

“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 substantive sections of the comprehensive refugee response, and overarching issues

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

Summary conclusions

I. Introduction

1. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2016,¹ called on the 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. In line with UNHCR’s “roadmap” document,² on 14 and 15 November 2017 the Office convened the fourth and fifth in a series of thematic discussions to inform the global compact on refugees, specifically its “programme of action”.³ Thematic discussion four was co-chaired by the Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations Office in Geneva and the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection and focused on “measures to be taken in pursuit of solutions”. Thematic discussion five, co-chaired by the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan and the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, explored “issues that cut across all substantive sections of the comprehensive refugee response, and overarching issues”.⁴
3. Almost 400 representatives from States, international and regional organizations and non-governmental organizations, together with experts and refugees, participated in a constructive debate, focusing on good practices, lessons learned and suggestions for the programme of action. A number of written contributions were also received.⁵
4. These summary conclusions do not necessarily represent the views of individual participants or UNHCR, but reflect broadly the themes and understandings emerging from the discussion. They should be read in conjunction with summaries for each of the panel discussions, available via: www.unhcr.org/thematicdiscussions.

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), available from: <http://www.unhcr.org/newyorkdeclaration>.

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

³ 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.

⁴ Concept papers and other documentation from previous thematic discussions available via: <http://www.unhcr.org/thematicdiscussions>. These were the last two thematic discussions in the process leading to the global compact on refugees. This will now move into a period of “stocktaking”, the centrepiece of which will be the High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges in Geneva on 12 and 13 December 2017.

⁵ The guidelines for submitting written contributions, together with written contributions received, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/writtencontributions>.

II. General conclusions

5. The possible suggestions for the programme of action contained in the concept paper for thematic discussions four and five⁶ were broadly welcomed as providing a basis on which to proceed. A summary of the feedback received on these proposals and new suggestions is contained in the annex.

6. More generally, some broad lines of agreement at thematic discussions four and five included the following:

- Consistent with the conclusions of thematic discussion three,⁷ it was emphasized that investing in education, vocational training and self-reliance for refugees while in exile can facilitate access to solutions, including eventual voluntary return.
- There is commitment by the international community to increase support to enable conditions for voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity. It is important to identify concrete partnerships and mechanisms for funding and resource allocation that can be put in place in this regard.
- The New York Declaration and the CRRF set ambitious targets to increase third-country solutions, including resettlement and complementary pathways. The programme of action will set out how access to resettlement and complementary pathways can be expanded, while also balancing practical considerations.
- The programme of action will reflect an integrated and coherent approach to addressing large-scale movements, including in terms of early warning and prevention. It is important to bring together humanitarian, development, peace and security, and financial actors to inform the “nuts and bolts” of a comprehensive response.
- In line with this, the New York Declaration’s “whole of society” approach provides a basis for concrete new partnerships including with the private sector, regional processes, academic alliances, chambers of commerce and faith communities. These partnerships will underpin the reliable and predictable support that the global compact on refugees will seek to provide to host countries and communities.
- The commitment to ensuring the involvement of refugees in the processes that affect their lives was unequivocal. Host community and refugee involvement will be central to the global compact on refugees and ensure the sustainability of responses. Many participants also stressed the importance of a rights-based approach in practice, guided by gender, age and diversity considerations.
- Finally, several participants noted the interlinkages between refugee movements and internal displacement and stressed the need to ensure coherent approaches including at the regional level.

III. Follow-up

7. These summary conclusions, together with the detailed written and oral contributions provided by stakeholders during thematic discussions four and five, will inform the “stocktaking” at the High Commissioner’s Dialogue in December 2017, as well as the preparation of the zero draft of the programme of action.

8. UNHCR continues to welcome proposals for the programme of action and feedback on the suggestions contained in the concept papers for the thematic discussions. These can

⁶ Available from: <http://www.unhcr.org/5a0019467>.

⁷ Available via: <http://www.unhcr.org/thematicdiscussions>.

be submitted through the online facility for written contributions at www.unhcr.org/writtencontributions.

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**ANNEX: FEEDBACK ON PROPOSALS FOR THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION,
AND FURTHER SUGGESTIONS**

Pillar four of the CRRF: measures to be taken in pursuit of solutions

Topic	Feedback on proposals in the concept paper, and additional suggestions
<p><i>Voluntary and sustainable return</i></p>	<p>Tripartite agreements and a “support group” for voluntary return</p> <p>While tripartite agreements provide a standard model that can be built upon, they are not the only means to facilitate return. Voluntary repatriation is not necessarily conditioned on the accomplishment of political solutions.</p> <p>UNHCR was encouraged to take stock of past tripartite agreements in order to establish guidance for future agreements.</p> <p>Where tripartite agreements are established, it is crucial that they be supported by financial, material and technical assistance, both in the country of asylum and in the country of origin.</p> <p>More information on the proposed support group was requested, including concerning its composition and tasks, to ensure it would add value.</p> <p>Rebuilding conditions conducive to voluntary return</p> <p>Participants requested further consideration of the mechanisms for funding and resource allocation that can be put in place to ensure the sustainability of return.</p> <p>Key conditions conducive to voluntary return that were mentioned included: housing, land and property rights; access to employment; access to basic services; access to civil documentation; and measures to support dignity and integrity.</p> <p>The “new urban agenda” could provide a useful basis on which to build, as could the global alliance for urban crises.</p> <p>The inclusion of refugees and returnees, particularly women and youth, in peace and crisis recovery strategies and national development plans was encouraged.</p> <p>Additional support in the context of return</p> <p>A whole-of-community approach was encouraged to avoid tensions between returnees and people in return areas.</p> <p>Support for those with specific needs (notably children) and ensuring family unity for returnees was emphasized.</p> <p>Additional suggestions and considerations put forward</p> <p>Work towards solutions, notably voluntary repatriation, is needed from the outset of a displacement situation. A regionally-centred dialogue focused on addressing root causes was suggested; the proposed global refugee response group could also play a role.</p> <p>UNHCR was encouraged to explore synergies with the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in the area of return.</p> <p>Measures to include women and youth through a community-based and participative approach were suggested.</p> <p>The use of innovative technologies to facilitate recognition of land rights or to establish digital identities was encouraged.</p> <p>Cooperation with the private sector was urged (e.g. for access to housing, skills sets).</p> <p>Some standards to guide notions of “voluntariness” and “safety” were encouraged.</p> <p>States of origin could integrate the “guiding principles on internal displacement” in national laws and policies.</p> <p>States, UN agencies and partners could expand and collaborate on collection of interoperable data to cover the entire displacement continuum, including internal displacement.</p>

<p><i>Expanding access to resettlement</i></p>	<p>Expanding resettlement</p> <p>The proposals to expand access to resettlement, both through increasing the number of refugees resettled by existing programmes and through expanding the number of countries with resettlement programmes, were welcomed. The discretionary nature of resettlement and the need to keep national capacities in mind were also emphasized.</p> <p>A guide to encourage States to resettle a fair share of refugees was welcomed by some, though it was noted that there would be difficulties calculating what constituted a “fair share”.</p> <p>The use of the Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism was highlighted as a valuable and practical tool to support the development of tailored programmes to strengthen emerging resettlement programmes, including in terms of identification, referral, public awareness raising, network expansion, capacity-building, and integration activities.</p> <p>Innovative approaches to financing could be considered to support emerging resettlement countries.</p> <p>Supporting a coherent, strategic and quality resettlement response</p> <p>The measures suggested to ensure that resettlement is undertaken in a strategic manner and retains its humanitarian and protection underpinnings were broadly welcomed.</p> <p>In particular, the proposal for a multi-year resettlement pledging process was welcomed, including in connection with the suggested solidarity conferences.⁸ It was noted that the domestic arrangements of some States would not make it possible for them to pledge on a multi-year basis.</p> <p>Whole-of-government approaches are essential to a comprehensive resettlement response.</p> <p>Ensuring the responsiveness and timeliness of resettlement programmes</p> <p>The specific suggestion to establish a resettlement core group in situations of large-scale displacement and protracted situations was broadly welcomed, with further information requested about the composition, functioning and objectives of such a group. The inclusion of hosting States was recommended.</p> <p>Support for the use of emergency transit facilities for at-risk refugees, especially women and girls, was encouraged.</p> <p>The proposal to dedicate 10 per cent of resettlement programmes to emergency cases was welcomed, with further consideration being requested to ensure that it is practical and feasible.</p> <p>Expanding partnerships</p> <p>The role of civil society, both in terms of operational support and in galvanizing public awareness of and public support for resettlement, was emphasized.</p> <p>The potential engagement of refugees themselves in resettlement programmes, including by employing refugees to work in national resettlement programmes, could be considered further.</p> <p>Additional suggestions and considerations put forward</p> <p>The programme of action could support the sharing of good practices in resettlement.</p> <p>The programme of action could encourage the establishment of local, national and regional networks of NGOs to identify those in need of resettlement.</p> <p>To maintain the humanitarian character of resettlement, it was reaffirmed that resettlement opportunities are grounded in an assessment of need (rather than economic potential).</p>
<p><i>Complementary pathways for admission</i></p>	<p>Establishing or expanding complementary pathways for admission</p> <p>The measures suggested to promote the establishment or expansion of complementary pathways were welcomed.</p> <p>Participants called for the programme of action to enhance access to all complementary pathways suggested in the concept note, notably family reunification, educational or training</p>

⁸ See further: <http://www.unhcr.org/59dc8f317>, p. 3.

	<p>opportunities, labour migration schemes, sponsorship programs and humanitarian visas or admission schemes. The importance of ensuring that these pathways contain protection safeguards was also stressed.</p> <p>In relation to family reunification, the expansion of eligibility to wider members of the family unit was encouraged.</p> <p>In relation to educational opportunities, scholarships that cover travel and living costs for recipients and their families (in addition to tuition fees) were encouraged.</p> <p>Participants stressed the need for labour mobility schemes to include a mixture of skill sets and skill levels, to support training and apprenticeships, and to create incentives for employers to recruit refugees.</p> <p>The development of private or community sponsorship programmes (including with the support of the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative) was highlighted as a way to empower citizens to become part of refugee solutions.</p> <p>Facilitating the use of complementary pathways for admission</p> <p>The suggestion of measures to facilitate the use of complementary pathways were broadly welcomed, with participants emphasizing the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - streamline, simplify and remove obstacles to speedy family reunification; - ensure that labour mobility schemes for refugees include protections against refoulement and, depending on the case, provisions for readmission to countries of first asylum on completion; - ensure that refugees who enter labour markets benefit from the same recruitment and labour standards that nationals receive, including protection against labour exploitation; and - ensure linkages between complementary pathways and durable solutions.. <p>Additional suggestions and considerations put forward</p> <p>Consider cross-border child protection needs when establishing or encouraging the use of complementary pathways.</p> <p>Consider including stateless persons in complementary pathways.</p> <p>That complementary pathways include the possibility of lifting visa requirements in certain situations.</p> <p>Seek refugee community perspectives when developing complementary pathways.</p>
<p><i>Local solutions</i></p>	<p>Supporting local solutions</p> <p>The suggestions contained in the concept paper were broadly welcomed.</p> <p>The following feedback was also provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was a call for more concrete and sustainable measures for funding and resource allocation to be identified. - It is important that resources for local solutions be additional to, not divert from, existing commitments. The goal is to ensure that providing local solutions does not create burdens on affected countries. - The local context will determine which policies and frameworks are needed to support an inclusive approach. - It is crucial to ensure that dividends from local solutions benefit both local populations and refugees. - Support is needed for governments not just in developing policies but in communicating them. - Sustained support from development actors to include refugees in national development plans is essential. - The skills and capabilities of refugees, including those of women and girls, could be mapped as the first step in ensuring that they are able to contribute to local economies. - The channeling of private investment into projects with public ends could be explored further. - Enabling refugees to learn local languages can foster inclusion and combat xenophobia.

Legal frameworks may need to be adjusted to set out criteria for local integration; flexible frameworks are needed for integration to be successful, including with respect to access to national passports.

Additional suggestions and considerations put forward

A coordinated dialogue process or platform on local solutions at the onset of refugee situations, including host countries, regional institutions, civil society, donors, and other actors.

Multi-year commitments to help host governments make necessary reforms to support local solutions, including in terms of access to education.

Preferential trade arrangements for goods produced by refugees in host States.

Working groups involving representatives from refugee and local communities to lead and advise on the integration process.

Inclusion of internally displaced people in local solutions programming where appropriate.

A strong gender perspective and inclusion of children, as well as particularly vulnerable populations, in local solutions programming.

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

Topic	Feedback on proposals in the concept paper, and additional suggestions
<i>Addressing the root causes of large movements of refugees</i>	<p>Early warning and prevention</p> <p>The suggestions in the concept paper—in particular in relation to development programming in fragile States, the early identification of potential root causes, preventative diplomacy and peacebuilding efforts—were welcomed. UNHCR was encouraged to consider linking these to the global refugee response group to ensure a more joined-up approach.</p> <p>Root causes are numerous and complex and include armed conflict and terrorism (particularly the use of explosive weapons), a lack of good governance, the absence of the rule of law and respect for human rights, corruption, economic inequality and inequality in resource distribution, and sexual and gender-based violence. Situation-specific approaches are needed, however.</p> <p>The role for women and youth, and the role of education and other local capacity-building activities, were particularly emphasized.</p> <p>It is important that the programme of action support and complement work taking place outside the international refugee regime, notably the work of the Security Council and the Secretary-General’s agenda for peace and security.</p> <p>Preventing and responding to statelessness</p> <p>The suggestions in the concept paper, in particular in relation to registration and documentation, were welcomed.</p> <p>Climate change, disasters and displacement</p> <p>Climate change and disasters can be root causes or “threat multipliers” of displacement, as well as being sources of vulnerability for those already displaced and hindrances to return. Participants welcomed the suggestions in the concept paper to address protection needs, enhance resilience and alleviate the effects of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters.</p> <p>The need for the programme of action to be consistent with the approaches adopted in the Paris Agreement, the Nansen Initiative and the Sendai Framework was emphasized, as was the need to ensure that States have sufficient resources to implement those approaches.</p> <p>Also emphasized was the need to clarify that the inclusion of climate change and disaster displacement in the programme of action was not intended to alter the refugee definition in the 1951 Convention.</p> <p>Additional suggestions and considerations put forward</p> <p>Establish a specific mechanism for early warning.</p> <p>Establish a fund for rapid response in the case of a large movement of refugees.</p> <p>Promote dialogue between countries of origin and host countries on questions of root causes.</p> <p>Improve economic opportunity in countries of origin, including through trade and decent work opportunities.</p>
<i>Ensuring a whole-of-society response</i>	<p>Global network of solidarity</p> <p>The suggested global network was widely supported. Its activities could build upon the work of existing networks, including at the regional level.</p> <p>Other local actors, such as chambers of commerce, could also join together in a similar type of network.</p> <p>Role of faith-based organizations</p> <p>The proposals in the concept paper were broadly welcomed.</p>

	<p>Ensuring ways to include and support the involvement of faith-based organizations as well as faith communities at large in the various elements of the programme of action were encouraged.</p> <p>Role of the private sector</p> <p>The suggested global platform for businesses was welcomed as an idea that could foster positive attitudes towards and assist in finding solutions for refugees.</p> <p>In addition to enabling the exchange of existing best practices that concern refugee hiring policies, social enterprise development and refugee access to financial services, a global platform for businesses could effectively mobilize businesses around the world to raise general awareness of the work of humanitarian actors in refugee contexts, offer innovative solutions for refugee response, use empirical data to show that engagement in refugee response makes economic sense and identify gaps as well as preliminary interest in engagement. This platform could be linked with other related fora.</p> <p>Role of universities and academic networks</p> <p>The suggested “refugee academic alliance” was welcomed as a way to channel the efforts of the academic community in designing research initiatives that work for refugees.</p> <p>Research and employment opportunities for refugee students and academics as part of the alliance were strongly encouraged.</p> <p>Additional suggestions and considerations put forward</p> <p>Take into account the barriers faced by many refugee women and girls in obtaining secondary education in particular in scholarships and programme design.</p> <p>Build refugee studies programmes in academic institutions where there are currently none, particularly in host communities.</p> <p>Invite commercial law firms to expand their clientele to refugees and refugee legal aid organizations, for example through providing pro bono support for asylum-seekers, facilitating introductory workshops for new arrivals on their rights and obligations in a host State, and in aiding non-governmental organizations with cross-jurisdictional research</p> <p>Develop a joint fund for private sector actors to contribute to refugee self-reliance, either as part of or separate to the global platform for businesses.</p>
<p><i>Regional institutions</i></p>	<p>Role of regional institutions in a comprehensive response</p> <p>The programme of action could recognize the role of regional organizations in facilitating a wide range of activities envisaged, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooperation with the private sector; - Technical cooperation and capacity building; - The free movement of persons on a regional basis as a complementary pathway; - Active participation in the global refugee response group and the envisaged solidarity conferences; and - Support for voluntary and sustainable repatriation. <p>Regional institutions and prevention, addressing root causes</p> <p>The programme of action could build upon the role played by regional organizations in early warning, preventive diplomacy and response mechanisms.</p> <p>Regional institutions and disaster displacement</p> <p>Regional organizations play an important role in preventing and responding to disaster displacement. The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response could be a model on which to build.</p> <p>Additional suggestions and considerations put forward</p> <p>Regional platforms for mobilizing more resources and assistance.</p> <p>A tool to monitor efforts and responsibilities of the international community in implementing the New York Declaration at a regional level.</p>

	<p>Frameworks to counter xenophobia.</p> <p>Regional support for refugee-led organizations, and involvement of refugees in peace processes.</p> <p>Regional thematic meetings and/or cross-regional standardized processes e.g. to ease recognition of refugee credentials including education certificates.</p> <p>Explore the feasibility of regional financing mechanisms based on regional and country specific contingency plans.</p> <p>Explore a process for regional organizations to identify what additional resources, partnerships and support they need to foster comprehensive responses in their regions.</p> <p>Encourage regional institutions to develop gender frameworks, and frameworks for vulnerable groups, in line with existing international standards.</p> <p>Platforms for cooperation and exchange of information between regional and international organizations.</p> <p>Regional programmes for refugee children, e.g. the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) programme in West Africa.</p> <p>A mechanism for collaboration convened on a regular basis to ensure exchange of good practices between different regional fora.</p>
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