TOWARDS A GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES
FORMAL CONSULTATIONS 2
20-21 March 2018

NGO intervention on Programme of action: Mechanisms for burden-and responsibility-sharing
(Part III.A)

Agenda item 2

Dear Chairperson,

This intervention has been drafted through wide consultations with NGOs.

NGOs recognize that the first draft presents a more concrete responsibility-sharing mechanism articulated around interdependent elements. Although still based on voluntary contributions, it aims to provide a more stimulating and organized framework to expand the support base. We particularly appreciate specific references to resettlement and complementary pathways as means to share responsibility.

Now that we have reached this level of detail, the main question is whether this architecture sufficiently addresses the original ambition to fix current challenges of refugee response?

To answer, we need further elaboration on how the various mechanisms complement each other. Moreover, some elements are modelled on past practices, which led to mixed results, particularly because of a lack of political will to evaluate progress and maintain momentum. Regular Global Refugee Summits could help keep refugee issues high on the agenda and allow for follow-up. However, experience with pledging conferences – an almost routine element of humanitarian practice – indicates a need to go beyond business as usual. To be efficient, summits will have to be focused, bring additionalities, with measurable and coordinated pledges. Careful joint preparations will be essential. We also expect those summits to be truly multi-stakeholder events. To live up to their name, summits will have to go beyond symbolic refugee participation, putting refugees at the very center.

We appreciate the details on the Global Support Platform, although much remains to be discussed, particularly to ensure it operates in a humanitarian and non-political manner. In particular, we encourage a wider involvement of actors. Several forms of association can ensure contributions from refugee-led organizations and NGOs. More information is also needed on how such a platform would support and complement long-term national and sub-national capacities. To allow for wider consultations and deeper details, the compact could indicate that the Platform’s terms of reference will be endorsed at a later stage.

Under key tools for responsibility-sharing, references to the Grand Bargain and inclusion of regional financial institutions are positive, provided they build on protection and accountability. We also support maximizing effective and efficient use of resources, but note that this should be linked to addressing fraud and ensuring transparency. Moreover, we repeat that host countries should increasingly receive support in the form of grants to address refugee situations. New ways of bringing additionalities should be considered. We also reiterate that development financing is not always suitable for emergencies. Humanitarian assistance and principles cannot always be aligned with national development plans.
Strong national and regional arrangements are crucial to ensure comprehensive responses and would benefit from civil society participation. This would improve local inclusion, facilitate participation of people of concern, help in the formulation of collective outcomes and allow monitoring of accountability. Generally, we regret the limited progress made on refugee participation. Contributions from refugee women, men, and youth should not only be limited to implementation, but must be actively linked to policy-making, planning and evaluation.

We support the idea that availability of robust, disaggregated and interoperable data will be vital to refugee protection and inclusion, provided there is political will to enact protection-oriented policies. It is also critical to adopt a privacy-centric and human rights based approach to refugee data collection and management with strong safeguards. We therefore recommend the inclusion of a reference to the right to privacy.

Finally, we welcome the effort to measure the cost and impact of hosting, protecting and assisting refugees. Such work could indeed help in mobilizing support. However, we request that this does not start from the idea that refugees represent costs only. It should also measure the positive impact refugees can bring. Moreover, variables should look beyond demography and development indicators to consider protection legislation and civil society’s role. We also urge to make this a dynamic and participatory process fully contributing to responsibility-sharing.

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

Thank you.