

*Towards a global compact on refugees: thematic discussions No. 2*

Geneva, Palais des Nations, XVII and XXIV, 17 October 2017

**Austrian interventions**

**On Panel 1:**

Thank you Chairperson.

As this is the first time that Austria takes the floor during the thematic discussions towards a global compact on refugees, let me first thank the High Commissioner and his team for their stewardship and on the work that has already been achieved since the adoption of the New York Declaration on Migrants and Refugees in September 2016. We very much appreciated the organization of a special segment on the comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF) during this year's UNHCR Executive Committee. We applaud those eleven countries that are already applying the CRRF.

We welcome and support the roadmap towards a global compact on refugees as submitted earlier this year. The roadmap provides the framework to implement the mandate given to the High Commissioner by the Heads of States and Governments in New York in September last year to develop a Global Compact on Refugees in consultation with Member States and relevant stakeholders. We welcome the proposed two complementary parts of the compact, that is the CRRF and the programme of action and thank the High Commissioner's for both this year's thematic discussions and the extensive formal consultations with member States and relevant stakeholders as foreseen for the first half of 2018. We are convinced that this process will result in a Compact on Refugees that will make a difference, with the aim to improve the situation of refugees and to better support host countries.

We thank UNHCR for the very useful background documents which give us some ideas what measures could feature in a future Global Compact on Refugees and its „Programme of Action“. We fully concur that we need to take further steps to enhance preparedness and ensure a more expeditious response to large movements of refugees. Actions such as the establishment of a „Global refugee response group“ hosted by UNHCR or the convening of a solidarity conference can in our view contribute to speedier and more coordinated action in such situations. The suggestion to deploy more resources and expertise to improve reception arrangements in States which lack sufficient means to face large-scale movements of refugees seems also very pertinent and should be further developed.

**On Panel Three:**

We thank UNHCR for the organization of this panel and agree that we need to avail ourselves better of technology and use innovative tools in the area of identity management, including registration, documentation and biometrics. We thank

UNHCR for the exhibition – during this year’s ExCom two weeks ago – of Iris scan registration centers and the use of those biometrics to receive cash grants at ATM machines in Jordan. The way this is functioning is quite impressive. Exact documentation as well as further improvements in the collection and quality of registration data while fully respecting data protection is key in large-scale refugees situations.