

NGO intervention on Follow-up and review arrangements (Part IV)

Agenda item 4

Dear Chairperson,

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

First of all, NGOs wish to thank UNHCR for sharing a non-paper on indicative outcomes ahead of the informal exchange held on 29 May.

However, we regret the contraction of this section, particularly the deletion of references to the development of a set of key indicators, which are crucial to building a credible and robust GCR monitoring system. We propose that the next GCR draft reinsert these references, while the process required to develop key indicators can be agreed at a later stage. Similarly, we hope the next draft will specify what is meant by collective outcomes or, at a minimum, suggest a timeline for reaching a shared understanding of outcomes and context-specific targets¹.

Several NGOs have developed proposals for measuring progress on responsibility-sharing and improved socio-economic conditions for refugees, and will be eager to jointly define outcomes, targets and indicators. NGOs also bring a strong operational perspective and therefore have a clear added value to these discussions. The role and modalities envisaged for NGOs in developing these measures should therefore be clearly spelled out.

We regret losing clear language on measuring success against the objectives set out in paragraph 7 and hope to see this language reinserted, together with a measure of progress on protection. Ensuring comparable progress is achieved in each of the four CRRF objectives is crucial. These, however, do not sufficiently capture protection concerns. In focusing solely on paragraph 7 objectives, we risk losing the emphasis on measuring progress on the level of protection afforded to refugees. We therefore urge that outcomes capture progress on indicators of success included in paragraph 7 of Draft 2 – responsibility-sharing, strengthened national protection systems, enhanced protection and socio-economic conditions of refugees and a reduction in the number of refugees living in protracted situations. NGOs have been proposing a ‘*state of protection report*’, which could also be a useful tool to evaluate improvements in protection. Prepared by a team of independent experts, the report could assess national refugee protection policies and track legal and policy pledges aimed at improving protection for persons of concern.

We welcome the Global Refugee Forum as a principal vehicle for pledging, taking stock, reviewing and measuring progress against the objectives of the global compact. As underlined earlier, the Forum

¹ For more recommendations on **collective outcomes, indicators and targets**, see a briefing paper developed by the International Rescue Committee: *Will it make a difference? Towards a Global Compact on Refugees that actually works (June 2018)*.

should allow for evaluating progress in responsibility-sharing as well as improvements in the socio-economic conditions of refugees and host communities. We also recommend clarifying that UNHCR will establish a mechanism not just for tracking pledges but also for reviewing progress on the implementation of the global compact by States and other stakeholders. Commitments expected of other stakeholders, including NGOs, will need to be defined so that they are able to demonstrate progress during the Forum.

Regarding evaluating progress in responsibility-sharing, the exercise to measure the impact of hosting, protecting and assisting refugees could provide a useful baseline; targets that are set following this exercise must aim to improve on the situation. It would therefore be useful to have a clear indication of the process and timeline for this exercise. UNHCR's reporting to the Executive Committee and the General Assembly could also be used to follow progress on GCR implementation on an annual basis. We note that the Global Refugee Forum will also serve to review efforts of Support Platform as well as country or regional specific situations. This will allow reviewing only after every four years. Regional and national contexts are dynamic and would require reviews to be conducted in a much shorter timespan to inform and adapt responses according to evolving situations. While the Forum remains a useful avenue to promote learning and exchange best practices, monitoring and review of context-specific responses should remain ongoing.

We note the non-paper indicates that increasing participation of States and relevant stakeholders in supporting refugee responses and the search for solutions will be a proximate and direct measure of success. While increasing participation remains important, this does not represent the ambition expected from the global compact. Success should eventually hinge on tangible improvements in the lives of refugees. Outcomes should be able to reflect this. In this regard, we welcome the inclusion of qualitative outcomes which allow for capturing the quality of protection and solutions. Furthermore, in choosing domains for improvements in socio-economic conditions, it is vital that these reflect progress in refugees' ability to exercise fundamental freedoms including freedom of movement, right to work and access to basic services.

We regret the absence of SDGs in the follow-up and review section of Draft 3. We strongly believe linking the global compact's monitoring framework to SDGs would promote inclusion of refugees in national development plans. This also reflects best practice as aligning with existing frameworks reduces the burden of reporting. This will require adapting existing data gathering procedures to include refugees. As such support for national statistical offices will be needed, and the programme of action should specifically call for assistance in this regard. Such support should ensure that data collected is disaggregated by age, gender, disability and diversity. At the global level, several data collection initiatives have been launched recently including the UNHCR-World Bank data centre and OCHA's Centre for Humanitarian Data. It would be useful to specify their role in supporting or collaborating with national statistical offices in data collection. Where national capacities to coordinate data collection remain limited, clear responsibilities will need to be set in terms of agencies including NGOs, that could support this endeavour.

For the success of regional and national plans, it is vital to collectively define outcomes, targets and indicators. This should include various stakeholders including NGOs, refugees and host community representatives. At the same time, implementing these plans would require stakeholders to assume specific responsibilities against which they could be held accountable.

Facilitating refugee participation in the Global Refugee Forum is positive. This will require appropriate mechanisms to systematically collect and hear the voices of refugees from their direct representatives. This could include supporting refugee-led agencies to organise a series of pre-sessions to widely consult refugees, which could then be presented at the Global Refugee Forum by refugee participants. In addition, for effective and meaningful participation of refugees in the follow up and review process, refugees will need strong technical expertise and resources to access all relevant stakeholders. Capacity building of refugee-led organisations should therefore be part of the mechanisms adopted to review the GCR. At the same time, participation of host community will also need to be spelled out in the monitoring framework. The methodology for monitoring and measuring progress should put at its centre a human development approach, focusing on improving the lives of people rather than assuming that improvement in refugee laws, policies or increased funding figures will automatically lead to greater wellbeing of refugees or host communities.

Finally, we believe the draft still fails to emphasise accountability towards refugees. While accountability mechanisms may develop over time, it will be important to underline the need for accountability towards refugees in the programme of action. Among other things, promoting accountability will require facilitating participation of refugees in national and regional refugee coordination structures too, where they can directly influence programme decisions. Communicating the impact of GCR would also contribute to accountability. As such, disseminating information relating to the GCR progress – in a language and format accessible to refugees – and providing opportunities to discuss and gather inputs, will be crucial.

Chair, we thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the third draft. NGOs look forward to the last consultations and commit to working together with UNHCR, Member States and all other stakeholders to make a tangible difference in the lives of refugees and host communities.