Thematic discussion 1: Past and Current Burden- and Responsibility-Sharing Arrangements
Room XVII, Palais des Nations
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Intervention by ICVA (International Council of Voluntary Agencies)

Mr. co-Chairs, distinguished delegates, NGO colleagues,

- The lack of responsibility-sharing in responses to date is one of the core concerns that the Global Compact was called to address. As such, responsibility-sharing arrangements should be central to the Program of Action. We therefore thank UNHCR and various member states for efforts towards jointly defining elements of burden- and responsibility-sharing.

- Mr. co-Chair, Assistant High Commissioner, in your introduction you asked how multiple actors can be involved in responsibility-sharing. As NGOs, we are working to do our part. In refugee situations, national and international NGOs implement both development and humanitarian programs. In this process, we often bring our own financial and human resources and focus on gaps that we have collectively identified and strive to provide innovative protection and assistance. Please, do not forget or minimize NGO contributions to burden- and responsibility-sharing arrangements.

- We heard a lot of concrete examples at the UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations. This year’s NGO Rapporteur’s Report – to be presented at ExCom – will be an important contribution to the debate and help in the stocktaking exercise.

- Among the many NGO proposals on the Global Compact, let me highlight the “NGO Reflection Paper” coordinated by ICVA and endorsed by over 20 NGOs and networks. Answering another of your questions, Mr. co-Chair, this paper suggests a set of standards and principles that should form the basis of the Compact, in particular:
  o The Compact should be relevant to the primary stakeholders – the refugees themselves – and their host communities
  o The Compact must not only reaffirm, but also strengthen international refugee law
  o The Compact must also strengthen the foundations of humanitarian action on behalf of refugees (humanitarian principles, the Principles of Partnership, among others)
  o The Compact must be human rights-based and promote international cooperation

https://www.icvanetwork.org
• The Reflection Paper also calls for the creation of a transparent responsibility-sharing system. This should be done in a way that helps States identify when and where they have responsibility in response to a large movement or protracted situation. Therefore, as you mentioned, Mr. Chair, clearly defined triggers need to be attached to responsibility-sharing arrangements. Those triggers should be based on and adjust to the scale, length and trends in displacement.

• The Reflection Paper also indicates that we need to define what, concretely, that responsibility entails, for example:
  o Incentivising increased financial support for refugee responses, including through new and innovative funding mechanisms;
  o financial and technical support for the development of host country legislative and governance frameworks to uphold refugees’ rights;
  o improved service access for refugees and their hosts, taking into account populations’ views, especially women, boys and girls – the majority of refugees.
  o increased resettlement places, expanded complementary pathways and legal migration channels;
  o improved accountability measures with regard to pledges. Responsibility-sharing should mean that we all make pledges in a responsible and transparent way.

• Finally, Mr. Chair, answering the question on the ‘key elements’ of burden- and responsibility-sharing arrangements, I would like to suggest that all the elements are key. None can be put aside or downplayed. To develop efficient and relevant burden- and responsibility-sharing arrangements, we also need to look at how the various elements balance and strengthen each other in the response.

• Thank you co-chairs and panelist and we look forward to the continued joint work.