

Open Statement from the International Trade Centre (ITC)

Trade-led, market-based solutions for sustainable livelihoods for refugees and displaced persons

June 2018

The International Trade Centre, the joint development agency of the World Trade Organisation and the United Nations, addresses this Open Statement to the Formal Consultation on the Global Compact on Refugees focusing on the importance of implementing trade-led, market-based solutions for sustainable livelihoods for refugees and host communities.

Addressing the needs of refugees and displaced persons requires a multi-faceted solution that includes both humanitarian and economic responses. ITC focuses on promoting trade-led growth and increasing the competitiveness of entrepreneurs and micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs), and connecting them to the market. This trade-led, market-based livelihoods solution offers sustainable opportunities to refugees, displaced persons and host communities to increase self-reliance and economic resilience.

In partnership with humanitarian actors, development actors like ITC can leverage their expertise to deliver long-term, market-based solutions. Key to achieving this is ensuring that long-lasting market connections are created and that supply and demand are properly linked in order to develop opportunities and jobs based on what the market demands.

Supply-led interventions include strengthening MSMEs, conducting skills development and entrepreneurship development, which enhance the capacities of refugees, displaced persons and host community members to engage in targeted market activities that generate income. Transferrable capacities aligned to the needs of the market can support voluntary return and facilitate resettlement or repatriation and can help generate income.

Market driven and demand-led interventions, which include efforts to build business advocacy, policy and dialogue, and market connections, rely on strong partnerships and the development of market linkages with relevant actors in the local, national, regional and international economy.

ITC also reiterates the importance of promoting solutions that build on local economies and integrate host communities. These initiatives build not only livelihood opportunities for displaced populations, but also the capacity to cope, at both the local and national levels, with the strains that exceptional situations present to countries of origin and host countries.

Trade-led, market-based livelihoods solutions offer durable opportunities for income generation and job creation by aligning to the needs of the displaced communities while fostering impactful market linkages for long-term development. A partnership based on addressing the diverse needs of refugees, displaced persons and the host country is required. This partnership must also consider the economic component in these contexts and address the need for sustainable income. We encourage you to take this integrated approach in addressing the issues around refugee and displaced communities as a means to build a viable and sustainable solution to providing livelihood opportunities.