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Oral update on the comprehensive refugee response framework

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Madame Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates

It is my pleasure to address you today with an update on the application of the comprehensive refugee response framework. Exactly two years ago, 193 Member States of the United Nations unanimously endorsed the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants its comprehensive refugee response framework with the objectives to:

- Ease pressures of host countries;
- Enhance refugee self-reliance;
- Expand access to third country solutions; and
- Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity

Today, after an intensive two years, 15 countries across Africa, the Americas and Asia are formally applying the comprehensive refugee response framework, including two regional applications. Equally – as a result of Member States’ consultations and deliberations here in this building – the HC has been able to present a global compact on refugees to the General Assembly. The consultations were informed by the practical application of comprehensive responses and the thematic discussions last year with the active participation of refugees themselves, including members of the Global Youth Advisory Council.

Today, I will update you on recent developments in the application of comprehensive responses at country and regional levels, and the engagement and support observed towards them. Before advancing, allow me to acknowledge the collective steps taken in capturing the progress and lessons learnt from the application of comprehensive responses, which have been presented to the Standing Committee in previous written and oral updates and during the High Commissioner’s Dialogue last year.

In line with these efforts, UNHCR issued last month a ***note¹ on progress achieved against the four objectives of the CRRF*** at global, regional and national levels since the adoption of the New York Declaration. It includes examples of how States and a broad range of other stakeholders have supported comprehensive responses within and beyond the current geographical application of the CRRF. These documented efforts serve as snapshots of how the New York Declaration and its call for international responsibility sharing have been operationalized over the past two years, [helping to shape the compact on refugees and laying the groundwork for its implementation.]

Update on countries applying the CRRF

Since our last update in June, we have welcomed **Afghanistan’s** announcement to apply the comprehensive refugee response framework. Comprehensive responses for this protracted situation are rooted in the “*Solutions strategy for Afghan refugees to support voluntary repatriation, sustainable reintegration and assistance to host countries*” (SSAR) and the regional efforts to implement it.

¹ Available from <http://www.unhcr.org/5b8d1ad34>.

Afghanistan's commitment to apply the CRRF provides an opportunity to showcase and build upon good practices as a country of origin, based on the experience gained through implementing the SSAR – especially with regard to the inclusion of returnees in Afghanistan's national policies and priorities. This, in turn, will help paving the way for the voluntary and gradual return of Afghan refugees and for sustainable reintegration.

The government has steered these efforts through the *Displacement and Return Executive Committee (DiREC)*, looking at the humanitarian and development angles and building on the support from the World Bank and other actors. An important benchmark ahead will be the *Geneva Ministerial Conference on Afghanistan* in November 2018 with a proposed side event on "People on the Move".

In formally applying the CRRF, Afghanistan joins 14 other countries, namely Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda and Zambia in Africa, as well as Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama in the Americas. The majority of these countries are covered by regional approaches supported by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) for the Somali Refugee Situation and the Organization of American States (OAS) in the north of Central America.

Examples of recent progress

Building on the progress note and previous updates, I would like to share with you a few recent developments that demonstrate the context-specific shape host country governments have given to comprehensive responses for the benefit of refugees and their hosts.

In the north of Central America, the national engagement to operationalize the comprehensive regional protection and solutions framework, known as **MIRPS** for its Spanish acronym, has been notable. The Government of

Costa Rica is now applying its national chapter of the MIRPS to the current influx of Nicaraguans, including by extending visas for Nicaraguan asylum-seekers. This shows how national responses that are part of regional frameworks can adjust to changing circumstances in the region.

In **Mexico**, national actors and municipalities are stepping up their cooperation. For example, Mexico City and the Ministry of Labour are working with UNHCR and civil society partners to establish a coordination mechanism for referring refugees to national employment programmes. Regional approaches also continue to be further domesticated in relevant national legislation, policies and institutional arrangements. **Guatemala** has adopted a new Migration Code which includes provisions for refugees, and **Honduras** has established a dedicated Directorate for the protection and attention of internally displaced persons within the Ministry of Human Rights.

Let me now turn to the African context where we see equally numerous actions capitalizing on the momentum created by the regional approach to the Somali Refugee Situation. In follow-up to the Djibouti Declaration on Refugee Education adopted in December 2017, a group of experts from **IGAD** Member States met in July to agree on a regional framework to support quality standards for refugee education and to share practical experiences on the inclusion of refugee learners in national systems. Often these processes require collaboration between States. For instance, as part of the inclusion of refugees in the national education system in Djibouti, Kenya is now looking into avenues to provide certification through examination to 3'000 refugee learners who still studied the Kenyan curriculum. Preparations for the IGAD regional meeting on jobs and livelihoods planned for the end of this year are advancing, and the first stocktaking report on progress made against the Nairobi Declaration on Somali Refugees and its Plan of Action has been finalized.

Across countries, we see progressive legislation and inclusion-driven policies being translated into practice for refugees and the communities hosting them. Since July, refugees in **Djibouti** can open bank accounts with their refugee identity cards. While enhancing the socio-economic inclusion of refugees, it also enables further growth of the local economies. In **Chad**, 108 schools located in 19 refugee camps are now officially recognized by the State. The Government has assigned over 300 teachers to these schools and is facilitating training for over 430 teachers from the refugee community. In **Ethiopia**, over 100 government officials from line ministries, regions and city administrations validated the new CRRF strategy to consolidate and further amplify the significant progress observed up-to-date in line with the roadmap.

Both the national and sub-national levels are of central importance when applying comprehensive responses, ranging from the early stages of an emergency to protracted situations. Local authorities are often among the frontline responders, and we see increasing steps being taken in their support. In **Uganda**, the National CRRF Secretariat with active participation of civil society has embarked on the localization agenda, which will entail support to the capacity of local actors and other measures in line with the “grand bargain” principles. In **Kenya**, the County Government of Turkana has taken the lead in including refugees as a target population alongside local communities in the new County Integrated Development Plan, which is also reflected nationwide in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2018-2022.

Partnerships and support

The four objectives of the CRRF are interrelated and inseparable, calling for their balanced implementation and the need to provide tangible support to countries receiving and hosting refugees. I would like to dedicate the last part of my update to the crucial elements of effective

partnerships and support, as reflected in the global compact on refugees and the mechanisms it suggests to further facilitate the operationalization of comprehensive responses.

Development-related investments reported by bilateral and multilateral development donors to CRRF roll-out countries and other contexts in support of comprehensive responses amount to \$6.5 billion, excluding humanitarian funding. In June, the **World Bank** approved the first projects for Ethiopia and Uganda under the \$2 billion IDA18 refugee sub-window, which had seen the first allocation decisions to Cameroon in May. Just last week, the World Bank announced a \$60 million grant for Chad to improve access to basic social services and livelihoods for refugees and host communities, and to strengthen national refugee management systems. Similar support is also being provided to Niger.

Bilateral development partners – including Canada, Denmark, the EU, Germany, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom – have mobilized more than \$1 billion in development support towards the objectives of the CRRF over a multi-year period. Development-related investments in other situations outside the current CRRF roll-out, such as in countries hosting Syrian refugees, amount to an additional \$3.5 billion.

One challenge in the application of comprehensive responses has been the tracking of development support in addition to humanitarian assistance. This is now gradually being addressed through self-reporting by bilateral development donors in particular. It is also worth flagging other forms of support, such as the collection of data on development contributions towards refugees and host communities that OECD has embarked on, and the technical assistance the **Inter-American Development Bank** is providing towards the quantification of national commitments under the MIRPS. Another example are the ongoing preparations for the

establishment of the Joint Data Center by the World Bank and UNHCR in Copenhagen, which will play a critical role in expanding the evidence base around comprehensive responses and their impact.

The “whole of society” approach continues to be crucial as part of applying comprehensive responses from local to global levels. During the annual consultations in June 2018, we had in-depth exchanges with local and international NGOs on how to further build on the engagement of **civil society**, including in support to State action to prevent and end statelessness. The active support of the **United Nations system** to comprehensive responses, as demonstrated during the UNHCR–Resident Coordinator dialogue in June 2018, continues to be applied at country level, as the example of Kenya illustrated.

Partnerships with **private sector partners** have the potential to further support the application of comprehensive responses. UNHCR’s collaboration with the International Chamber of Commerce increasingly focuses on the advancement of comprehensive responses at local levels together with national chambers of commerce. We also established the position of a Senior Advisor on Private Sector Partnerships to harness the full potential of the private sector in supporting refugees and the countries and communities hosting them.

Way ahead

We have come a long way since the endorsement of the New York Declaration. A key task ahead of us is to apply comprehensive responses in a more systematic, globalized and mainstreamed manner – including the tangible demonstrations of international burden and responsibility sharing this implies. We have been successful in finding avenues to enhance and accelerate the application of comprehensive responses, many of which are captured in the global compact on refugees.

For UNHCR, a key priority for the way ahead will be to further optimize our ability to support and facilitate comprehensive responses, and thus mobilizing additional partners towards refugees and host communities. These considerations are captured in the ongoing change processes including with regard to regionalization, the revision of the results-based management system, the implementation of multi-year multi-partner protection and solutions strategies, and a number of other key areas, such as the identification of further synergies with the 2030 Agenda, the ongoing UN reforms and the Sustainable Development Goals.

I thank you for your attention and welcome your questions and comments.