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## “Towards a global compact on refugees”

**Thematic discussion two:  
Measures to be taken at the onset of a large movement of refugees**  
17 October 2017

### **Panel three: how can we support States to identify persons in need of international protection?**

#### Summary

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The need for international cooperation to ensure early and effective identification, registration, documentation and asylum procedures for refugees in line with the commitments in the New York Declaration was underscored. The global compact on refugees (GCR) could provide a platform to ensure partnerships and support from the international community to receiving States in this regard: going forward, no State would be left to address these challenges on their own.

Some important factors in terms of supporting the identification of those in need of international protection highlighted by participants included the following:

- Initial entry, profiling and referral: the need for collaboration and coordination between relevant actors and referral mechanisms was stressed, as was the need for capacity building.
  - Effective screening and referral procedures take into account and seek to address specific needs, including urgent medical issues.
  - Gender-sensitivity in screening procedures was emphasized.
- Registration and identity management: this is vital both for refugees and for hosting governments, and a prerequisite for effective legal and physical protection. Registration forms the basis for identifying and collecting disaggregated data on new arrivals and their specific needs, ensuring appropriate funding levels, the delivery of services and assistance, and eventually access to solutions.
  - Registration is a key tool not just to record arrivals and departures of refugees, but also for marriages, births and other civil status.
  - The importance of registration procedures in ensuring proper security screening was emphasized.
  - Use of biometrics including fingerprinting, voice and picture biometrics can ensure reliability, assist with identification and reduce instances of double registration.
  - Ensuring access for women and children to individual registration, and the need for child appropriate procedures, were emphasized.
- Asylum systems: the need to combine reliability and flexibility in asylum systems was underscored, as numbers of arrivals can vary over time. In the face of a large number of arrivals the following tools have been helpful (although no one solution on its own will be sufficient):
  - “Arrival centres” where all relevant authorities and other actors are under “one roof”, to work in an integrated manner and streamline the process.
  - Pools of trained and qualified experts who are on standby to assist as needed.
  - Systems to facilitate integrated identity management, including to ensure all relevant authorities and line agencies have access to the same data set.

- Caseload management tools including access to reliable country of origin information, which can reduce backlog and delays.

## **Suggestions for the programme of action**

### *From the concept note*

- An “ecosystem” for collaboration on identity management, including registration, documentation and biometrics
  - This was welcomed by delegations, as a tool that could allow UNHCR and States to work together to share good practices, tools and technology, and to facilitate accurate data collection.
  - The expanded use of biometric technology was encouraged.
  - Data sharing between partners could be deepened as part of this “ecosystem”, including based on existing models e.g. regional data sharing mechanism of the Bali process.
  - The private sector could contribute to the “ecosystem”, including with respect to new technologies.
  - Emphasis could also be placed on building capacity among local and national authorities to improve registration – this can assist authorities to ensure refugees are taken into account in national planning and link to efforts to facilitate livelihood opportunities for refugees.
  - Measures to ensure respect for confidentiality and data protection principles were emphasized in the formation of such an “ecosystem”.
- Asylum capacity support group
  - Supporting receiving States to strengthen asylum procedures is a key priority as part of a comprehensive refugee response.
  - The proposal of an asylum capacity support group was generally welcomed, and could enable swift deployment or sharing of case management tools in large-scale refugee situations, as well as potentially facilitating consistency of decision-making across regions.
  - It was recommended the asylum capacity support group be set up on invitation of the host State, and build on existing models or practices e.g. in Kenya and the Americas (where the need for well thought out and contextually appropriate plans developed in collaboration between host governments and other stakeholders is an important lesson learned).
  - It was suggested that technical assistance and support provided be on an ongoing basis, not ad hoc.
  - Twinning projects and other asylum procedures support could be provided by willing governments as part of this support group.
  - Similarly, the group could support training and capacity-building for authorities and decision-makers, including interview techniques and technical report writing, confidentiality, and use of country of origin information.
  - It was cautioned that such a group not be too bureaucratic, and add to and build on the functions and support already provided by UNHCR.

### *Additional suggestions for the programme of action*

- Development of standard operating procedures and/or fora for the sharing of best practices for screening and referral and other mechanisms to identify those in need of international protection.
- Protocols with respect to assisting persons with specific needs or ensuring data confidentiality.
- Gender guidelines for asylum decision-makers.
- Further specification on statelessness determination procedures e.g. using the language of the 2013 Executive Committee conclusion on civil and birth registration.
- Further detailed guidance on new forms of “group-based” recognition by UNHCR was encouraged.

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*UNHCR*  
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