

TOWARDS A GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES
FORMAL CONSULTATIONS 5
12-13 June 2018

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

Agenda item 2

Dear Chairperson,

This intervention reflects a diversity of views within the NGO community.

In general, Draft 3 brings more clarity on responsibility-sharing mechanisms, which remain at the heart of the global compact. Expanding the support base and going beyond existing processes will be crucial to their success. These mechanisms can also allow for systematic and predictable support, which has been lacking so far.

Importantly, these mechanisms now enjoy wide support, which is crucial to broadening the support base, but remains only a first step. Further efforts are still required to ensure we deliver on expectations. How these would work in practice will need to be better elaborated and this should not be solely left to iterative improvements during implementation. Allowing for a range of contributions – including financial, material and technical – makes it possible for a larger number of stakeholders to contribute. In a context where contributions remain voluntary, however, bringing about equitable, predictable and sustainable responsibility-sharing will remain a challenge. Determining a fair share for States therefore would be crucial to addressing the ‘perennial gap’. In this regard, we welcome the impact mapping exercise with a view to promoting responsibility-sharing. NGOs are ready to contribute to this exercise.

The link between the various mechanisms have been strengthened. The Global Refugee Forum is now firmly at the centre of the system as the main mechanism to sustain momentum and mobilise stakeholders. It will channel support towards context-specific mechanisms including national arrangements, Support Platforms and the Asylum Capacity Support Group. However, complementarity between national arrangements and Support Platforms will require further precision. Welcoming that context-specific arrangements are now contingent on host States consent, provisions will have to be made to ensure that where States are not forthcoming, timely and predictable response can still be mobilised amid sudden and rapid influxes.

More specifically, on the **Global Refugee Forum**, we welcome the added details. Inviting the United Nations Secretary General to participate will add political weight to the Forum; organising these in Geneva could allow all Member States as well as the humanitarian community to participate. It is vital, however, that participation of refugees and refugee-led organisations as well as national civil society actors is facilitated to ensure those high-level discussions are anchored in field realities. The programme of action should commit to the systematic and meaningful participation of refugee women, youth, and children, particularly young women and girls in the Global Refugee Forum and other follow-up mechanisms. Age-, gender- and disability related barriers to meaningful participation of refugees must be addressed through targeted strategies and dedicated funding. A clear role for civil society actors,

including NGOs, in the Global Refugee Forum should also be considered and spelled out. NGOs propose the creation of a civil-society platform, which can support the Forum and help track progress.

Moreover, we encourage that the periodicity of the Forum should not be further extended to ensure that high-level attention does not evaporate. We note that the Forum is now the main vehicle to take stock and assess progress. This will occur every four years, so linkages to UNHCR's Executive Committee and the General Assembly are essential as these provide for annual follow-up and stocktaking. We note that the emphasis on reviewing the Forum has been reduced, and this is now mostly mentioned in relation to responsibility-sharing. Establishing a clear mechanism to review the overall progress on the objectives of the global compact in the lead up to each Global Refugee Forum needs to be explicitly mentioned in the text. Evaluating the effectiveness of the Forum will also be important. As NGOs have already suggested, developing a template to collect and record pledges will help promote predictability and coherence, and allow for covering gaps, all important elements for proper review and evaluation.

We endorse the primacy of national leadership in constituting and coordinating **national arrangements** so long as space for independent, impartial and neutral humanitarian action is guaranteed. Furthermore, in implementing comprehensive responses at the national level, engagement of sub-national actors should be sought and encouraged as they are often at the forefront of responding to large-scale movements. Area-based approaches, while allowing for comprehensive coverage, also encourage wide-scale involvement of local actors. Participation of people of concern, including women, youth, and children, and host community members should equally be facilitated at national and sub-national levels. Clarity will also be required on how national arrangements align with, and complement, existing UN coordination structures at country level. In sum, we suggest adding to the section on national arrangements details to underscore the importance of inclusivity and transparency, as well as accountability frameworks for comprehensive plans.

We note that **Support Platforms** will be mobilised to assist national arrangements. Support Platforms must aim at achieving collective outcomes developed as part of comprehensive plans. In practice, how this will work still needs to be clarified to avoid multiplication of coordination structures. Resources channelled to the Platforms through the Global Refugee Forum will offer some predictability. However, our concern with the lack of a standby capacity remains, particularly at regional and national levels. We acknowledge the inclusion of standby capacities in footnote 16, but this would require further elaboration, particularly about how to strengthen already existing standby arrangements. If such capacities can be mobilised only through voluntary contributions, it will be difficult to ensure that these can be rapidly constituted. Activating the Platforms also requires further clarification. In situations where criteria for activation are fulfilled, but consent of the host State is lacking, a balance will have to be struck between State sovereignty and the imperative to save lives. Deactivation also poses major challenges as the 'L3 system' shows. As deactivation is now mentioned, we note that criteria highlighted in the text only relate to 'activation'. The process of deactivation would also have to be clearly thought through. In terms of governance, we note that the Support Platform will report to the Executive Committee and the Global Refugee Forum. This could reinforce linkages between the Forum and the Support Platform, but we would welcome the reasoning behind this.

Language on **solidarity conference** has evolved, now providing for the engagement of a wider set of actors including local communities and the private sector as well as calling for diversified contributions, going beyond financial pledges. Establishing criteria on when to call for such conferences would be useful. One such criteria could be when funding levels for a specific situation fall below a certain

threshold. This would ensure solidarity conferences are not called upon arbitrarily, and in doing so, could partially address concerns over earmarking of funding. Where possible, we would encourage that these align with already planned country-specific pledging events.

Under **key tools for effective burden- and responsibility-sharing**, we welcome the commitment to ensuring timely, predictable, and above all, sustainable public and private funding. Generating additional resources is of utmost urgency as most humanitarian crises and CRRF contexts remain grossly underfunded. We recommend highlighting the need for additional humanitarian funding, over and above current humanitarian levels, and as a complement to additional development funding. This was one of the key findings of the High-Level Panel Report on humanitarian financing to the UN Secretary-General in 2016. While it is vital that development funding does not impose conditionality on host countries, it is equally important that additional resources result in an enabling environment for refugees, which allows them to progressively reduce their aid dependency. At the same time, additional development resources should not impact funding for humanitarian action, which has a specific role in providing timely assistance to populations in hard-to-reach areas. We note that references to grants have been removed in Draft 3, yet this brought much-needed additionality for low-income countries. We would encourage that commitments to grants be reintroduced.

We welcome the global compact's commitment to a **partnership approach** but regret the deletion of the Principles of Partnership. Principles of Partnership are humanitarian in character and were adopted by humanitarian actors in 2007. These, in our view, represent a good basis to develop whole-of-society approaches and should be reinserted as they make practical sense. This section could furthermore specify that the list of stakeholders mentioned is not exhaustive, opening the door for other context-specific partnerships. We note the continued absence of some relevant UN Agencies in this process, including the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Its function in coordinating humanitarian response is important to the success of the global compact, especially where internal displacement interacts with refugee movements. Specifying the role of OCHA and other UN agencies will be important for a more effective operationalisation of the compact. We welcome that recruitment of local personnel by humanitarian and development agencies will not lead to weakening of local actors, organisations and structures. This however should not be used as an excuse to not recruit, as working in international organisations also allows local staff to gain valuable experience and develop their human potential.

We endorse a strengthened focus on data protection, in **data and evidence**, and reiterate our call to include a specific reference to adopt a human-rights based approach to data collection. We note that reference to dissemination of evidence on the effectiveness of arrangements resulting from the global compact has been dropped. This nevertheless will be vital for learning and reviewing and should be reflected in the text or feature as part of the follow-up and review. Furthermore, welcoming systematic data collection and analysis on resettlement and complementary pathways, we encourage that this also includes local integration and voluntary repatriation to provide a comprehensive picture.

NGOs appreciate more clarity on the process of **measuring the impact** of hosting, protecting and assisting refugees. We also welcome the non-paper shared by UNHCR, ahead of the informal exchange held on 29 May and look forward to next week's update at the Standing Committee. However, we note the absence of engaging civil society in this process. NGOs are keen to participate and contribute to the development of methodologies for measuring the impact and would be looking forward to a meaningful engagement in this process. We would therefore appreciate more details on the modalities of

participation. Refugees and host communities would also have valuable insights on measuring the impact and outcomes of refugee protection.

Finally, sustained political will is required to strengthen refugee protection and expand solutions. As we redefine traditional refugee response and move towards more comprehensive approaches that involve a wide range of actors from the onset of displacement, it is vital that the focus on engaging persons of concern is not lost. In the pressing need to mobilise new actors and additional resources, they must remain at the centre of our efforts. The search for solutions to today's unprecedented forced displacement crises must be driven by humanitarian imperatives, and respond to people's needs and aspirations.

Thank you, Chair, for the opportunity to provide comments on the third draft of the programme of action, and we look forward to providing further comments on the rest of the agenda items.