Thank you, Chair.

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

We would like to begin by recognizing progress achieved since the March Standing Committee in following up on the New York Declaration, the Leaders’ Summit commitments and the practical application of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). CRRF Secretariats have now been launched in Uganda and Tanzania; the IGAD-led regional approach is being further defined and new countries have embarked on the implementation of the CRRF in Central America, thus increasing the global reach of the process. Those are concrete steps in fulfilling important commitments to refugees by the international community. However, modalities for NGO engagement and participation in the CRRF applications need further clarification. We ask respective States and UNHCR to ensure the CRRF Secretariats and other relevant structures include NGOs and bring clarity with regard to their role within the work plans. Structures should also be set-up, inclusive of NGOs, at the regional level in Central America and in the East and Horn of Africa to ensure the regional development of the CRRF.

NGOs stand ready to support the consolidation of good practices, the development of a transparent global responsibility-sharing paradigm, and to move forward on implementing new ways of working in refugee responses. States, UNHCR and NGOs should work together to proactively ensure that host communities are adequately supported, the self-reliance of refugees is prioritized and enshrined in law, third country solutions are made available in an effective and predictable manner, and that informed, safe and voluntary return to countries of origin is possible.

All those themes were discussed at the UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations two weeks ago, which also highlighted four important priorities for the CRRF and Global Compact to succeed:

1. The discussion on the CRRF and Global Compact should be brought to all regions – even if the CRRF is not being applied there – thus ensuring it translates into a truly global process.
2. The discussion on the CRRF and Global Compact should be localized. We need to ensure meaningful engagement from INGOs, NNGOs, local leaders, host communities and refugees themselves. These are the key constituents in the “whole-of-society” approach that the CRRF is supposed to test. A first step in this direction resides in improving communication and information dissemination about the CRRF and the Global Compact on Refugees so as to raise awareness about it in ‘the field’. Ensuring refugees and host communities – particularly
adolescents and youth – are being consulted and engaged in the process was a major take-away from this year’s UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations.

3. A particular focus should be placed on ensuring that the views of women and girls – the majority of refugees – are sought and taken into consideration. Last week we heard NGOs also raise concerns about youth, IDPs, camp-based vs. urban displaced, persons with disabilities, LGBT, and others.

4. The CRRF and the Global Compact should be as much about finding new ways of working as to bring back the refugee system to its core: providing protection and solutions for refugees. It should reaffirm and strengthen refugee law, in particular the principle of non-refoulement.

NGOs welcome UNHCR’s Roadmap on the Global Compact on Refugees: this detailed overview of the processes leading up to the Zero Draft Global Compact was much needed and has brought useful clarifications. Further explanation and joint reflection are needed to develop clearly articulated methodologies to ensure lessons learned from the practical CRRF application and the thematic discussions feed into the ultimate development of the Programme of Action. NGOs are ready to work with UNHCR and States to ensure rigorous and consistent methodology is applied to assess the implementation of the CRRF, derive lessons, collect and collate good practices as well as analyses of gaps and challenges to be addressed through a new way of working.

For this to happen, NGOs also call for a more inclusive process allowing for meaningful civil society inputs into the thematic discussions and the December High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges. Although mindful of the inherent challenges and time pressure related to organizing the first thematic discussion of 10 July, at a minimum NGOs would hope that in the future NGOs will be provided with:

- Early information with regard to modalities for participation to allow for more meaningful preparation and participation;
- Opportunities to input in the format and agenda of the thematic discussions, allowing for NGO panelists to showcase their good practices and provide ideas and analyses;
- Improved opportunities to submit good practice examples and lessons learned via the UNHCR-NGO-IFRC Reference Group on the CRRF, UNHCR’s new online portal and other avenues;
- Direct involvement in defining the criteria to select and analyse good practices and lessons learned, via a process that ensures geographically diverse civil society participation;
- Direct engagement alongside States, UNHCR, and other key stakeholders in providing inputs for the Zero Draft Programme of Action based on analysis of collected good practices and lessons;
- Beyond late 2017, a process for continuous learning with respect to the Global Compact on Refugees will need to be instituted, continuing the “whole of society” approach by engaging a wide range of relevant stakeholders from refugee-hosting countries, for example via UNHCR’s online portal for CRRF feedback.

As demonstrated during this year’s UNHCR-NGO Consultations, NGOs have much to offer in terms of expertise, experience and ideas. We would like to refer UNHCR and Member States to a number of papers developed by NGOs and regional networks over the past weeks putting forward principles and standards on which the Global Compact should be built, essential protection elements it should include as well as ideas about how to structure the Programme of Action. NGOs believe those documents can help address existing ambiguities related to the Programme of Action and the creation of a transparent global responsibility-sharing system.
In particular, the CRRF objectives as stated in Paragraph 18 of Annex 1, should underpin and provide the strategic vision for all of the actions set out in the Programme of Action, rather than forming the basis of the text or goals in the Programme of Action itself. The CRRF sections/pillars could then form the core chapters of the Programme of Action for following-up on actions of States, UNHCR and civil society.

Although a priority, it is unlikely that a more robust and transparent system to track country commitments to responsibility sharing will be completed in time for inclusion in the Global Compact on Refugees. Thus, the Programme of Action needs to include a call for more aspirational thinking on the development of a global responsibility sharing mechanism. This could include clearly defined triggers that adjust as the scale and trends in displacement change; new and innovative funding mechanisms; and approaches that would incentivize more equitable sharing of responsibility.

NGOs would also like to bring States’ attention the Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts. We commend UNHCR for its support of this initiative, which seeks to ensure that children’s rights are upheld and mainstreamed across both the migration and refugee Compacts. This Initiative is being driven by a civil society-led steering committee, which is co-convened by Terre des Hommes and Save the Children, and counts on the support of a broad range of UN and non-governmental partners, including: the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF, OHCHR, UNHCR, IOM, the Special Representative to the Secretary General on Violence Against Children, and many ICVA members. This initiative highlights the fact that it remains critical to ensure strong linkages between the two compact processes and final documents. Repeating a point made at the March Standing Committee, we believe that many of the issues faced by refugees and vulnerable migrants are similar. Cross-compact reflection is important to identify and address major intersections. We urge UNHCR and States to work towards coherence between the two compacts and to communicate about such efforts.

Finally, NGOs would like to reflect on the recent Uganda Solidarity Summit on Refugees, where governments pledged about $358 million. NGOs welcome the international community’s new commitments but believe this continues to fall short of meeting the needs of refugees. Being concerned by the gap between funding needs to develop a proper refugee response and the pledges made on 23 June, we call on additional contributions to materialize in support of Uganda and of the CRRF approach. Success cannot be achieved without international support and true solidarity. The crucial role of local humanitarian agencies must also be recognised with funding to support them in delivering the response.

Thank you, Chair.