

Statement by the Islamic Republic of Iran

Towards a Global Compact on Refugees Formal Consultation One

Geneva, 13-14 February 2018

At the outset, we appreciate UNHCR for presenting this zero draft and request the Office to take a better note of the views raised by the major refugee hosting countries in this process. If there's one issue that the global compact on responsibility-sharing for refugees must seriously address, it is the translation of fair and equitable burden and responsibility sharing from words into action among all stakeholders. Protecting refugees is a shared global responsibility which cannot and should not be taken only by some member States. To make this change happen successfully, we need to create a robust mechanism and we would like to see this mechanism to be highlighted in the modalities of the programme of action.

Strengthening burden and responsibility sharing cannot be realized by fragmented arrangements and inconsistent procedures. The principal modalities now mentioned in the zero draft are almost the existing old arrangements which have proved powerless to address challenges of international refugee system. These modalities in absence of a global robust mechanism for a global division of work cannot make a real change. We have one convention and we need one mechanism for assisting Member States to comply with the convention.

We must acknowledge in the GCR that burden and responsibility sharing should not be reduced to financial aspects only, since it refers to a broad notion across the full cycle of forced displacement, including prevention, protection and solutions. The GCR should propose action-oriented measures in order to systematically enhance burden sharing in terms of receiving, assisting, protection and promoting durable solutions for refugees and put an end to the current asymmetries and injustices in the international refugee protection system. The programme of action should underline the open border policy for asylum seekers and a whole of the globe approach to facilitate free access of potential refugees to seek asylum wherever they want, rather than directing and holding them in neighboring countries to the countries of origin.

As far as data and evidence are concerned, the GCR should emphasize the importance of the work of UNHCR to provide comparable data and map of burden sharing for every major refugee situation without which it is impossible

to have a clear picture of the present realities and the appropriate scenarios for future of refugee protection. The GCR should take into account the overall protection provided for refugees by different countries and measure the equivalent value of this global public good offered by each of them.

The global compact must facilitate it for refugees to voluntarily repatriate to their countries of origin. The programme of action must include a clear plan to address protracted refugee situations and make refugees become full members of their own countries and real contributors to the development of their own societies. The zero draft now could be a recipe for creating more protracted situations through excessive and imbalanced emphasis on self-reliance in host countries and this defect should also be rectified.

It is mentioned in the Zero Draft that the Global compact addresses the perennial gap in the international system for the protection of refugees, but it is not clear how? Is it just through inviting interested Member States and stakeholders? In fact, the interested Member States and stakeholders have lent their support from time to time which has proved to be insufficient. Now the question is what makes this process different from the former efforts? How can such a process transform the International Community's approach to refugee protection and guarantee the success of the global compact by moving towards fair and equitable burden and responsibility sharing?

We understand that due to the non-binding status of the GCR, reference has been made to interested States in different part of the zero draft. But it seems that interest is not a reliable concept in such a context and if this is the case, we should also create a platform for the major host countries to enable them to act on this basis, taking into account the huge and chronic problems they have.

The success of the global compact hinges on securing fair and equitable burden and responsibility sharing. This is not about a vague invitation to mobilizing more resources; it is about a transparent and systematic sharing of burden and responsibility to protect refugees.

Thank you