NGO Statement on the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)

Dear Chairperson,

This statement is delivered on behalf of a wide range of NGOs.

Overall, we welcome the CRRF implementation in new countries, especially Afghanistan – the first Asian country and first country of origin to roll-out the CRRF. Two years after the New York Declaration, refugee-impacted nations clearly demonstrate their increasing commitment to Comprehensive Responses. We look forward to contributing to the CRRF implementation in refugee operations worldwide.

Second, we note that multi-stakeholder engagement and proper coordination mechanisms are still lacking in most CRRF countries. Refugees, host communities and local actors, continue to be largely sidelined from designing comprehensive responses. We therefore call on UNHCR and governments to prioritize raising awareness among these groups to ensure their involvement. We must also ensure that CRRF steering groups are streamlined with other critical processes, such as World Bank financing and development planning. Moreover, at global level, we regret that the CRRF Reference Group, which offered a platform for exchange among NGOs and UNHCR, has slipped into abeyance.

Third, while steps are taken to expand the CRRF roll-out, international support is lagging behind. Financial pledges remain largely unfulfilled and third country options are stalled. We continue to welcome the World Bank’s support for programs aligned to CRRF objectives; however, lack of support from other development actors is troubling. We urge the adoption and implementation of the Refugee Compact to ensure a meaningful shift in mobilizing CRRF resources by a wider range of actors.

We also wish to reiterate the importance of building a strong monitoring and accountability framework. Going forward, we call for the development of GCR collective outcomes and targets, as well as a baseline to measure the impact of hosting, protecting and assisting refugees. Building on discussions held at the UNHCR-NGO consultations, we can share expertise on monitoring and impact measurement.

Looking at regional situations:

We welcome the June regional workshops held by UNHCR in Quito and Nairobi on inclusion of persons of concern in National Development Plans and UNDAF. We hope future similar workshops will reach beyond UN staff, particularly to NGOs and refugees, and help clarify how refugees fit in the Agenda 2030.

In East Africa, we urge the creation of adequate monitoring mechanisms for host countries’ commitments to IGAD’s Plan of Action for the Somali Situation. We welcome additional funding from the Somalia
Development and Reconstruction Facility in south-west Somalia, while calling for monitoring mechanisms to ensure returns are sustainable, safe, dignified and voluntary.

In **Central America**, we commend the establishment of a *MIRPS* follow-up mechanism by the OAS and UNHCR. This mechanism will track national commitments and contribute to exchanging good practices. NGOs stand ready to engage in this exercise.

In **Asia and the Middle East**, we regret the weak CRRF focus, particularly in response to the Syria and Rohingya refugee situations. Although NGOs have not been engaged so far, we look forward to working with UNHCR and others on the CRRF in Afghanistan. Similarly, we encourage European States to adopt consistent approaches by implementing the CRRF for refugee movements in Europe.

**At the country level:**

- **In Ethiopia**, we look forward to the adoption of the revised Refugee Proclamation and the National Comprehensive Refugee Response Strategy. This should promote a common vision to implement pledges. We also reiterate concerns about the deficit in sub-national stakeholders’ engagement and lack of quality benchmarks to ensure sustainable outcomes for affected communities. We recommend that decisions about financing, policies, and programs be based on engagement of different levels of government, regional bodies, NGOs and refugees.

- **In Djibouti**, the CRRF implementation has been slow. We reiterate concerns about the lack of engagement of community actors, INGOs and line ministries. We call for an improved and inclusive National Action Plan. Furthermore, inadequate funding and coordination issues continue to result in service and protection gaps.

- **In Kenya**, we welcome the inclusion of refugees and stateless persons in UNDAF and this will lead to systematic inclusion of refugees into development planning. We also commend the recent discussion with key CRRF implementers on refugee inclusion as a tool for protection and sustainable solutions. We appreciate the inclusion of national NGOs in the technical working group, although this process has stalled since April. We encourage the formulation of whole-of-government strategies to implement the CRRF and urge development donors to provide technical and financial support.

- Similarly, in **Rwanda** we take note of the whole-of-government workshop held while launching the CRRF. We support the decision to align the CRRF with the *Strategic Framework for Refugee Inclusion* – a costed plan identifying policy changes and a funding strategy. We look forward to consultations with development partners, refugees and host communities, hoping these will happen regularly.

- **On Tanzania**, we once again call to identify the reasons for the change of course on the CRRF and discuss the way forward. We remain concerned that the current situation may set an unhelpful precedent.

- **In Uganda**, we welcome CRRF progress in the key sectors of education, health, water and environment. Efforts to develop a settlement strategy and response plan for livelihoods and economic recovery for refugees and host communities are equally critical. Given the CRRF Secretariat’s inclusive approach, NGOs pulled resources to continue their active support until late 2019. However, declining funding levels for the response are alarming. Without adequate resources, the CRRF and Uganda’s progressive model are at risk.
• Moving to Central America, in Belize we support the creation of three inter-ministerial working groups focusing on MIRPS priorities identified by the Government: profiling and data collection; quality of asylum procedures; livelihoods and social development.

• In Honduras, we welcome UNHCR’s joint advocacy with the national Episcopal Conference in support of MIRPS.

• In Mexico, the Government is taking promising steps towards greater inclusion of refugees in national systems and public programmes, such as engaging refugees to promote the national Regulation on Labour Equity and non-Discrimination.

We look forward to future multi-stakeholder discussions putting NGOs, refugees and host communities at the center.

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

Thank you