

**74th meeting of the Standing Committee
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Agenda item 7

Oral update on the High Commissioner's Dialogues on Protection Challenges

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- I would like to start with a brief review of **past Dialogues** and then present the outcomes of the **2018 Dialogue**. I will conclude with a few **forward-looking remarks** on the High Commissioner's Dialogue and how it links to the Global Refugee Forum.

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- In 2007, then UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres **launched** the first in a series of Dialogues on Protection Challenges.
 - This annual event in Geneva facilitates a lively and informal discussion on new or emerging global protection issues. It is a forum to discuss protection challenges related to UNHCR's mandate and work, and to identify ways of strengthening the protection of people of concern.
 - It is not structured to elicit formal or agreed outcomes. It is a unique forum for free and open exchange of views between States, non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, the academic and research community, and other stakeholders.

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- I will briefly touch upon the two Dialogues to precede last year's event, namely the **2016 Dialogue on Children on the Move** and the **2017 Dialogue on the comprehensive refugee response**.
- The **2016 Dialogue** on Children on the Move had the following key conclusions and recommendations:
 - First, ending **childhood statelessness**
[Background: follow-up efforts include the launch of the Coalition on Every Child's Right to a Nationality, led by UNICEF and UNHCR, with 35 members, including UN agencies and CSO.]
 - Second, ending the **detention of children**
[Background: two main follow-up activities include: i) ongoing implementation of the Global Strategy 'Beyond Detention' ii) Support to the Independent Expert working on the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty.]

- Third, the establishment of **Global Youth Advisory Council**.

[Background: The establishment of the GYAC has proven to be an effective and impactful voice for ensuring the voice of refugee youth are heard in global policy processes. During 2019, the GYAC are exploring the possibility of establishing national youth advisory councils in a couple of countries to promote the voices of youth also in national policy processes and to strengthen the linkages between global and national policy processes.]

- The final conclusion focused on ensuring **child rights** are at the heart of the global compact on refugees.

[Background: child rights are reflected in the now-affirmed global compact of refugees which includes references to age, gender and diversity throughout, as well as a specific section on children, adolescents and youth in the programme of action.]

- The **2017 Dialogue** on the **comprehensive refugee response** served as a stocktaking of the progress made and lessons learned in the process leading to the global compact on refugees, both through the practical application of the CRRF and the thematic discussions that were held in Geneva in the second half of 2017.

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- The **2018 High Commissioner’s Dialogue** on Protection Challenge was the 11th Dialogue. The theme was on the **role of cities and municipal authorities** in protecting and assisting refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons in urban settings.
- Cities and local authorities have long played an **important role in extending protection and solutions** to displaced and stateless people, which is something also recognized in the Global Compact on Refugees.

[Background: The affirmation of the Global Compact in 2018, which builds on UNHCR’s long-standing engagement with refugees in urban areas, identifies cities and city networks as stakeholders with an important role to play in comprehensive refugee responses.]

- The Dialogue drew on the **outcomes of an earlier High Commissioner’s Dialogue**, entitled “Challenges for People of Concern to UNHCR in Urban Settings”, in 2009, which included:
 - fine-tuning of the 2009 **UNHCR policy** on refugee protection and solutions in urban areas
 - the intensification of efforts in several “**pilot cities**” – including with partners
 - the development of a repository of **good practices** in urban areas with a view to promoting these globally

[Background: The 2009 Dialogue focused on responding to the specific vulnerabilities experienced by populations of concern in urban settings and on better supporting local actors to respond to them, as well as securing protection space in these contexts. Outcomes from the 2009 Dialogue.]

- As usual, last year's Dialogue was composed of a **dynamic mix** of plenary and breakout sessions.

[Background: The breakout sessions allowed for in-depth discussion on key points, including the role of cities and municipalities in implementing the global compact on refugees. During the two days, participants shared good practice examples, continued challenges, and identified possible opportunities for collaboration between the various participants at the meeting.]

- There were **six thematic sessions, as well as six roundtables** organized with a **regional focus** (Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East and North Africa) or a **thematic focus** (the role of sports in social cohesion, inclusion and wellbeing of refugees; and internal displacement).

[Background: These included: i) meeting the needs of the displaced in urban areas; ii) urban conflict and violence; iii) the Global Compact on Refugees and the role of cities and municipalities; iv) supporting self-reliance in urban areas: economic inclusion, access to livelihoods and the role of the private sector; v) harnessing community support for solutions; vi) the "cities of solidarity" initiative": the experience of the Americas.]

- In line with the comprehensive approaches promoted by the Global Compact on Refugees, the 2018 Dialogue sought to broaden the focus of discussions to encompass both **humanitarian and development** perspectives, as well as opportunities for engaging with forcibly displaced, stateless people, and host communities in urban areas.
- The **summary report** from the Dialogue and the summaries from the thematic sessions and roundtables are available on the website.

<http://www.unhcr.org/high-commissioners-dialogue-on-protection-challenges-2018.html>.

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- The 2018 Dialogue had five **objectives**.
 1. Recognize the important **role of municipal authorities and city networks** in protecting and assisting refugee, internally displaced and stateless populations in urban areas.
 2. **Take stock of existing inter-city support measures and commitments**, as well as best practices, guidance, and tools.

[Background: That could be made available to all relevant stakeholders operating in urban environments.]

3. Explore the engagement of cities in the **implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees**.

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4. Identify areas for greater city and municipal engagement in the context of **comprehensive refugee responses**.

[Background: including in the areas of reception and admission; meeting needs and supporting displaced people and local communities; identifying solutions for displaced people in urban areas; mechanisms for burden- and responsibility-sharing, as well as preparing for and responding to future challenges and opportunities.]

5. Support the advancement of evidence-based, effective national and municipal-level **policy-making and programming** for urban areas hosting displaced people.

[Background: including by exploring the application of participatory approaches, sharing of good practices and exploring possibilities for further collaboration and cross-fertilization.]

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- **Key outcomes** from the 2018 Dialogue include:
 - **Recognition of the role of cities** and city networks in implementing the Global Compact on Refugees and the importance of reflecting these contributions and good practices at the Global Refugee Forum.

[Background: As part of the multi-stakeholder engagement, the recently formed Global Refugee Forum coordination team is considering ways in which cities and city networks could be engaged in the lead-up to the Forum in December and considering ways in which their contributions could be reflected. This forms part of the modalities for multi-stakeholder engagement in the forum, which UNHCR is currently developing.]

- Continued collaboration between partners in diverse sectors to counter growing **xenophobia** through targeted communication and advocacy and promote international solidarity.

[Background: Cities and local authorities have a particularly important role to play in addressing xenophobia and promoting international solidarity as some cities such as Valencia (welcomed stranded refugees and migrants last summer), Amman, Beirut, Milan, Quito and others have done.]

- Dedicated space on the **GCR digital platform** to support the exchange of good practices between cities and other relevant actors.
- A review of **UNHCR's urban refugee policy**, in its 10th year in 2019, will take place in consultation with stakeholders.

[Background: DRS, in close consultation with DPSM, will be leading the review of this policy. Early work is underway.]

- Recognition of the need to ensure **consistent engagement** with city networks to enhance collaboration and common approaches on displacement-related issues.

[Background: As UNHCR is reviewing its urban policy, we are considering how to engage with city networks going forward, given the very strong support for the engagement on displacement issues, the GCR and the GRF that was expressed in the lead-up to, as well as at, the Dialogue.]

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- Looking ahead, the outcomes of the 2018 Dialogue will feed in to the first **Global Refugee Forum**, to take place in Geneva on 17 and 18 December 2019.
- This year, and in future years where the Global Refugee Forum will take place, there will be no High Commissioner's Dialogue.