



Tunis Declaration Resulting from the High Level Regional Meeting on Education for Refugees in the Arab Region: Challenges and Future Prospects

We, Representatives of Arab Countriesⁱ, Representatives of concerned International and Regional Organizationsⁱⁱ participating in the regional meeting entitled "Education for Refugees in the Arab region: Challenges and Future Prospects", convened in cooperation and coordination between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) on 18-19 May 2017, at ALECSO Headquarters in Tunisia;

Recalling the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, and its subsequent Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), released in parallel with the work of the United Nations General Assembly on 19 September 2016, which affirmed the enduring significance of the international protection regime and recognized the refugee response as a shared international responsibility;

Recalling the Arab Charter on Human Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

Adhering to the region's strong traditions, principles and commitment to the protection of refugees, and the international and regional commitments and covenants on expanding the scope of life-saving protection, safety and services provided to unprecedented numbers of refugees and forcibly displaced in the Arab region;

Recognizing the negative impact of the exceptional circumstances that some Arab States are going through and what has been achieved within the framework of the sustainable development goal 4 on education;

Recognizing that war and conflict in the region can deprive whole generations of access to education. Acknowledging, also, the disruptive impact of emergencies and forced displacement of populations on the full realization of the right to education;

Recalling that education is a fundamental human right and key factor to promoting socio-economic, environmental and gender equality, and that States have to secure free, public quality education for all, especially for refugees, internally displaced persons, and most disadvantaged groups among boys and girls, so that international authorities in charge of Palestinian refugees' education do not relinquish their responsibilities towards them;

Reaffirming the need for implementing the targets of Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals through Arab education policies to achieve quality education by 2030, and recognizing the progress in access to early childhood and primary education that has been made, as well as the marked improvement in the area of gender equity in education, as well as Amman Declaration



issued in the Arab Summit in March 2017, considering that assistance in meeting life and educational needs of refugees is an investment for a secure future for the region and the world.

Acknowledging the generosity of many Arab States in extending hospitality, solidarity and support to millions of refugees and asylum seekers, often providing access to education and other services despite profound strain to their resources, which has all contributed to great progress in the reduction in the number of out of school refugee children at primary level.

And based on the deliberations conducted during the meeting, where discussions were held on the ways to address challenges on Education for Refugees in the Arab Region, Member States presented practical challenges faced in their respective countries as well as possible solutions applicable in the national and Arab context; opportunities for collaboration were identified, with a view towards ultimately establishing integrated responses that address both the Education and Higher Education in current displacement situations in a spirit of solidarity and responsibility-sharing.

- **We affirm** the right of every refugee and displaced person to a fair and quality education, from early childhood to higher education, to achieve the fourth goal of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **We declare** our keenness to eliminate all forms of exclusion and inequality in education, including the refugee inclusion into the education systems and national sector plans to meet their needs according to the available means and resources, and to provide flexible education options to meet diverse needs.
- **We support** educational policies and plans aimed at reducing gender disparities, including equal training opportunities for teachers of both genders, addressing discriminatory cultural practices, and ensuring equal nutrition, sanitation and the provision of scholarships.
- **We emphasize** the need to develop comprehensive policies for the teachers' recruitment, care and training on effective teaching methods and psychosocial support provision for refugees and forcibly displaced persons.
- **We call** for the adoption of policies, legal frameworks and strategies on national and regional levels to provide adequate educational resources, including teaching and learning materials accessible to refugees and internally displaced persons.
- **We stress on the importance** of ensuring that all children and adults, including females, receive lifelong learning, functional literacy and requisite skills programmes for life and work.



- **We seek** to meet the language needs of refugees and forcibly displaced persons, in addition to Arabic language, and its early teaching.
- **Recognizing** the limited resources, the need for continuous improvement, good governance and the management of educational systems, we emphasize that Governments, donors from States, Organizations and Agencies, are responsible for the efficient, equitable and sustainable education of refugees and displaced persons, in an efficient, equitable and sustainable manner.
- **We call upon** the legislative authorities in host countries and donor countries to allocate adequate budgets for education, especially for the education of refugees and forcibly displaced persons as much as they can.
- **We value** the role of communities and civil society organizations in supporting the education and protection of refugees and forcibly displaced persons.

ⁱ Participating Countries: Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Arab United Emirates, Kingdom of Bahrain, Republic of Tunisia, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Republic of Sudan, Republic of Iraq, State of Palestine, Republic of the Comoros, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Arab Republic of Egypt, Islamic Republic of Mauritania, and Republic of Yemen.

ⁱⁱ Participating International and Regional Institutions and Organizations: League of Arab States (General Secretariat), Arab Interior Ministers Council (General Secretariat), UNHCR, UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP, International Labor Organization (ILO), UNRWA, ESCWA, European Union, World Bank Group, ISESCO, Goethe Institute, American University in Beirut, Norwegian Refugee Center, Eid Charitable Foundation and the Tunisian Red Crescent.