

Canadian Interventions (as delivered)

Global Compact on Refugees Thematic Discussions 4 & 5

14-15 November 2017 | Geneva

DAY ONE: Thematic discussion four -- Measures to be taken in pursuit of solutions

Panel One: How can we support voluntary and sustainable return?

This panel will consider ways in which the Programme of Action could ensure predictable and timely support to facilitate voluntary and sustainable return, including with respect to:

- Establishing conditions in countries of origin to enable return in safety and dignity
- Reintegration of refugees
- Participation of returnees in peace and political processes
- Ensuring enjoyment of housing, land and property rights

Canadian intervention:

Canada is pleased to see a strong focus in these thematic discussions on how the Global Compact on Refugees can help refugees realize their preferred durable solution of voluntary repatriation and to support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity. In that regard, we have the following recommendations for the Programme of Action:

- It should reaffirm and support the use of tripartite agreements as standard tools in voluntary repatriation processes, with a particular emphasis on these tripartite processes actively involving representatives of refugees and communities of origin, including women and youth;
- The Programme of Action should reaffirm the importance of working on voluntary and sustainable return at the outset of a refugee situation, calling for the initiation of regionally-centred dialogue processes on root causes and return in the early stages of a crisis; the proposed Global Refugee Response Group could play a role in catalyzing such processes;
- The Programme of Action should also call for diverse groups of refugees and host community representatives – in particular women and youth – to be included in decision-making processes related to return; in that regard, gender-sensitive data collection and mapping of community services and conditions to support refugees' informed decision-making regarding return is critical;
- Finally, we fully agree that the Programme of Action should include measures to support *sustainable* voluntary return of refugees; in this regard, support to countries of origin should include an emphasis on strengthening local governance and service provision as well as gender-sensitive economic growth and job creation.

Panel Two: How can we expand access to resettlement?

- *Expanding and strengthening resettlement programmes*
- *Providing support to emerging resettlement countries*
- *Enabling emergency transit mechanisms*
- *Promoting the active involvement of civil society in resettlement*

Canadian intervention:

Resettlement is a vital tool for protection, durable solutions, and responsibility sharing. In this regard, Canada has the following recommendations for the Programme of Action:

- First, it should affirm that resettlement programmes are to be protection-centered, flexible, and responsive to need. Programs should be anchored in UNHCR's strategies and priority situations, and premised on predictable engagement, including through multi-year commitments like those Canada employs.
- It should also support the strategic use of resettlement, calling for commitments to be established as part of comprehensive responses, for instance through the Global Refugee Response Group and any associated resettlement core groups, pledging conferences, solidarity conferences, or context-specific compacts.
- It should call for the establishment of new resettlement programs and the expansion of existing ones, supported by a multilateral mechanism engaging diverse stakeholders to share information, technical support, and resources in a strategic manner. Canada notes efforts under the Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism in this regard and offers help in bridging to related capacity building efforts including the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative.
- Madame Chair, the Programme of Action should incorporate best practices for effectiveness and efficiency, focusing in particular on whole-of-society approaches and innovative financing.
- Finally, recognizing that resettlement is a critical, life-saving protection tool, the Programme of Action should support effective responses to the emergency protection needs of refugees in vulnerable situations, particularly women and girls facing specific risks. Innovative modalities like Canada's efforts under the Urgent Protection Program are an example of initiatives that could be promoted.

Panel Three: How can we expand access to complementary pathways for admission?

- *Expanding family reunification*
- *Leveraging private and community sponsorship*
- *Expanding access to educational opportunities*
- *Facilitating labour mobility*

Canadian intervention:

In addition to expanding resettlement as discussed this morning, growing complementary pathways will mean greater access to protection and solutions for refugees, and better global responsibility sharing. Canada has the following recommendations for the Programme of Action in this area:

- First, it should encourage states to pursue private or community based refugee sponsorship. Canada is pleased to support global capacity building in this area through the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, and we thank UNHCR, the University of Ottawa, and our other partners for their ongoing collaboration.
- It should encourage states to make complementary pathways as accessible as possible, including by expanding eligibility and easing administrative requirements. Canada recently expanded its eligibility criteria for family reunification by raising the age of dependence from 18 to 21.

- Similarly, the Programme of Action should encourage states to make labour pathways more available to refugees, for example by facilitating access and incorporating protection-sensitive safeguards where needed and by working with civil society and private sector partners to facilitate skills assessment; accreditation; documentation; language support; and training.
- The Programme of Action should also encourage education pathways, such as university scholarships, for example along the lines of the Student Refugee Program operated by the World University Service of Canada, as well as apprenticeships and traineeships.
- Finally, Canada appreciates the efforts of the OECD and UNHCR to develop data in this area. As we know, the robust collection, analysis and evaluation of data related to refugee outcomes achieved helps to build public confidence in, and support for, third country solutions and provides a solid evidence base to demonstrate the valuable contributions refugees make to our society. We hope to see the Programme of Action encourage such valuable data practices for resettlement and complementary pathways as well.

Panel Four: How can we make local solutions work for refugees and the communities in which they live

- Support interested States to provide local opportunities as part of a comprehensive approach to protection and solutions;
- Support inclusive policies;
- Support for naturalization procedures; and,
- Promote social harmony and address xenophobia

Canadian intervention:

Canada strongly supports the focus of this session, particularly on the advantages of inclusive approaches and policies for both refugees and host communities. We have the following related recommendations for the Programme of Action:

- It should recommend that a coordinated dialogue process be initiated at *the onset* of a refugee situation involving the host country, donors, development partners, and regional institutions to discuss how host countries can be supported in revising or developing national policies and economic frameworks that include refugees;
- In that regard, the Programme of Action should call for intersectional gender-sensitive needs and capacity assessments to be undertaken at the onset of a refugee situation to inform this revision and then for the development of financing strategies with governments, donors, IFIs and the private sector that are in line with these inclusive frameworks;
- The Programme of Action should encourage robust measures to support economic growth and gender-sensitive job creation in refugee-hosting countries, complemented by strong support to social protection and safety net programming to ensure the most vulnerable are not left behind;
- Finally, in order to counter xenophobia, the Programme of Action should strongly call for dedicated programs in host countries to communicate the investments made in refugee-hosting areas as well as the long-term socio-economic benefits of including refugees in communities.

DAY TWO: Thematic discussion five -- Issues that cut across all four substantive sections of the comprehensive refugee response, and overarching issues

Panel One: How can we address the root causes of large movements of refugees?

This panel will consider ways in which the Programme of Action could support efforts to address root causes more strategically, collaboratively, and systematically as part of a comprehensive refugee response, including through strengthened cooperation between humanitarian, peace-building, human rights, and development actors with respect to:

- Early warning and preventive diplomacy
- Climate change and displacement
- Peacebuilding and development
- Explosive weapons and displacement

Canadian intervention:

Canada endorses the inclusion of measures to address root causes of refugee movements within the Programme of Action, and in that regard:

- We fully support the Programme of Action calling for enhanced engagement by development, peacebuilding and financial institutions to address root causes of displacement, and we advocate for a particular focus within that on involving women and youth as well as preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence;
- Secondly, we recommend that the Programme of Action encourage regional institutions to play a more active role in early warning and early political engagement to address rising tensions that could lead to conflict;
- We also fully support the suggestion that the Programme of Action call for accelerated efforts to enhance access to quality education for all girls and boys, particularly in contexts of forced displacement; the role of Education Cannot Wait in that regard could be highlighted;
- Finally, the Programme of Action should call for the development -- at the onset of large movements of refugees -- of multi-year *regional* strategic plans that integrate, as appropriate, humanitarian responses, development programming, durable solutions, and peace-building efforts;

Panel Two: How can we ensure a whole-of-society response to large movements of refugees and protracted situations?

This panel will consider some of the parameters of “whole of society” approaches in applying the CRRF that could be included in the Programme of Action, including the specific roles, accountabilities, and contributions of:

- Faith-based organizations
- Civil society networks
- Local governmental authorities
- Host communities
- Private sector

Canadian intervention:

In Canada's experience, whole-of-society approaches render refugee responses more effective, efficient and sustainable. We welcome the focus on this area in the Programme of Action, and suggest the following:

- The Programme of Action should define the core elements needed to foster whole-of-society approaches. From Canada's perspective, these include:
 - Participatory approaches that work with men, women, boys and girls in contributing to refugee protection and fostering inclusion;
 - Cross-sector engagement of governmental and civil society actors across the spectrum of refugee protection, humanitarian, development, and stabilization activities; and
 - Measures that integrate gender equality and ensure that the protection, inclusion and participation of refugee women and girls are fully considered in shaping and implementing responses.
- We would also welcome further elaboration of the proposal, included in the concept note, for municipal governments to establish a global network of solidarity to share approaches and models for providing protection, local inclusion, and assistance for refugees. Further elaboration should ensure that this network builds on existing related initiatives and responds to identified gaps.
- Finally, the Programme of Action should include clear measures to more actively unlock potentially significant contributions from the private sector. We are therefore interested in the proposal in the concept note to create a global platform to better enable private sector actors to contribute. Ideally, this platform should outline the range of possibilities for private sector actors to engage and to strategically connect private sector capacities, resources, and technical expertise with the appropriate actors and refugee contexts.

Panel Three: In what way can regional institutions contribute to comprehensive refugee responses?

The panel will consider the roles and contributions that could be made by specific regional actors as part of the Programme of Action, including, amongst others:

- The African Union
- ECOWAS
- The Organization of American States (OAS)
- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- The Bali Process
- The Commonwealth of Independent States; and,
- The League of Arab States

Canadian intervention:

We fully agree that regional organizations and fora have an important role to play in fostering comprehensive refugee responses, including in helping to address root causes, mobilizing international support, informing regional and national responses, and fostering durable solutions. In that regard, we would recommend that the Programme of Action:

- Acknowledge and encourage this important role, both in relation to formal regional organization and other regional fora;

- Include a process by which Regional Organizations and fora could identify what additional expertise, partnerships, and support they need to play a stronger role in fostering comprehensive refugee responses in their respective regions; and,
- Finally, we would recommend that the potential development of a Global Refugee Response Group include consideration of how to best involve regional organizations or for a, particularly in the early stages of a crisis.