementary pathways;
- introduce safeguards to ensure that refugees can benefit from complementary pathways to third countries which are also protection sensitive;
- provide accurate and authoritative information about available opportunities to refugees, including through counselling, awareness raising, targeted advocacy, or electronic media platforms;
- provide concerned refugees with convention travel documents or other machine-readable travel documents;

¹⁶ See further: <http://www.unhcr.org/59dc8f317>, p. 2.

- facilitate, ease or waive exit requirements and departure from host countries for refugees benefiting from complementary pathways; and
- enhance the systematic collection, analysis and evaluation of data related to the use of complementary pathways, and share good practices and lessons learned.

(d) ***Panel four: how can we make local solutions work for refugees and the communities in which they live?***

11. Local solutions for some refugees usually form part of comprehensive, multi-year and multi-partner protection and solutions strategies, particularly for refugees who have formed close family or other ties with the hosting country or community. This panel will consider how the programme of action can:

- (i) support interested States to provide local opportunities as part of a comprehensive approach to protection and solutions;
- (ii) support inclusive policies;
- (iii) support naturalization procedures; and
- (iv) promote social harmony and address xenophobia.

Possible suggestions for the programme of action

Supporting local solutions

As part of a comprehensive refugee response, in order to support hosting States willing to provide local solutions, humanitarian organizations, including UNHCR, development actors such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), other relevant organizations including the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat), financial institutions such as the World Bank Group, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), regional institutions, interested States and donors would **dedicate funding, other resources and technical expertise to:**

- ensure adequate development and financial assistance to national institutions in hosting areas so as to be inclusive of refugees. This could include provision of additional development assistance, expanding access to grant-based assistance and ensuring favourable conditions for financial lending schemes, preferential trade and investment arrangements and innovative financing mechanisms, such as social impact bonds;
- support the development of inclusive policies on employment, economic development, social services, health care, justice and security, and other key sectors;
- ensure that humanitarian and development assistance is designed to benefit refugees and host communities to address development impacts in displacement-affected areas;
- support States to undertake comprehensive and participatory needs and capacity assessments for the development or updating of national and local development plans, in line with the “leave no-one behind” commitment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- support the inclusion of communities where refugees will settle in the implementation plans for all sustainable development goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 16;
- support the development of a clear strategic framework on the implementation of identified local solutions, assist in coordination and information-sharing

efforts among all stakeholders, as well as in mobilizing and empowering communities;

- analyse the economies in refugee hosting areas, taking into account local labour market assessments, skills profiles, value chain development and institutional capacities, and support local development plans that focus on jobs creation, skills development, and infrastructure and institutional development;
- develop programmes to promote tolerance and social harmony, and to address xenophobia;
- assist States in the identification of solutions for the legal local integration of refugees—including securing durable legal status, residence rights and naturalization where appropriate—sensitive to the specificities of refugee needs, as well as the socio-economic realities of hosting countries; and
- support regional frameworks which may complement national laws in offering pathways to permanent residence or naturalization for refugees in some cases e.g. the ECOWAS, MERCOSUR, or Southern African Development Community (SADC) frameworks.

III. Thematic discussion five: issues that cut across all four substantive sections of the comprehensive refugee response, and overarching issues (15 November 2017)

(a) *Panel one: how can we address the root causes of large movements of refugees?*

12. The New York Declaration reaffirmed the commitment of the international community to addressing the root causes of large refugee movements, including through preventive diplomacy and early response to conflict, as well as by promoting the rule of law, good governance, effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, and sustainable development.¹⁷ This panel will consider ways in which the programme of action could support efforts to address root causes more strategically, collaboratively and systematically as part of a comprehensive refugee response, including through strengthened cooperation between humanitarian, peace building, human rights and development actors with respect to:

- (i) early warning and preventive diplomacy;
- (ii) climate change and displacement;
- (iii) peacebuilding and development; and
- (iv) explosive weapons and displacement.

Possible suggestions for the programme of action

Early warning and prevention

Building on, and supporting, the United Nations Secretary-General's reform agenda, including in the peace and security sector, the following actions could contribute to preventing and ensuring early responses to human rights violations, conflict and other root causes of displacement:

- humanitarian and human rights actors to consider how best to collaborate with **development, peacebuilding and financial institutions**, including UNDP, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the World Bank Group, to address State fragility, marginalization and other root causes of displacement, including

¹⁷ New York Declaration, paras 12 and 64, and para 11 of annex I.

through **data collection and analysis, training, institutional support and interventions designed to support good governance;**

- relevant actors would undertake coordinated programming in areas such as: measures to strengthen the rule of law (including justice and security, in line with SGD 16); measures to prevent and respond to sexual- and gender-based violence that protect survivors and which can also prevent displacement; renewed efforts to address security sector reforms and the proliferation of small arms and explosive weapons which have led to displacement and can hinder return; and educational strategies to foster understanding and respect and to prevent ideologically-based conflict in future.

Preventing and responding to statelessness

Statelessness can be both a cause and a consequence of displacement. As a first step, in line with SDG 16.9 and the New York Declaration,¹⁸ UNHCR will engage partners and provide **expertise and technical support** to assist relevant national institutions or systems to register refugee births in a timely manner; enhance national civil registry systems including through utilization of technology and mobile services; and undertake awareness-raising campaigns that involve community and religious leaders among refugee populations on the importance of birth registration.

UNHCR and other relevant stakeholders will also **deploy resources and expertise** to support States more generally to work to reduce the incidence of statelessness in line with UNHCR’s Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024.¹⁹

Climate change, disasters and displacement

States, international organizations, civil society actors and other stakeholders **would mobilize funding, resources and expertise** to:

- implement the recommendations of the Nansen Initiative “Agenda for the protection of cross-border displaced persons in the context of disasters and climate change”²⁰ to address the protection needs of cross-border disaster-displaced persons;
- enhance the resilience of refugees and their host communities to prevent secondary displacement and support affected countries to address climate change and environmental degradation. This would facilitate, among other things, safe return for refugees and displaced persons; and
- alleviate the effects of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters as root causes of refugee movements, including through mitigation of climate change and environmental degradation and the promotion of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction activities.

(b) Panel two: how can we ensure a whole-of-society response to large movements of refugees and protracted situations?

13. The New York Declaration calls for a comprehensive refugee responses to be grounded in a multi-stakeholder approach including local authorities, international organizations, international and regional financial institutions, civil society partners (including faith-based organizations, diaspora organizations and academia), the private sector, the media and refugees themselves.²¹ This panel will consider some of the parameters for such a “whole of society” approach in applying the CRRF that

¹⁸ New York Declaration, para 5 (f) of annex 1.

¹⁹ See further: <http://www.unhcr.org/ibelong-campaign-to-end-statelessness.html>.

²⁰ Available from: <https://www.nanseninitiative.org/>.

²¹ New York Declaration, para 69.

could be included in the programme of action, including the specific roles, accountabilities and contributions of:

- (i) faith-based organizations;
- (ii) local women's networks;
- (iii) local government authorities;
- (iv) host communities; and
- (v) the private sector.

Possible suggestions for the programme of action

A global network of solidarity encompassing municipalities committed to refugee protection and solutions

Building on existing initiatives, including the global network of cities and local and regional governments,²² commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit,²³ “100 resilient cities”,²⁴ the 2017 global mayors summit,²⁵ and the “cities of solidarity” model contains in the Mexico Declaration and Plan of Action,²⁶ interested municipal governments could establish a **global network of solidarity** committed to providing protection, local inclusion and assistance for refugees.

In support of such a global network, consideration could be given, among others, to:

- the value of developing a platform to promote the sharing and implementation of good practices, including through twinning approaches; and
- how databases such as UNHCR's database on urban refugees²⁷ could be adapted to support their usefulness for city and district practitioners.

Role of faith-based organizations

Building on the “**Charter for faith-based humanitarian action**”,²⁸ faith-based organizations could be invited to commit to supporting and engaging in the various platforms adopted in this programme of action, as appropriate, including in particular: leadership in conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes; efforts to support receiving States with reception arrangements, including for those with specific needs; as well as measures to support inclusion of refugees in national systems and services (e.g. spiritual and psycho-social support, social safety nets, housing, mental and physical health and education), and to have access to community and cultural networks.

Role of the private sector

The private sector has been recognized as a crucial actor as part of a comprehensive refugee response, both as a driver of economic development and as a supporter of key response elements, including increased funding and assistance for hosting countries, innovation in delivery of humanitarian assistance, and access by refugees and members of host communities to livelihood opportunities, poverty reduction programmes and microfinancing. To harness this potential, a **global platform of businesses to invest in refugees and affected host communities**, supported by actors

²² See: <https://www.uclg.org/>.

²³ See: <http://urbancrises.org/>.

²⁴ See: <http://www.100resilientcities.org/>.

²⁵ See: <http://globalpolicy.columbia.edu/events/2017/09/global-mayors-summit>.

²⁶ See further: <http://www.urban-response.org/resource/20205>.

²⁷ See: <http://www.urbangoodpractices.org/>.

²⁸ See: <http://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/4012>.

including UNHCR, the International Chamber of Commerce and the World Bank Group, could be established potentially building also on the TENT foundation partnership for refugees²⁹ and the UN Global Compact.³⁰ This could be complemented by a *working group to compare good practices* on private sector support for refugees and hosting communities.

Role of universities and academic networks

Universities and academic networks, including the United Nations University, have a vital role to play in supporting the inclusion of refugees (e.g. through language training); contributing expertise, research, data and analysis; as well as potentially facilitating complementary pathways for admission to third countries through scholarship or related programmes.

A refugee academic alliance could be established with relevant universities, academic networks, UNHCR and other key stakeholders, to facilitate research, training and other initiatives in support of the objectives of the global compact on refugees. The World Bank Group's recently established Africa Fellowship Programme³¹ could serve as a model.

(c) ***Panel three: in what way can regional institutions contribute to comprehensive refugee responses?***

14. Past and current burden- and responsibility-sharing arrangements,³² as well as experience in application of the CRRF to date, demonstrate the importance of regional organizations, institutions and processes in supporting comprehensive responses to large-scale refugee movements. Against this background, this panel will consider the roles and contributions that could be made by specific regional actors as part of the programme of action, including, amongst others:

- (i) the African Union;
- (ii) ECOWAS;
- (iii) the Organization of American States (OAS);
- (iii) the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN);
- (iv) the Bali Process;
- (iv) the Commonwealth of Independent States; and
- (v) the League of Arab States.

²⁹ See: <https://tentpartnership.org/>.

³⁰ See: <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/>.

³¹ See further: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afri/brief/world-bank-group-africa-fellowship-program>.

³² See, in particular, the summary conclusions from thematic discussion one, available via: <http://www.unhcr.org/thematic-discussions-for-the-global-compact-on-refugees.html>.

Possible suggestions for the programme of action

Role of regional institutions in a comprehensive refugee response

As part of a comprehensive refugee response, depending on the specific context, it is envisaged that regional institutions, organizations or fora could play an important role in the following areas:

- solidarity conferences;³³
- the global refugee response group;³⁴
- support for sustainable voluntary repatriation; and
- expanding complementary pathways for admission of refugees to third countries.

The example of the role played by IGAD in the development of the comprehensive refugee response for the Somali situation provides a model on which to build,³⁵ as does the role of the OAS in support of the adoption of and follow-up to the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework for Central America and Mexico.³⁶

Regional institutions and prevention, addressing root causes

Regional instruments and commitments provide a strong basis to build collective capacity to find solutions to conflicts and refugee crises at an early stage;³⁷ while regional mechanisms to ensure the accurate and timely flow of information and analysis from the country-level to global decision-makers have been established by the European Union, the OSCE and the African Union. These existing arrangements serve as bases on which to build.

Regional institutions and disaster displacement

Regional institutions can develop useful tools for States to prepare for and respond to disaster displacement. These could build on good State practice of admitting disaster-displaced persons through free movement protocols (e.g. ECOWAS), humanitarian visas, invoking temporary protection and by the application of regional refugee law instruments (i.e. under the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa). South America (MERCOSUR), the Horn of Africa (IGAD), southern Africa (SADC) and the Pacific are some of the regions where such work may be undertaken or further supported, in cooperation with the Platform on Disaster Displacement.³⁸ Organizations such as IOM and UNHCR could support regional institutions to promote and implement such activities.

IV. Participation and organizational matters

15. Thematic discussions four and five will take place on 14 and 15 November 2017, from 9.00am to 6.00pm at the Palais des Nations (room XIX) in Geneva. Thematic discussion four will be co-chaired by the Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations Office in Geneva and UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection. Thematic discussion five will be co-chaired by the

³³ See further: <http://www.unhcr.org/59dc8f317>, p. 3.

³⁴ See further: <http://www.unhcr.org/59dc8f317>, p. 2.

³⁵ See further: <https://igad.int/communique/1519-communique-special-summit-of-the-igad-assembly-of-heads-of-state-and-government-on-durable-solutions-for-somali-refugees>;
<http://crrf.unhcr.org/en/country/som>.

³⁶ See further: San Pedro Sula Declaration,

<http://www.acnur.org/fileadmin/scripts/doc.php?file=fileadmin/Documentos/BDL/2017/11337>.

³⁷ See e.g. the 2014 Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action, and the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa.

³⁸ See further: <http://disasterdisplacement.org/>.

Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations Office in Geneva and the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection.

16. In addition to the plenary and the panel sessions outlined in Parts II and III above, a side event will take place on the theme of statelessness in the morning of Wednesday 15 November 2017.

17. Invitations to participate in thematic discussions four and five have been extended to Member and Observer States of the United Nations, partners in the United Nations system, and key intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, refugees, academics, and other experts. Deliberations will be livestreamed and can be followed via <http://webtv.un.org/>.

18. Written contributions to thematic discussions four and five are invited from all stakeholders, whether or not they are attending the thematic discussions in Geneva. Contributions may be sent to refugeecompact@unhcr.org for posting online at <http://www.unhcr.org/writtencontributions> and are strongly encouraged before, during and after the thematic discussions.

19. To ensure that the discussion is interactive, prepared formal statements are discouraged (but can be posted online if desired). Speakers are requested to focus their comments on concrete suggestions and commitments that may be included in the programme of action. Interpretation will be provided in English, French and Spanish.

20. A brief summary report will be made available at <http://www.unhcr.org/thematicdiscussions>. Statements will not be attributed, and the summary will reflect the key points and overall conclusions of the discussion, with a focus on concrete ideas for the programme of action. This will, in turn, feed into the stocktaking at the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges in December 2017.

UNHCR
6 November 2017