Dear Chairperson,

This intervention reflects a diversity of views among NGOs.

To start with, we welcome a more detailed follow-up section. Measuring progress towards achievements of high-level objectives set out in paragraph 7 is positive. We support proposals to define short and mid-term indicators of success, as well as targets. However, we reiterate the need to maintain a long-term measurement of fair responsibility-sharing and improved socio-economic outcomes for refugees. We also urge that a monitoring framework be defined and targets and indicators developed by late 2018, through multi-stakeholder consultations. Many NGOs are working to develop relevant indices, targets and indicators and they stand ready to contribute to this process.

We note that, at the global level, the refugee forums will serve to provide indication of progress and impact based on follow-up on pledges. However, this process would only allow holding to account those making pledges in the first place. We therefore reiterate our call for a “state of protection report”, which, track contributions of each stakeholder and monitor national refugee protection policies and legal frameworks. This can create incentives and positive peer-pressure. A high-level panel with UN representatives, States, civil society and academics could be mandated to produce the report. It could complement the impact study UNHCR intends to release at each four-yearly global forums. UNHCR’s reporting to the General Assembly and ExCom could allow for annual follow-up.

The GCR global monitoring framework should, as far as possible, align with and complement the SDG framework. While only a few SDG targets and indicators specifically mention refugees, the compact could allow to specifically track improvements in the lives of refugees. The domains for measurement must encompass social, economic and protection dimensions including progress towards the fulfilment of key human rights standards. Taking stock of progress must be timed with periodic SDG reviews through to 2030. It should also include periodic evaluations of the GCR implementation to better understand what works, what doesn’t and why. As challenging as it is, these evaluations will be essential to improve international responses to refugee situations.

At country level, refugees must be included in national development plans. This will allow tracking progress against nationally-defined indicators and targets. We note that measuring progress will be based on secondary data. As such, it will be important that refugees are included as a specific category in existing data collection to avoid placing further burden on States. Commitments to collect data disaggregated by age, gender, disability and diversity must also reflect a choice of indicators allowing to measure progress in the socio-economic conditions of women, girls, boys, men, youth, elderly and persons with disabilities. Financial and technical support must therefore be provided for States to strengthen their national statistical systems.
For national and regional multi-stakeholder approaches – including the support platform, CRRF and national arrangements – progress must be measured against collective outcomes instead of outputs and activities. To collectively define outcomes, joint analysis and planning will be necessary and all stakeholders must be ready to take responsibility for progress towards these outcomes. It will also be important to conduct regional reviews to share best practices and promote learning. Support platforms and solidarity conferences should also have specific targets capturing their ability to generate additional resources.

Regarding accountability, all stakeholders must be encouraged to report publicly, in a transparent manner. Including refugees in national efforts to achieve the SDGs will actually facilitate state reporting. At the same time, global refugee forums could be an opportunity for states to report on their contributions toward fairer responsibility-sharing. We note, however, that accountability remains directed towards states rather than refugees. Refugee participation in global forums, support platforms, and solidarity conferences remains ill-defined although primordial. As such, refugee participation must be actively encouraged in various refugee-focused planning and decision-making structures.

On this note, we thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to provide comments on the second draft of the programme of action. NGOs look forward to subsequent consultations.

A detailed version of this intervention is available on icvanetwork.org