Global Compact on Refugees (GCR): ICVA update 
May 2017

The month of May saw significant developments in the practical application of the CRRF in selected countries, NGOs engagement and in the process towards the development of a Global Compact on Refugees (GCR).

ICVA worked to disseminate information among NGOs on the processes and to coordinate action. In particular, ICVA held – on 2 and 29 May – two strategic meetings with over 15 NGOs each time specifically dedicated to organizing a collective effort to develop an ‘NGO Reflection Paper’ on the Global Compact on Refugees. The overall objective of this paper is to propose ideas and approaches contributing to the development of the GCR, particularly how it should be organized, which principles and standards should underpin it and what should be the content of the CRRF additional paragraphs and the Programme of Action. This paper is meant to be distributed in draft form during the UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations, with the intention of feeding into the debates and being further developed on the basis of those consultations. A final version will be circulated in early July. Ultimately, this paper will also contribute to NGOs’ preparation for, and engagement with, the process leading to the adoption of the GCR in late 2018.

Notes from the 2 May and 29 May meetings are available to ICVA members on ICVA website.

On 8 May, ICVA contributed to a Roundtable organized by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) in Brussels on ‘Europe in the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and the Global Compact on Refugees’. The event gathered about 20 NGOs, the European Commission and UNHCR (including Ms. Ellen Hansen, Senior Policy Advisor at the Office of the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection and Mr. Mamadou Dian Balde, newly appointed Deputy Director of the CRRF Task Team). Possible European contributions to ensure the GCR develops as a truly global process were highlighted. The relevance of the CRRF/GCR for Europe was discussed, both in terms of European States’ contributions through humanitarian and development funding for programmes in third countries hosting refugees, but also in terms of potential European contributions to responsibility-sharing and in the application of the CRRF in European states hosting refugees. This discussion was also meant to help prepare for the session on Europe at the UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations to be held in Geneva on the CRRF (14-16 June).

Other NGO networks are interested in looking at how comparable roundtables could be organized in their regions. ICVA also contributed to CRRF/GCR discussions at protection meetings organized in early May by the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN).

On 22 May, the second meeting of the UNHCR-NGO-IFRC Reference Group took place at ICVA office. This was the occasion for NGO networks to highlight their activities and initiatives related to the CRRF and Compact on Refugees. UNHCR presented an update on the CRRF Implementation Support Tools it is currently developing, including a framework to collect good practices and progress towards the launch of a CRRF Global Digital Portal. The World Bank seconded staff to the Task Team also provided an update on the World Bank’s mapping approach. UNHCR also explained the process detailed in the third version of its
**Roadmap towards a Global Compact on Refugees**, issued on 17 May. This version particularly provides the dates for the series of 2017 Thematic Discussions. NGO networks indicated their eagerness to know more about the modalities for participation. ICVA’s ‘Timeline of Main Opportunities for NGO Engagement Towards the Refugee Compact’ was updated accordingly. The dates of the Thematic Discussions are as follows:

**Notes** from this Reference Group meeting are available to ICVA members on ICVA website.

- **Thematic discussion 1 (10 July):** Past and current burden-and responsibility-sharing arrangements
- **Thematic discussions 2 and 3 (17-18 October):** Measures to be taken at the onset of a large movement of refugees and meeting needs and supporting communities
- **Thematic discussions 4 and 5 (14-15 November):** Measures to be taken in pursuit of durable solutions and issues that cut across all four substantive sections of the framework, and overarching issues

In May, ICVA was also immersed, with the UNHCR Partnership Section, in the last throe of the organization of the UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations which will focus on the theme “From global responsibility to local action – Implementing the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)” (more information is available in ICVA May Bulletin). To assist NGOs’ engagement in those consultations – and more broadly to support all humanitarian actors’ involvement in the whole process leading to the adoption of the GCR – ICVA published a Briefing Paper on “The Global Compact on Refugees Explained”. This briefing paper was also the basis for developing a webinar on “Demystifying the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and the Global Compact on Refugees” scheduled to take place in early June.

**Developments in the CRRF countries:**

On 10 May, ICVA contributed to a side event on supporting Refugees and their Host Communities in the Horn and East Africa (Lancaster House, London) organized by UKAID and UNHCR on the margins of the [London Conference on Somalia](http://bit.ly/2quvW63). The [Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)](http://bit.ly/2quvW63) and UNHCR provided updates on the follow-up to the 25 March ‘Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions’ and CRRF implementation. IGAD and its member states reaffirmed their hospitality towards refugees, provided they receive adequate international support, especially through a Multi Donors Trust Fund and multi-year funding. IGAD works to develop indicators and a roadmap by June/July to move forward with the Nairobi Declaration. The role of development actors and financial institutions was highlighted, calling for a ‘new way of working for refugees’. All actors agreed on the importance of maintaining the momentum and translating decisions into action. Donors renewed their commitment to provide political, technical and funding support, also for Somalia’s stabilization and indicating that funding should be accompanied with the adoption of the right policies and legislations by countries. ICVA recognized that states, IGAD and UNHCR in the region are leading by example in their effort to follow-up on the commitments of the New

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1 On 29-30 May, IGAD, UNHCR and the European Union held a workshop to develop the framework following the Nairobi Summit.
York Declaration and Leaders’ Summit. ICVA also highlighted that NGOs – particularly national NGOs – are vital partners for a successful application of the CRRF. Noteworthy, OCHA and ICRC called to address the current lack of attention to IDPs. The official Co-chairs’ Summary is available here.

Notes from this meeting are available to ICVA members on ICVA website.

In late May, Daniel Endres and members of the Task Team visited most countries set to apply the CRRF in the East and Horn of Africa, meeting with NGOs on a number of occasions. With regard to Somalia, it was decided that the CRRF would be implemented there through the Durable Solutions Initiative structure rather than through setting up a CRRF Secretariat.

A number of meetings with NGOs also took place in Tanzania to prepare for the official launch of the CRRF and its Secretariat in early June. On 26 May, UNHCR devoted a coordination meeting to this topic, also discussing with NGOs the preparation for the UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations.

Although modalities for NGO participation in the Secretariat in Uganda and Tanzania were still unclear, the Terms of Reference of the CRRF secretariats in both Tanzania and Uganda were updated in May. Meetings involving NGOs also took place in Uganda, related to the CRRF and to prepare for the Uganda Solidarity Summit, particularly side-events led by NGOs and the Uganda Red Cross. More information on the Uganda Solidarity Summit can be found on the dedicated web site: http://solidaritysummit.gou.go.ug A Uganda Refugee Response Portal was also launched, with useful information and details on the refugee situation and the CRRF, including a May updated on the “Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework – Uganda, Translating New York Declaration Commitments into Action”.

In a welcome and noteworthy initiative, Plan International hired a consultant who will be working between Geneva, Tanzania and Uganda over the next 6 months. The Consultant’s role will particularly be to analyze how the CRRF is being implemented and provide support to NGOs.

Relatively little concrete information has so far transpired with regard to the practical application of the CRRF in Central America, especially in Honduras. The regional network of NGOs, Grupo Articulador Regional del Plan de Acción Brasil (GAR-PAB), is following-up and advocating for NGO engagement in the process as well as on the links that may be established with the follow-up meeting to the San José Action Statement. Other countries, such as Guatemala, Ecuador and Brazil, are reportedly looking at how to best implement some particular elements of the CRRF.

UNHCR issued a noteworthy document on “A Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework for Central America” providing useful preliminary information. NGOs welcomed the effort and underlined that Spanish versions of such documents would be extremely useful for effective information dissemination in the region.
More broadly, UNHCR revamped its relevant web pages, particularly on:

- The roadmap to the Global Compact on Refugees: [www.unhcr.org/towards-a-global-compact-on-refugees.html](http://www.unhcr.org/towards-a-global-compact-on-refugees.html)

Information on ICVA and NGO activities, articles and statements that relate to the CRRF and Global Compact on Refugees can be found on ICVA's website and by following @ICVA_Displaced on Twitter. ICVA also welcomes any information that may be shared in order to foster a more collective approach to the CRRF and Global Compact on Refugees. To request and provide information, please contact: [jerome.elie@icvanetwork.org](mailto:jerome.elie@icvanetwork.org)