

**UNHCR High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges:
“Toward a Global Compact on Refugees”**

U.S. Statement – Opening Plenary Remarks

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We would like to commend UNHCR, and all implementing states and organizations, for the progress achieved thus far in the implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. We would also like to highlight the multiple countries that are implementing elements of the Framework and thus contributing to the development of the Program of Action. As we have noted before, we look forward to a Program of Action that tangibly illustrates how refugee responses can be more effective, efficient, and comprehensive, building on the comparative advantages each entity can bring to the table. The United States supports the recent G7 and G20 communiqués that “recognize(s) the need to support refugees as close to their home countries as possible, and enable them to return safely to and help rebuild their home communities.”

There is real value in the CRRF’s acknowledgement of the myriad protracted crises the world faces today and the need to work towards long-term solutions from the onset of every crisis. As stated by President Trump at the UN General Assembly this September, “We seek an approach . . . which enables [refugees] eventual return to their home countries, to be part of the rebuilding process.” We are heartened to see this element of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework emphasized in the current Rohingya emergency. However, we also caution against pre-mature return operations as they can lead to unsustainable returns and thus long-term, vicious cycles of displacement that inflict considerable suffering and can be significantly destabilizing for a region. Returns must be voluntary and conducted in safety and with dignity.

We also support this process’ current efforts to emphasize refugee freedom of movement and access to education and employment opportunities in their countries of asylum. These opportunities are essential for refugees to become self-reliant,

thus less dependent on aid and the hosting countries, and are critical to providing refugees skills they can utilize in the reconstruction of their communities upon return. We applaud the significant advances made in this regard over the last year, particularly in Uganda, Jordan, and Djibouti.

We see real value in the implementation of the CRRF. However, more effective, efficient, and comprehensive responses can not be achieved without additional resources – whether financial, technical, or political – from other countries, development actors, civil society, and the private sector. We must also identify better strategies for partnership between the international community and host countries. This process must be used to galvanize greater burden-sharing, but not to create additional standards or commitments.