

Madame President,

Assistant High Commissioner,

Esteemed fellow panelists,

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

I was asked to elaborate further on the idea of a Global Response Group/Platform or "Coalition of the willing", as it was called in yesterday's stakeholder exchange. And to do so in the broader context of reception and admission.

When receiving large numbers of refugees political leadership and close coordination between all actors involved are key. In the case of Germany, the Chancellor herself showed strong leadership in the refugee response by making it a matter of daily top priority. At the same time a dedicated coordination structure was put in place to facilitate a whole of government approach: At the highest level of the federal government,

a coordination body for the overall political coordination was established under the leadership of the Chancellery.

A task force of the State Secretaries of various relevant Ministries was established to ensure a coherent whole of government approach. At national level, national governments clearly need to assume leadership for implementing a comprehensive multi-stakeholder approach in refugee situations. And it requires the political commitment to do so.

With these experiences in mind we think that a Global Response Group or Platform could address a substantial gap in the current international response to refugee situations: mobilize political commitment and therefore help to kick-start a faster, more comprehensive and solutions-oriented response right from the beginning of a refugee situation. A response that also involves new partners and, thereby, mobilizes funding for emergency

and beyond and ensures additionality of resources. And a response that triggers or supports a systematic regional response. Heads of governments dealing with the reception of large numbers of refugees could therefore assume the required leadership role with the confidence that they will not be left alone when receiving refugees on their territory.

In addition, the Response Group or Platform should not only mobilize political commitment, but also help to mobilize humanitarian, development and other relevant actors to ensure the whole-of-society approach. We see the Response Group as global arrangement that would ensure early and coordinated action when a potential refugee crisis is looming so as to ideally prevent new protracted refugee crises from arising in the first place. In that sense, the Group or Platform is a means to implementing the New York Declaration and the GCR.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Coming back to the particular topic of reception and admission. Also in Germany, we have only been able to cope with the large influx of refugees by enabling and truly practicing a whole-of-society approach already in the reception and admission of refugees. Substantial support of civil society with technical know-how and staff capacity to act quickly are required to organize the reception of large numbers of refugees. In addition, the integration of refugees into volunteer efforts – refugees helping refugees – was a crucial part of our whole of society response.

An important measure to be better prepared is the establishment of reserve capacity at regional or national level in particular for reception and admission - even when the number of new arrivals decreases.

As the representative of Federal Office of Migration and Refugees explained during the second thematic discussions, work is ongoing to create a pool of qualified personnel that can be mobilized quickly and in an organized way, if additional reception capacity is needed. Such a pool might draw on the human resources of different administrative authorities who are already trained and familiar with the registration and admission procedures. [We would support the inclusion of such measures into the Programme of Action, on a national but also on a regional level, where appropriate, as a means of regional burden- and responsibility sharing. The Global Response Group could in this regard support affected countries with good practices gathered in the course of other large refugee situations.]

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me conclude by underlining some points for the Programme of Action that we find crucial for a successful reception and admission of large numbers of refugees:

- In Germany, social media proved to be an important vehicle to provide information to the local audience affected by the influx and engaged in reception and admission. A challenge that needs to be addressed in this regard is however the coordination of social media output as well as ensuring transparency and correct information.
- Large numbers of new arrivals within a short period of time can give rise to an increasingly polarized political debate. Against this background, it is key to include host communities in the planning of the reception of new arrivals. [Particularly local communities directly affected by for example the opening of a new reception centre in their

neighbourhood need to be involved and informed proactively and in the most transparent manner possible.]

- Another crucial element for successful reception and refugee protection at community level is access to relevant information about the new arrivals. It is important that already during registration information relevant for the further reception and admission process is generated and made accessible to authorities responsible for reception and integration, while being mindful of data protection needs.

Finally, what we took away from yesterday's fruitful exchange was that the Group or Platform would have to concentrate on plugging few critical gaps in order to have an added value. We stand ready to flesh out further details of the Group or Platform together with UNHCR

and other interested member states; and particularly  
welcome the inclusion of large refugee hosting countries  
in this exercise.

Thank you for your attention!