Thank you, Chair.

This statement has been drafted through a wide consultation with NGOs and attempts to reflect a diversity of views.

NGOs would like to begin by recognizing the commendable efforts made by UNHCR in taking the New York Declaration, and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework forward. We are looking to UNHCR to show strong leadership in seizing the opportunity that the CRRF represents. UNHCR must push States to proactively engage in transforming the refugee protection regime to ensure that host communities are adequately supported, self-reliance of refugees is prioritized, third country solutions are made available in an effective and predictable manner, and that safe and voluntary return to countries of origin is possible.

While we recognize that the endorsement of the CRRF already represents an achievement, we feel that the call for a Global Compact in 2018 should be viewed as an opportunity to further strengthen the commitments currently made in the CRRF. This next year should be as much about addressing what is missing from the CRRF, and ensuring that commitments can be tangibly applied going forward, as it is about consolidation of best practice from past experience.

**Implementing the Framework**

We applaud the immediate establishment of the CRRF Task Team, and recognize the progress made, particularly in Uganda and Tanzania in laying the groundwork for the implementation of the CRRF. However, we feel that a number of key adjustments need to be made. We encourage the current approach to pilots, or ‘case studies,’ to break new ground to address longstanding gaps in responsibility sharing for refugee protection. Over the next 18 months, the messaging, communication and activities associated with the CRRF and the Compact should improve the way that we protect refugees.

UNHCR and partner staff could benefit from more face-to-face opportunities to learn about the CRRF content and consider its potential for transforming their own activities. We would support UNHCR’s efforts to increase high-level commitment from its country offices to the CRRF. NGOs are eager to support learning for all around the CRRF, and the strengthening of responsibility sharing mechanisms for refugee protection. In this regard, we would encourage UNHCR to swiftly adopt a strong, progressive and ambitious agenda for affecting tangible change through this process.

It is encouraging that other refugee-hosting countries in Africa are specifically looking to learn from Uganda. Moreover, we are pleased to learn that Uganda authorities have embraced
the CRRF, and dedicated resources within the Prime Minister’s office for working towards its full realization. However, we feel that it is extremely important to broaden the scope of the official pilots beyond East Africa. We encourage States to support UNHCR to facilitate the engagement of refugee generating, refugee hosting, and transit countries in the full implementation of the CRRF. Regional diversity in this effort will be essential for demonstrating the relevance of the Framework to the range of refugee contexts we find globally.

While we have a strong foundation and commend UNHCR, it is essential to better integrate NGOs into the process of implementing the CRRF. In keeping with the whole-of-society approach, the two-year transformation of the CRRF into the Compact offers an important opportunity to expand the scope of actors involved, most notably opening the discussion to countries and regions actually affected by large movements of refugees, and to refugees themselves. NGOs are uniquely positioned to support this opening up. We have significant country operations in all contexts experiencing large movements of refugees, and are eager to ensure the smooth transfer of lessons learned from the CRRF implementation to the global elaboration of the Compact.

In order to ensure that we can effectively engage in the CRRF implementation, we call on UNHCR to provide its monitoring and evaluation plan, highlighting opportunities for NGO engagement at all levels – from the very local, to the global forums. NGOs participation in the CRRF through briefings, the Annual Consultations, a new Reference Group, and some country-level consultations is welcome. We look forward to amplifying and augmenting these opportunities for engagement at the global, thematic, levels and at the country-level. NGOs have much to offer and seek to increase constructive engagement and substantive inputs in the roll-out of the CRRF and the development of the Compact. To this end, we request UNHCR communicate its timeline, workplan, deadlines and opportunities for NGOs to engage.

We also call on states to support UNHCR, NGOs and all stakeholders in the CRRF process. By signing the New York Declaration, Members States have taken a historic step. This now requires continued dedicated resources and political will. Broadening the scope of the CRRF to new regions also means that States should come forward to apply it in new contexts. We welcome the positive statements in this direction made over the past two days.

**Thematic Areas**

We are pleased that UNHCR is exploring key thematic issues in a more in-depth manner, in its approach to the CRRF. We believe that there are a number of core cross-cutting themes which should be more fully considered and elaborated through this process, including responsibility-sharing, children, gender, securitization, nationality and statelessness, and displacement linked to climate change and disasters. Each of these cross-cutting issues has important implications for refugee protection, and should be fully accounted for in the development of the Global Compact on Refugees.
Conclusion

The implementation of the CRRF provides an important opportunity to translate vague commitments into tangible actions, contributing to refugee protection. NGOs are eager to work with UNHCR to use the CRRF to save lives; provide safe and regular routes for refugees to leave conflict and persecution; stop detaining children and their families; to ensure access to protection services and quality education for all refugee children within a few months of their displacement; to provide pathways for refugees at all skill levels to find solutions to their displacement. The core of the challenge is that all governments must respond, and with urgency: not just a few, not only those in regions people move through or to, and not just those with money. The implementation of the CRRF must motivate the world’s governments to change – to build on their experience and change the way refugee protection is approached globally. If done well, the implementation of the CRRF will give rise to such change, and to a Compact that will ensure that we are upholding the rights and improving the protection and support for all refugees.

A longer version of the statement will be made available on ICVA’s website at icvanetwork.org.

Thank you, chair.