

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

**NGO intervention on background, goals of the Global Compact on Refugees, and prevention and addressing root causes (Part I)**

**Agenda item 1**

Dear Chairperson, distinguished delegates,

This intervention has been drafted following wide consultations with NGOs.

First, we recognize UNHCR's efforts to enrich the draft taking into account multiple inputs. We note that the first draft is more concrete, reflecting progress towards the adoption of a meaningful Compact. This draft goes further in addressing host States' needs, calling for broadening the support base. Stronger references to normative frameworks and to the SDGs, further details on responsibility-sharing mechanisms, emphasis on mobilising political will to address refugee challenges and root causes, and attempts to define monitoring frameworks reflect comments raised earlier, including by NGOs. We also commend the emphasis on gender equality, supporting increased empowerment of women and girls and ending sexual abuse and exploitation.

More specifically, we appreciate that the introduction provides a comprehensive picture of drivers of refugee movements, including environmental degradation and disasters, providing a solid basis to develop 21st century responses. This paragraph should also reflect on the displacement continuum, emphasising the potential links between internal displacement and refugee movements. The specific challenges of the increasingly urban nature of displacement and the particular risks faced by children and women could also be mentioned here.

Furthermore, we welcome the stronger references to the Refugee Convention and regional instruments. Too often, we witness instances of *refoulement*, which constitute fundamental violations of refugee rights and obvious denials of responsibility-sharing. We therefore welcome that the Compact now highlights *non-refoulement* and hope this will translate into increased applications of this cardinal principle. We also reiterate that all persons of concern are rights holders and should be able to enjoy fundamental freedoms including access to justice.

However, we think the foundational New York Declaration should be clearly mentioned, underlining the need for coherence between the two Global Compacts.

Although the 'whole-of-society' approach is still not elaborated, we appreciate that this notion is now underpinning the Compact. We would welcome details on how all actors are expected to contribute to responsibility-sharing. Recognising that we share responsibility for refugee protection and assistance, we are eager to engage in refining the proposed mechanisms. Collaboration should, however, start from the earliest stages of design, through to implementation and evaluation. We also welcome the mention of operational experience although we suggest adding a reference to CRRF best practices, including those from NGOs.

We appreciate too that the Compact's goals are now more clearly articulated and provide a basis to develop indicators of success. Paragraph 5 now builds on a more holistic understanding of responsibility-sharing, not limited to financial aspects: it defines success in relation to protection outcomes, refugee rights and improved socio-economic conditions. NGOs will provide further inputs under agenda item 3 but urge that a goal on prevention of and response to SGBV be included here.

Finally, we note the new section on 'Prevention and addressing root causes'. To quote High Commissioner Grandi, "a full response to today's displacement flows can only be achieved through action to restore security, resolve conflict and build peace". **Mobilising political will** to address refugee challenges and tackle root causes will be critical and require renewed commitment to multilateralism and a strengthened UN to peacefully settle disputes. Continued State support for prevention, peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding activities and renewed commitment to stop arms trafficking and the use of explosive weapons in populated areas will be essential. However, we feel the draft Compact is currently not structured in a way that reflects this objective and suggest to analyze how this can relate to the Compact's humanitarian and non-political nature.

Similarly, supporting and assisting countries of origin can indeed contribute to durable solutions, particularly through more sustainable reintegration. We, however, would ask that support to countries of origin conforms to humanitarian principles. Verified conditions for voluntary, safe and dignified repatriation and reintegration must exist before support is offered and clear accountability mechanisms work to ensure proper use of assistance, including safeguards against diversion.

Above all, as we delve deeper into deliberations, we must remind ourselves that behind all this are people fleeing violence or languishing without hope. The Compact owes it to them, to make a tangible difference in their lives.

A detailed version of this intervention is available on [icvanetwork.org](http://icvanetwork.org).

Thank you.