

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

Panel: Meeting Needs and Supporting Communities

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- The number of forcibly displaced persons is approaching 66 million, continuing the upward trend of the previous five years, and the absence of conflict resolution in many regions around the world has meant that more and more people are living in protracted displacement, many for decades.
- As a result, and in line with the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, the increasing involvement of development actors in ensuring that national systems and services are strengthened and host communities’ needs are addressed alongside those of refugees represents an important change in responses to refugee situations. This should not be limited to funding discussions; it can also mean leveraging development and financing expertise and relationships – in particular with government line ministries – to inform smarter and more sustainable approaches to assistance and solutions.
- The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework marks a paradigm shift in the way the international community responds to refugee situations by inviting a multi-stakeholder approach from the outset, including greater burden-sharing and coordination with a broader range of actors, more innovative approaches, and more predictable, systematic and sustained engagement with development partners.
 - The U.S. Government puts this into practice through our Whole of Government approach as a Cooperating Country to the Central American CRRF. Through the State Department, the Department of Homeland Security, and the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. government has invested \$2 billion since 2015 toward economic, governance, and security reforms in the

region. This funding and technical assistance to countries of origin, transit, and asylum helps to address the root causes of people moving and assist the most vulnerable in this mixed migration flow that includes refugees.

- This multi-stakeholder approach also includes building the capacity of national and local responders, who not only likely have the comparative advantage of understanding the country context and profile of the affected population, but will also remain once the emergency moves into early, medium, and long-term recovery. The Program of Action should reflect the need for opportunities for capacity investment (for example, through UNHCR-NGO partnerships) and more inclusive coordination structures with national and local responders.
- The Program of Action should also emphasize the need to increase the scale and quality of support (whether humanitarian, development, private investment, technical or political) for countries hosting refugees to improve their ability to provide refugees with sufficient opportunities to become self-sufficient and gain skills that can help the countries who host them as well as help in the reconstruction/stabilization of their country of origin once they are able to return.
- Including refugees in national education systems and national sector education plans as early as possible after displacement is therefore key to effective and efficient refugee responses. Inclusion in national systems provides is generally the most sustainable option in the medium to long term, ensuring safe access to examinations and certification, access to teaching and learning materials, quality assurance and improved access to national education services, including options to continue education at higher levels.
 - An example of my government's contribution and partnership to support communities is our funding for refugee education and involvement with Education Cannot Wait (ECW). In Uganda, ECW is developing a multi-year plan and funding partners to support refugee education alongside host communities to ensure all children have access to quality education.
- Self-reliance through livelihoods interventions can improve the prospects for durable solutions. While the merits of livelihoods are well

understood and may be considered especially important in protracted situations, there is increasing recognition of the importance of promoting livelihoods in all phases of displacement, as well as of the benefits of incorporating refugees into labor markets, when feasible. Not only do livelihood opportunities increase refugees' dignity by providing them opportunities to provide for themselves and their families, it also allows refugees to contribute to the communities hosting them and to decrease their dependence on aid. Livelihoods activities may reduce the pressure on nutrition and health programs to meet 100% of needs; build skills and assets that can be utilized in exile or upon return home; and can, in some cases, improve protection – such as reducing vulnerability to sexual exploitation and gender-based violence.

- The U.S. government is proud to be part of a public-private partnership with the Tent Foundation, and we look forward to continued collaboration with the private sector and consortia such as Tent to support refugees.
 - The Center for Global Development, in collaboration with the Tent Foundation, unveiled a report at last fall's UN General Assembly that noted that global businesses can make unique and valuable contributions to refugee response by engaging refugees not as aid recipients, but as employees, producers, investees, and customers. By including refugees in their core business activities, global enterprises can achieve social impact, gain reputational benefits, and build brand loyalty, while maintaining or enhancing their bottom line.
 - Many private sector companies are partnering with the UN and NGOs (IKEA, UNIQLO, UPS, Google, Vodafone, etc.) to invest in a future for refugees and displaced people that will bring them greater access to technology, access to education, the ability to obtain professional skills, and economic opportunity.
- None of the above will lead to real success if we do not take the needs and aspirations of refugees, especially those who are most vulnerable, into account. To effectively meet refugee needs, support communities, and transform humanitarian response, the Program of Action must ensure that women and girl refugees, as well as youth, those with disabilities, minority groups, and others with higher risk of vulnerabilities, are consulted on their needs.