

NGO Statement on Sustainable Responses

Dear Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

This statement has been consulted with a wide range of NGOs.

The NGO community welcomes the discussion on sustainable responses, especially its focus on the operationalization of all 4 objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees.

At a time of unprecedented funding crisis, there is a critical need for a better approach to bridge the gap between humanitarian response, development and peacebuilding to respond in an effective and meaningful way to address the challenges of forced displacement and statelessness.

At the centre must be forcibly displaced and stateless persons themselves. Upholding human dignity and rights must be of highest priority in all phases of the response, including in emergency phases, in protracted situations, and in the search for durable solutions.

A truly sustainable approach requires recognizing the delivery of protection and services to displaced and stateless populations as a global common good. This means acknowledging that sustainable responses need adequate, predictable and multi-year funding. It also means supporting and enabling host countries to provide the same responses to forcibly displaced persons, while ensuring equitable burden and responsibility-sharing. The imperative for sustainable responses should not mean that more burden is placed on host countries and communities.

Given the complexity of forced displacement, sustainable and effective responses requires that humanitarian and development efforts simultaneously prioritize the reconstruction, stabilization, and capacity building of countries of origin. Without addressing root causes and rebuilding social, economic, and institutional infrastructures in countries of origin, we risk perpetuating cycles of displacement.

Due to funding constraints, NGOs are gravely concerned that the adequate, predictable and multi-year funding needed to enable sustainable responses is unavailable. The current funding shortfalls might impede a key aspect of sustainable responses: the transition from parallel delivery systems towards economic inclusion and social protection and integration of service delivery for forcibly displaced persons into national systems. Sustainable responses require time to transition and build up the capacity of host governments to deliver on protection and essential services.

Yet UNHCR has been forced to make impossible choices, pulling out of education, health, water and sanitation services hastily, when what is needed is a conducive transition period. Too quick transitions can jeopardize the effectiveness of local responses and the lives and dignity of displaced and stateless populations.

Dear Chair,

NGOs, and local actors have always played a crucial part in sustainable responses with their community-based and community-led approaches, contributing to social cohesion, the

engagement of both forcibly displaced populations and host communities, stateless communities, and capacity building of government structures at national and local levels. Sustainable responses require a whole of society approach.

Despite limited formal recognition and financial resources, these organizations remain embedded within their communities, offering vital support and emergency response using available tools and contextual knowledge. Furthermore, a number of these organizations are led by persons living at the intersection of forced displacement and disability, or other compounded risks. Their lived experience provides essential, firsthand insight into the unique protection challenges faced by individuals with intersecting identities — insight that is critical to designing truly inclusive and effective responses.

Despite their impact, organisations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons are frequently marginalized and denied meaningful participation in humanitarian decision-making.

All of us, collectively, be it Member States, UNHCR and INGOs must promote sustainable and equitable partnerships with organizations led by forcibly displaced persons and stateless persons. This means shifting power and resources.

We recommend supporting the expertise and leadership of these organizations and assuring their meaningful participation in decision-making. Strengthening these organisations through increased recognition and support will particularly amplify refugee and stateless voices and enhance their ability to address community-specific challenges effectively. To achieve this, we need to scale up opportunities for flexible, direct and sustainable funding, capacity sharing, collective advocacy, and coalition development. Partnerships with the private sector will help us to further reinforce impact.

This statement is available on icvanetwork.org.

Thank you.