

Global Compact on Refugees

First Thematic Discussion: “Past and current burden- and responsibility-sharing arrangements”

Geneva, 10 July 2017
Room XVII, Palais des Nations, Geneva
Intervention (app. 3 min.)

Ladies and gentlemen,

Germany highly welcomes this first thematic discussion on more equitable international responsibility and burden sharing. With a refugee population that doubled between 2015 and 2016, GER is currently the 8th largest refugee hosting country; and is integrating the refugees, that will stay for longer periods in Germany, in its society and labor market. In addition, as co-host of the Leaders' Summit on Refugees in September 2016 GER has shown its solidarity with major refugee hosting countries. In 2016 we provided almost 1 bln. EUR for humanitarian assistance in support of refugees and host communities and about 3.35 bln EUR for development cooperation aiming at mitigating root causes of displacement; supporting refugees, IDPs and their host communities worldwide; and assisting to reintegrate refugees and IDPs. At the recent Solidarity Summit for Refugees in Kampala, GER made the **biggest bilateral pledge** – consisting of roughly 35 mln. EUR development and 14 mln. EUR humanitarian funding. GER has also adapted its humanitarian **assistance modalities towards more multi-year funding** to provide adequate and predictable resources for refugee situations.

In the absence of a mechanism for international responsibility and burden sharing, the present refugee protection regime does not provide comprehensive solutions to large refugee situations. Both the Geneva Refugee Convention and the New York Declaration do not answer the question how responsibility for implementing international protection standards should be shared among states. Neither of them establishes a formal structure for monitoring state compliance. Some states can therefore practically evade their global responsibility. **This has led to the fact that 60 percent of refugees worldwide are currently hosted by only ten countries.**

In the light of mixed migration flows, the Compact should therefore improve the international governance of migration and should develop tools and institutional structures accordingly. The Compact should also establish a designated Body that would review periodically the compliance of states with their political commitments regarding the GCR.

Please allow me to highlight some concrete suggestions on responsibility sharing mechanisms:

All past and current examples of large refugee situations have shown that **early action and regional cooperation** are crucial for preventing a protracted situation and ensuring protection of refugees. **Robust stand by mechanisms are therefore needed.** To this end, the Programme of Action should propose the establishment of a global “Response Group” – potentially under the coordination of UNHCR. Goal of the Group would be a more rapid, better coordinated and comprehensive response to large refugee movements; ideally before the situation evolved into a protracted refugee crisis. [This Group could include donor and concerned refugee hosting countries, representatives of NGOs and civil society, multilateral humanitarian and development organizations (e.g. the Worldbank) and

refugee organizations.] The members of the Group would commit to an early, coordinated and comprehensive action – involving humanitarian assistance, stabilization measures, development programs resettlement and alternative pathways. **The Compact should announce the creation of a Response Group, or request UNHCR’s Executive Committee to discuss a plan for its establishment and report back.**

We need a **mechanism to put the responsibility a country should be assuming for refugees** – according to parameters that we would have to agree on – **in relation to its actual contribution** through hosting refugees and supporting other host countries. The Programme of Action should therefore suggest a way to assess the impact of displacement on a host country and the responsibility a country should be assuming. **Generally, every country should participate in hosting refugees.**

[GDP and population size of a country could serve as parameter defining the proportion of global responsibility for refugees a country **should be assuming**. The support provided to refugee hosting countries and the number of refugees, asylum seekers and people admitted through alternative pathways hosted would give an indication on the responsibility and burden a country **actually assumes**. Factors like language barrier, cultural differences, education level of refugees or difficult socio-economic conditions obviously increase the burden on the host country, particularly at the beginning. However, in the longer run, the burden should decrease since refugees are gradually integrated into the society and labor market of the host country; which should enable them to provide for themselves. **Generally, every country should participate in hosting refugees.**]

Early and coordinated action is also contingent on appropriate emergency funding mechanisms. The Compact should encompass a clear commitment to contribute equitably to more core funding for emergency funds. At the same time the programme of action should outline how to better coordinate humanitarian and development activities in crises.

Lastly, in the light of a stronger cooperation between UNHCR and the private sector in tackling large refugee situations, the respective private sector actors should assume an increased responsibility in refugee protection and respect of human rights when doing business. **The Compact should thus call for the introduction of a “protection/human rights impact assessment” for major private sector activities.**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Germany highlights that resettlement, humanitarian admission and the use of complementary legal pathways for admission of refugees like family reunification are essential for reducing and preventing irregular migration. Resettlement and humanitarian admission programs give refugees the opportunity to find a safe new home country without putting their fate in the hands of smugglers. This is why Germany issued more than 45.000 visa for refugees within the framework of humanitarian admission and resettlement programs since 2013. On another legal pathway, Germany issued around 100.000 visa for family reunification in 2016. **It is expected that in 2017 that number will even increase.**

Germany calls upon all states to support UNHCR activities by providing legal alternatives to irregular onward movements – including the use of resettlement schemes and other alternative legal

pathways for asylum seekers stranded in Transit Countries. **Germany takes a leading role in this regard and will co-host the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement in 2018.**

Thank you.