

## **Statement by the Danish Refugee Council to the global thematic consultations, 14<sup>th</sup> Nov 2017, Voluntary and sustainable return**

### *Written submission*

The Danish Refugee Council warmly welcomes a focus on voluntary and sustainable returns. The ambition to ensure that returns are sustainable speaks to the obvious truth that return is not a solution – reintegration is. The ambition to ensure that returns are voluntary corresponds to the basic notion of human dignity.

To get a Global Compact on Refugees that facilitates not just an increase in scale but also the quality of repatriation, the Danish Refugee Council would like to suggest two concrete recommendations to the Programme of Action:

First, keeping in mind that refugees and host communities are the primary agents in achieving solutions – and that their participation is the key to achieve durable solutions, we recommend that the Programme of Action establishes modalities for inclusion and participation of refugees and host communities in drafting Tripartite Agreements. Tripartite Agreements should take into account and be accountable to the preferences expressed by refugees and host communities through a solid inclusive consultation process.

Second, the Danish Refugee Council would like to recommend that the Programme of Action qualifies what voluntary, safe and dignified return implies. Concretely, we would like to suggest that the Programme of Action unpacks what it means for refugees to make well-informed and non-coerced decisions. We would also like to see the Programme of Action describing what safe returns require relating to for example mine-contamination, prevalence of violence and security provision in countries of origin. And lastly, we would like to see that Programme of Action establishes what it means for returns to be dignified, for example allowing for participation in the return process and avoiding family separation.