

**Seventy third meeting of the Standing Committee  
19-21 September 2018**

Agenda item 4 (i)

Oral update on the comprehensive refugee response framework

Countries applying the CRRF

Since the last update to the Standing Committee in June 2018, Afghanistan announced its decision in July to apply the comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF), bringing the total number of countries doing so to 15. Comprehensive responses for this protracted situation are rooted in the “Solutions strategy for Afghan refugees to support voluntary repatriation, sustainable reintegration and assistance to host countries” (SSAR). Afghanistan’s commitment to apply the CRRF provides an opportunity to showcase and further build on good practices as a country of origin, based on the experience gained in implementing the SSAR, especially with regards to the inclusion of returnees in Afghanistan’s national policies and priorities. This will help pave the way for the voluntary and gradual return of Afghan refugees and for sustainable reintegration.

The 14 countries in Africa and the Americas which have been applying the CRRF – including 11 covered by regional approaches supported by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Organization of American States (OAS) – continue to observe significant progress. In August 2018, UNHCR issued a note<sup>1</sup> on progress achieved against the four objectives of the CRRF, at the global, regional and national levels, since the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. It includes tangible examples of how States and a broad range of other stakeholders have supported comprehensive responses within and beyond the current geographical scope of the CRRF roll-out and the impact this has had. Through these efforts, the operationalization of the key principles outlined in the New York Declaration has helped shape the proposed global compact on refugees and will lay the groundwork for its eventual implementation.

Key developments

As detailed in the progress note, and building on previous updates to the Standing Committee, a few notable examples of recent developments in the CRRF roll-out countries are as follows:

- In **Chad**, 108 schools located in 19 refugee camps have now been officially recognized by the State. The Government has assigned over 300 teachers to these schools and facilitated training for over 430 teachers from the refugee community. This represents a further tangible demonstration of inclusion of refugees in national education systems, which promotes self-reliance.
- Since July, refugees in **Djibouti** can open bank accounts with their refugee identity cards, which enhances their socio-economic inclusion. This development reflects recently adopted progressive legislation and policies, which have a positive impact on refugees and enable further growth of the local economies.
- In **Ethiopia**, the Council of Ministers recently endorsed a new comprehensive Refugee Proclamation, which serves to strengthen application of the CRRF at the local level. Meanwhile, more than a hundred government officials from line ministries, regions and city administrations validated the new CRRF strategy.
- **Uganda** has taken significant steps forward in developing strategies to strengthen the inclusion of refugees in the education and health sectors – a process led by the respective line ministries, with technical support from the CRRF Secretariat, the work of which is guided by the CRRF Steering Committee. The Secretariat has also focused efforts on supporting the localization agenda by agreeing to (i) collect detailed funding data, (ii) create pooled funding for local and national responders, (iii) urge international actors to align policies to promote funding for local actors and (iv) develop strategies to support local government capacity – in line with the CRRF and the “grand bargain” principles.

There have also been numerous actions taken that capitalize on the momentum created by the declarations and plans of action which support the two regional approaches:

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<sup>1</sup> Available from <http://www.unhcr.org/5b8d1ad34>.

- In follow-up to the Djibouti Declaration on Refugee Education adopted in December 2017, a group of experts from **IGAD** Member States met in July to agree on a regional framework to support quality standards for refugee education and share practical experiences on the inclusion of refugee learners in national systems. Preparations for the regional meeting on jobs and livelihoods to be convened later this year are advancing, and the first stocktaking report on progress made against the Nairobi Declaration on Somali Refugees has been finalized.
- In the north of Central America, there has been intensive national engagement in the comprehensive regional protection and solutions framework (known as **MIRPS** for its Spanish acronym). The Government of **Costa Rica** is now applying its national chapter of the MIRPS to the current influx of Nicaraguans, including by extending visas for Nicaraguan asylum-seekers. This demonstrates how national responses that are part of regional frameworks can adjust to changing circumstances in the region. In **Mexico**, national actors and municipalities are stepping up their cooperation. For example, Mexico City and the Ministry of Labour are working with UNHCR and civil society partners to establish a coordination mechanism for referring refugees to national employment programmes.

### Partnerships and support

The annual consultations between UNHCR and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which took place in June 2018, enabled in-depth exchanges with local and international NGOs on how to further build on the engagement of **civil society** in shaping the application of the CRRF at the global, regional, national and sub-national levels. UNHCR and civil society partners also explored how “whole-of-society” engagement can support State action to prevent and end statelessness. As a good practice example of national level engagement, in Uganda international NGOs and local NGOs, including the Ugandan Red Cross – with support from the National NGO Forum – are actively involved in the advancement of the localization agenda, working closely with the Ministry of Local Government.

The active support of the **United Nations system** to comprehensive responses, as demonstrated in the UNHCR-Resident Coordinator dialogue held in June 2018, continues to be applied in practice at the country level. In **Kenya**, the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2018-2022 includes the needs of refugees, stateless persons and migrants, alongside those of local communities, across different sectors. This echoes the “leave no one behind” principle of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Development-related investments reported by bilateral and multilateral development donors to CRRF countries and others applying comprehensive responses amount to over \$6 billion, which excludes humanitarian funding.

In June 2018, the **World Bank** approved the first projects for East Africa under the \$2 billion IDA18 refugee sub-window for Ethiopia and Uganda. The World Bank and **bilateral development donors have** mobilized more than \$3 billion in support of the objectives of the CRRF over a multi-year period, excluding humanitarian funding. In addition, development-related investments in other situations which apply regional approaches outside the CRRF, such as in the Syria refugee host countries, amount to an additional \$3.5 billion. One of the challenges in the application of comprehensive responses has been the tracking of development support in addition to humanitarian assistance. This is gradually being addressed through self-reporting by bilateral development donors.

Partnerships with **private sector partners** have the potential to further support the application of comprehensive responses. UNHCR’s collaboration with the International Chamber of Commerce increasingly focuses on the advancement of comprehensive responses at local levels together with national chambers of commerce. UNHCR welcomes the secondment by the Government of the Netherlands of a Senior Advisor on Private Sector Partnerships in the context of the CRRF and the proposed global compact on refugees. The Senior Advisor’s function will complement UNHCR’s existing efforts to harness the full potential of the private sector in supporting refugees and host countries and communities.