

**TALKING POINTS**  
**DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION**  
**NOTE ON INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION**  
**STANDING COMMITTEE, 19 JUNE 2018**

- This year's Note on International Protection describes key challenges and developments in international protection over the past 12 months. The Note highlights many of the crucial aspects of international protection that the compacts process seeks to address and reinforce. Its structure is broadly organized around key elements of the proposed global compact and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework.
- Today I will touch briefly on some **key elements of the Note**. In addition to the points I will mention in this oral summary, the Note charts developments in other key areas which are the subject of other Conference Room papers and dedicated agenda items for this meeting. These include items on UNHCR's engagement with internally displaced persons; solutions to displacement and statelessness (including an update on the campaign to end statelessness, the CRRF); and measuring the impact of hosting refugees.
- The picture painted in the Note highlights the ongoing relevance and pressing need for the international refugee protection regime, and – what makes it meaningful – the unequivocal support of States for its principles, based inter alia on their commitments in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. It also recalls the principle of the '**centrality of protection**', which underlines that protection is central to any humanitarian response to displacement, and that responses in practice must involve activities – concrete and practical – aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of individuals.
- In seeking to support States in ensuring the protection of persons of concern in 2017-18, UNHCR proud to support and contribute the development of **national legislation** in almost 80 countries, and issued guidance on the interpretation and application of legal protection standards, which we are again proud to offer to states – as well as numerous country-specific eligibility guidance documents. Many specific examples of this guidance are listed in the Note.
- In addition to guidance in applying international and supporting States at national level, UNHCR also welcomed and sought to contribute to the development of regional standards. We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute at expert level regional to processes and standard-setting.

In relation to **burden- and responsibility-sharing**:

- The widely-documented imbalances in the distribution of the world's refugee population highlight sharply the need for a better application of the principle and practice of **burden- and responsibility-sharing**. This notion is grounded in international law and in the recognition that hosting large numbers of refugees may place strains on the affected countries – and that satisfactory responses cannot be achieved without international cooperation. The Note recalls the value of broadening the support base for refugee protection across

the whole of society, and among national, regional and international stakeholders.

- In this regard, progress is welcomed at multilateral level, including in the application of the CRRF currently ongoing in 14 countries and in relation to two specific refugee situations.

- I will turn now to developments referred to in the Note which relate to key aspects of protection, cooperation and solutions as addressed in the GCR, including the CRRF, which speaks among other things to reception and admission; meeting needs and supporting communities; and solutions.

**Firstly, on reception and admission:**

- The Note recalls that the principle of non-refoulement represents a continuing and essential cornerstone of the international refugee protection regime.

While this core principle continued to be respected by most States, there have nevertheless been instances where those seeking asylum were unable to do so, in some cases where they were prevented from leaving, or precluded from entry by physical and administrative barriers at frontiers. Many attempted to use dangerous land and water routes, with many refugees and migrants going missing or losing their lives, including at sea.

- Building on its “Ten-Point-Plan of Action for Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration”, UNHCR continues its work with States and other partners in relation to mixed movements, to enhance operational cooperation with partners; strengthen information, analysis and knowledge; and promote good practices to help States and other stakeholders respond more effectively to mixed movements. This includes supporting arrangements to identify, screen and refer new arrivals to appropriate services according to their needs, regardless of status.

**In relation to addressing specific needs,**

- The Note recalls that in many situations worldwide, refugees and other persons on the move suffer sexual and gender based violence (**SGBV**). UNHCR continued to focus on the needs of **victims of trafficking**, cooperating with States and partners to combat the phenomenon.

- In 2017, some 52 per cent of refugees globally were **children**. UNHCR welcomes measures by States, including in Latin America, to ensure children have access to asylum processes, taking into account their best interests, while promoting family reunification and alternatives to detention. To uphold the best interests of the child, UNHCR worked with partners to support specific arrangements for children, including alternative care arrangements for those separated from their families, guardianship arrangements, best interests determination procedures, psychosocial support and, where available, inclusion of refugee children in national child protection systems.

- Best State practice involves **alternatives to detention** for persons in need of international protection. These include release into custody of local institutions and open accommodation in conjunction with welfare agencies and

with reporting requirements. A number of States undertook or explored these further, as well as taking measures to **improve conditions** for those who are detained.

**Identification of those in need of international protection:**

- Effective **registration** systems were promoted to help States identify new arrivals, ensure the integrity of protection systems and prevent fraud and corruption. The note importantly underlines that fraud and corruption, national security considerations and international refugee protection can and should be complementary, acknowledging the concerns of many States.

**On meeting needs and supporting communities those of concern and communities which host them:**

- The Note documents advances in the enhancement of **self-reliance**, which is intended to allow refugees awaiting solutions to contribute to, rather than depend on, their host country and donors. Attainment of self-reliance can help refugees prepare selves to obtain any durable solutions, notably voluntary repatriation. UNHCR is promoting self-reliance in the spirit of helping refugees help themselves and of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development pledge to “leave no one behind”.

- Linked to this, UNHCR advocates strongly for the inclusion of refugee children and youth in national educational systems. In addition to primary schooling, tertiary education was made accessible for thousands of refugees over past year through creative means such as connected learning, combining digital platforms complementary to traditional classroom teaching.

- The Note also recalls instances where access to **economic opportunities** and promoting inclusion has realised refugees’ potential to contribute to the economies of host communities, meet their own needs and advance progress towards solutions.

## Solutions

- The Note recalls that UNHCR has continued over the last year, in cooperation with States, to engage vigorously in support of achieving **solutions**. Ending displacement requires a mix of solutions, adapted to the specific circumstances of each situation and the needs of the population. This has included the three traditional durable solutions of voluntary repatriation, resettlement and local integration, increasingly also relies on other pathways for admission to third countries which provide additional opportunities for protection and solutions.
- In its conclusion, the Note observes that the international community is at a crossroads, with promising advances in the context of the development of the global compact on refugees, but with many challenges still ahead – noting that some developments which have occurred have not all been positive, as noted in the AHC-P's speech.
- Building on the achievements of the last year, it acknowledges the importance of international cooperation, underpinned by fundamental protection principles, to fulfil that potential and bring about positive change in the lives of refugees and the countries and communities that receive them.