



**European Union**

**GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES**

**Formal consultations on the zero draft on the Global Compact on Refugees**

**Geneva, 13-14 February 2018**

**– CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –**

## **Global Compact on Refugees**

### **Formal consultations on the zero draft on the Global Compact on Refugees**

#### **EU Statement**

*Excellency, Madam Chair,*

At the outset of this exercise of formal consultations on the Global Compact on Refugees, I wish to share some preliminary observations on behalf of the EU and its Member States. The EU and its Member States will provide more detailed coordinated comments on the text that will be shared at the next round of our formal consultations.

#### **On Agenda item 1: the programme of action and the principal modalities for burden- and responsibility-sharing**

I would like to reiterate, once more, that the EU and its Member States firmly stand behind the New York Declaration and support the process to prepare the Global Compact on Refugees. We have done a lot of work all together in strengthening comprehensive responses in many refugee situations, and we would like to express particular appreciation to the countries hosting large numbers of refugees. The very focused and constructive thematic discussions of last year have demonstrated that a comprehensive approach is the future for effective and efficient refugee responses.

We also wish to support the inclusive and transparent process set for the formal consultations. We trust that UNHCR will steer the discussions forward in a professional manner, welcome the suggested facilitation role of the Executive Committee bureau members and the suggested working method, avoiding line by line negotiations. Similarly, we support the structure of the draft Compact that should be composed of a reference to the already adopted CRRF, complemented by the proposed Programme of Action. We appreciate the action-oriented nature of the Programme of Action that could further operationalise the CRRF and learn from other existing best practices world-wide.

This paradigm shift proposed in the Refugee Compact is a historical necessity: the number of refugees is without precedent since the Second World War. Never has there been greater need for global responsibility sharing and solidarity with refugees by the international community. And

never has it been clearer that only together, in our diversity, with improved governance structures, will we find the necessary path to immediate and sustainable solutions that will protect refugees and support those who host them. The EU and its Member States remain committed to uphold the norms of international human rights law and international refugee law.

The EU and its Member States recognise the significant efforts made by countries hosting large refugee populations for protracted periods of time as this is considered a global public good. In line with the EU approach to forced displacement and development, we have significantly stepped up our support to refugee hosting countries, with the aim of strengthening the resilience and self-reliance of refugees and host communities through an integrated approach. Strengthening the response capacities of national and local authorities is essential. We should support host countries to move away from encampment and parallel services for refugees wherever possible.

In turn, such approaches require donors and all other stakeholders to make the necessary commitment to support mechanisms which enhance efficiency and improve collective outcomes by reducing dependence on humanitarian assistance and maximising the effectiveness of development investment. We express our full support to initiatives by the World Bank, other international financial institutions and the private sector, together with UNHCR and other agencies.

*Madam Chair,*

Funding is a key dimension of responsibility sharing, but it is not the only one. Responsibility sharing also requires – from us all – agreement on principles, continuous engagement and commitment to stay the course. We are well aware that the New York declaration applies to all States and requires more responsibility sharing across the globe. This applies to the EU and its Member States, too. We also recall that responsibility sharing and solidarity, both within the EU and with third countries, are an integral part of the Common European Asylum System and European Union's approach to forced displacement and development. This has not been without challenges but we have learned a lot and come a long way in recent years.

We reaffirm the primary goal of bringing about conditions that would enable refugees' return in a voluntary, safe, dignified and human manner to their countries, while respecting the principle of non refoulement. We would like also to recall that a large and increasing number of EU Member States are stepping up their resettlement efforts in the context of the EU initiatives taken in this area,

notably through the implementation of the European resettlement scheme of July 2015, the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016 and the recent proposal made in September 2017.

Finally, the EU and its Member States recall their commitment to supporting the tackling of root causes of forced displacement at source by stepping up efforts to prevent new conflicts, resolve existing ones and address all major drivers of forced displacement. Political dialogue and engagement from the outset of every refugee situation is imperative to devise and implement effective responses and solutions.

The EU and its Member States will continue to actively engage in the upcoming formal consultations and remain committed and firmly united towards the adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees in 2018.

*Thank you.*

**Agenda item 2: support for the application of the comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF): reception and admission, meeting needs and supporting communities, and solutions**

*Excellency, Madam Chair,*

We very much welcome that the Programme of Action builds on and complements what we have unanimously agreed as part of the New York Declaration: the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), implemented under the leadership of UNHCR.

We wish to underline some key elements which are rightly reflected in the draft Programme of Action on which we are consulted.

The EU and its Member States recognise that responses, in full respect of international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law, should be tailored to the specific contexts and address specific needs and vulnerabilities of the refugees. We recognise the importance of age, gender and diversity considerations guiding the Programme of Action. Special attention should be paid to women, youth and children, persons with disabilities and victims of human trafficking and smuggling.

With regard to reception and admission, the EU and its Member States deem it essential to enhance preparedness. Preparedness measures such as early warning and contingency planning can be beneficial for both host and forcibly displaced populations. The EU and its Member States are

committed to foster international and regional co-operation, notably by increasing the capacity of host countries for providing sufficient protection, including through the development of effective asylum systems.

When it comes to "meeting needs", we recognise the significant efforts made by all countries hosting large numbers of refugees. We would like to recognise the importance of investing in the socio-economic inclusion of refugees in host societies including through measures addressing access to education, health, employment and livelihoods. There is also a need to pay particular attention to the specific vulnerabilities of refugees in designing and implementing local solutions and integration programmes as well as to understand better the complex impact of displacement. We should support host countries to move away from encampment and parallel services for refugees wherever possible. We are also fully committed to strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus. Dialogue mechanisms between local and national authorities and refugee populations have proven their positive impact. Cash assistance – preferably multipurpose – can also be more beneficial to the local economy and dignity of refugees and should be developed or scaled up, wherever conditions allow.

Secondary and multiple displacements reflect a collective failure of the international community to address the specific mid- to longer-term needs and vulnerabilities of refugees and their host communities and to provide them with durable solutions. In line with the EU approach to forced displacement and development, we have significantly stepped up our support to refugee hosting countries, enabling effective protection and strengthening the resilience and self-reliance of refugees and host communities through an integrated approach. This includes Middle Income Countries as well as significant support to the roll-out countries of the CRRF. For instance, in the Horn of Africa, IGAD and the countries in the region together with the EU and its Member States are addressing major challenges in new ways and by intensifying reflection on related policies. The recent regional meeting on refugee education, attended by the High Commissioner is an important example. Other positive signs should also be welcome, such as CRRF developments in Central America. We also praise in particular the establishment of a dedicated source of funding for host governments by the World Bank under the IDA-18 regional sub-window for refugees and their host communities.

Supporting the response capacities of national and local authorities is essential. Local actors bear the brunt of the response to refugee crises and clearly demonstrated their willingness and ability to

provide effective and efficient responses to the benefit of displaced populations and host communities in line with local development plans. Furthermore, diaspora should be encouraged to play a positive role in the integration to host societies.

The EU and its Member States would like to recall the relevance of the Agenda for Humanity and the Grand Bargain commitment to make the international aid system more efficient and predictable. Host countries must be able to rely on the international community's sustained and predictable support, at the outset of and beyond an immediate crisis.

We recognise that more efforts are needed in search of "durable solutions". We reaffirm the primary goal of bringing about conditions that enable refugees' return in a voluntary, safe, dignified and humane manner to their countries, while respecting the principle of non refoulement. We would like also to recall that a large and increasing number of EU Member States are stepping up their resettlement efforts in the context of the EU initiatives taken in this area, notably through the implementation of the European resettlement scheme of July 2015, the EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016 and the recent proposal made in September 2017.

The EU and its Member States would like to stress that responses should serve the objective of protection, be guided by the "do no harm" principle and conflict sensitivity. In addition, humanitarian assistance shall be delivered according to humanitarian principles. It is important that human rights and gender equality are mainstreamed in the Global Compact on Refugees. We would like to highlight the significant contribution and leadership of women in refugees' communities and their full, equal and meaningful participation should be recognised, also as key actors of peace processes. We also reaffirm the need to combat xenophobia, racism and discrimination against refugees in host societies.

*Thank you.*

**Agenda item point 3 follow-up arrangements**

*Excellency, Madam Chair,*

Discussions this afternoon are dedicated to the « follow-up arrangements ».

At this stage, we wish to highlight our support to the overall approach: the GCR should pave the way for more continuous engagement of all of us based on its principles, in a non-legally binding format, towards a meaningful and improved responsibility sharing. We look forward to hear from UNHCR and engage on more details on the modalities to monitor and evaluate progress and outcomes of the Global Compact on Refugees.

In addition to UNHCR's monitoring role, we would also like to recall the linkages to State reporting under the 2030 Agenda. In order to monitor that no one is left behind, reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals should, wherever appropriate, be disaggregated by, among others, migratory status, as outlined in the Agenda 2030. The Programme of Action should therefore also promote the inclusion of refugees into reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals.

We look forward to the next formal consultations and the changes proposed by the co-chairs.

*Thank you.*