



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

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**Agenda item 5
Oral update on the comprehensive refugee response framework
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Excellencies,
distinguished delegates,
ladies and gentlemen,

One year and two days ago, at a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, UN Member States unanimously adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. This landmark political declaration served notice that States were recommitting themselves to the international refugee regime, while strengthening its application through a comprehensive response framework.

One day later, at the Leaders' Summit for Refugees, 57 States translated these political commitments into specific, actionable pledges that they would undertake. These pledges relate, on the one hand, to refugees' inclusion and self-reliance, and on the other hand, to more equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing (specifically through financing and access to solutions through resettlement and complementary pathways to admission).

Twelve months later, I am pleased to provide this update on where we have been, and how the process is unfolding.

I will address four areas: the operational roll-out of the comprehensive refugee response framework; the response of States; progress in partnerships; and UNHCR's own process of change in support of the CRRF.

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In these 12 months, 11 countries have begun applying the CRRF – with the addition of Guatemala, El Salvador and Panama, since I last addressed this Committee. Among these 11, we have two regionally coordinated comprehensive responses.

The first, emerging from the March Summit of Heads of State of IGAD countries, addresses the Somali refugee situation. Just last week - and only five months on - these States have validated a comprehensive roadmap for delivery on their commitments, including a results framework. The IGAD Summit and its roadmap have already contributed to greater harmonization of asylum policies among IGAD countries hosting Somali refugees and reinforced the new Somali Government's engagement in addressing returns of refugees and IDPs.

Meanwhile, 5 Central American countries and Mexico have convened a series of national consultations for the development of national action plans. These will be brought together into a Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework, which will be presented in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, next month.

The momentum and ownership generated by these regional responses is one of the first significant achievements of the CRRF.

Another important achievement has been the adoption and expansion of inclusive policies by host governments. While the CRRF is, in part, about fostering sustained engagement that yields better results for refugees and host communities, we are already witnessing tangible changes on the ground.

Let me share just a few:

Djibouti's new refugee law represents a significant shift in its refugee policy. The majority of the refugees it hosts have long lived in three camps. Promptly implementing its Leaders' Summit commitment in January this year, the country passed a new refugee law, granting refugees access to education, health services, the justice system, legal employment, and freedom of movement.

Djibouti has now progressed on its **second commitment**: to give all refugee children access to accredited education. Three weeks ago the Ministry of Education and UNHCR signed an MOU enabling the inclusion of refugee children in the national system.

Twelve days ago, the first refugee children began using the national curriculum.

In Ethiopia, a revised Refugee Proclamation – incorporating its pledges related to the rights to work, education and freedom of movement – is expected to be promulgated by Parliament soon. Among other things, this change will mean that tens of thousands of refugees qualify for work permits, enabling them to work legally and contribute to the local economy. Already, consistent with its pledges, Ethiopia has made significant progress in the enrolment of refugee children, from pre-school through higher education. This means, for example, that an additional 20,000 children are in primary school today.

With the unfolding emergency in the north, **Uganda** continues to welcome newly arriving refugees in line with its generous policy, providing them with access to land as well as education and legal employment. One year ago, Uganda pledged to do this for 120,000 refugees – refugees who had arrived earlier in 2016. It did. And since then, in the intervening 12 months, it has done so for more than 700,000 additional arrivals, four-fifths of whom are women and children.

In Somalia, the new government has demonstrated a strong sense of ownership and accountability. Three weeks ago, the Prime Minister convened a **National Forum on Durable Solutions for Refugees, Returnees and IDPs**. This dialogue marked the first time in over thirty years of conflict and unrest that Somalis themselves – through their state governments, civil society and community leaders – are leading discussions on displacement. As a result, durable solutions have been recognized as an express objective of the National Development Plan, and a draft National Policy for Refugees, Returnees and IDPs has been presented to support implementation of the Nairobi Declaration at the national level.

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The political will expressed in the New York Declaration – and the legal and policy advances of host countries – can only be sustained through political engagement, financing, technical support, and other concrete actions in support of refugees, host communities and host countries.

We are beginning to see the mobilization of additional support across CRRF roll-out countries, including from new actors. The transformative potential of the World Bank’s engagement, with its Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP) and the US\$ 2 billion IDA-18 financing for refugee and host community programmes, is significant. Along with financing in the form of grants and loans, the World Bank will be able to support CRRF countries like Ethiopia, Uganda and Djibouti with technical expertise in sectors including education, energy, the environment and agriculture, and thus contribute to the inclusion of refugees while strengthening services and infrastructure for host communities.

Some key development actors – including DEVCO, JICA, BMZ and DFID – have included host populations and refugees in their planning and allocated significant resources to CRRF countries. We are in discussions with other bilateral development actors, including the US and China, on possibilities for more systematic inclusion of refugees in development and investment programmes.

(Optional: Dedicated CRRF allocations amounting to US\$ 78 million have also been allocated to UNHCR and some of its partners. Australia, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, Germany, Japan, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.)

Together, we must now accelerate the progress achieved to date. It is important that host countries are provided additional support, especially when they include refugees in national services. This way the inclusion of refugees can become standard practice.

At the same time, we need to enhance responsibility-sharing. This is recognized in the New York Declaration and was the focus of the first thematic discussion for the global compact on refugees. We appreciate the constructive collaboration that we have had with States on this topic to date, and we commit to engaging further on how the international community can better recognize the contribution that hosting States make to the refugee regime.

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In the area of partnerships, the range of institutions and actors – and the depth of their engagement – continues to grow. I will briefly highlight some of the very positive momentum.

The UNHCR-NGO-IFRC reference group is hosting a meeting of NGO networks from Africa, the Americas and Asia in Amman next week, where we will focus on how best to include and amplify refugees' voices and participation in programming design, implementation, and CRRF advocacy. We also will review the practical application of the CRRF in various operations, both regional and national. The outcome of these discussions will feed into the upcoming thematic discussions.

Civil society organizations are playing a particularly important and pro-active role in the roll-out of the CRRF, from advocacy, to engagement with line ministries, to adjustments of their own programmatic and financial mechanisms. Consultations and workshops have been taking place in various regions. *(Such as those organized by ReDSS in Nairobi, and those now being organized by NRC with civil society partners in Honduras, El Salvador and Panama. These consultations will yield priorities and recommendations for governments to consider in advance of the San Pedro Sula conference.)*

As we move forward with the thematic discussions in October and November, and the High Commissioner's Dialogue in December, we count on the continued, crucial engagement of the NGOs. In this regard, I would like to acknowledge the very constructive operational and policy papers on the CRRF submitted by members of civil society, as well as the wealth of recommendations that emerged from the NGO Consultations in June.

Our partnership with ILO is also reaching a very productive stage. Since the adoption of the "Guiding Principles on the Access of Refugees and other Forcibly Displaced Persons to Labour Markets", we have finalized a joint plan of action to support the roll-out of the Guiding Principles and "Decision 205 on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience". The work will range from technical support for normative changes in laws and policies, to the creation of new livelihoods opportunities. It will be undertaken in collaboration with the relevant ministry of the interior, workers, employers and civil society. And importantly, the expansion of labour markets and decent work will accrue to the benefit of all – refugees and host communities alike.

The identification of roll-out countries is now underway, with several CRRF countries under consideration.

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Since the adoption of the New York Declaration, we have had a number of internal discussions on UNHCR's adaptation to its new role.

In some areas, the CRRF confirms and supports existing guidance, such as the out-of-camps policy and increased engagement with line ministries in sector work. Operationalising the CRRF also requires that - with the full range of actors mentioned in the New York Declaration - we address the needs of host communities. This broadening of scope and partnership has implications for how we carry out planning, needs assessments, budgeting and resource mobilisation. The roll-out of Multi-Year Multi-Partner planning and the conceptualisation of the new Results-Based Management system provide good and timely opportunities to ensure that UNHCR systems are properly aligned with and fully supportive of the CRRF approach.

The CRRF Task Team is now working with the Divisions to ensure that the CRRF approach is fully reflected in areas of emergency response and preparedness; the strengthening of asylum systems; resettlement and complementary pathways; information management; and communication. In order to ensure effective transformations and adaptability in these areas, the CRRF Task Team has also established a close collaboration with the Change Management Team. The NYD and CRRF are informing all change management work streams and will contribute significantly to the future functioning and structure of UNHCR.

To ensure that the CRRF is continuous, informed and evidence-based, we have developed a monitoring, evaluation and learning approach that is simple, pragmatic, and timely. The approach accommodates contextualisation at the national level and comparability at the global level, through a "global dashboard."

In recent months, we have started a stocktaking and learning exercise. We have contacted all large-scale refugee operations and hundreds of partners in the field to collect good practices that are replicable and scalable. We will be sharing the first compilation of this learning in time for the High Commissioner's Dialogue in December.



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(I am also happy to announce that we are advertising 15 field-based posts, in CRRF countries, as part of UNHCR structure that will bring to the organisation complementary knowledge in development skills.)

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Let me conclude by saying that a well-implemented CRRF approach not only requires change for UNHCR as an organization; it also requires change for our UN sister agencies, civil society partners, bi-lateral and multi-lateral development and humanitarian actors, and host States.

In 10 days' time, the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's programme will convene at its 68th annual session, with a special segment devoted to the CRRF. We will hear the perspectives of a number of States on the many ways that they are putting the principles of the CRRF into action, for example: as countries of asylum, as resettlement countries, as development actors and as humanitarian donors – and sometimes, as all four at once. During the general debate that follows, we encourage all States to similarly share their experiences and contributions, as well as their own experience of change-management.