

UNHCR High Commissioner Protection Dialogue 2017 – special session on lessons learned and good practices in applying the CRRF

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Check against delivery

- We are moving towards a paradigm shift in the way we deal with large-scale movements of refugees. Annex 1 of the New York Declaration was a very good start, but we need to pin down and develop in more detail some of its key elements – as we are going to do in the Programme of Action.
- Here, we must think a bit out of the box. We must avoid investing in unsustainable, parallel systems for emergency service delivery, and instead to base the response to emerging and potentially protracted refugee situations on national development frameworks and local development priorities to ensure inclusive and sustainable responses.
- For UNHCR this means reaching outside the usual range of humanitarian actors, including government refugee departments, in order to engage with appropriate and relevant government agencies at local and national levels; and with bilateral and multilateral development actors, including civil society, covering relevant sectors. The key objective is to promote and facilitate the investment of additional development resources in comprehensive, area-based responses, benefitting both refugees and host communities – in support of local socio-economic development.
- This approach will allow UNHCR to focus on its core mandate – that is to ensure improved protection of people of concern by monitoring access to rights and ensuring that no one is left behind.
- We must also intensify our efforts to pursue durable solutions, the most important and preferred solutions always being to be able to return in safety and dignity.
- In our view the core CRRF principles are really as relevant to supporting voluntary repatriation as they are in respect of protracted displacement. It is about recognizing that the support for solutions should be mainstreamed across the national development agenda – and within the framework of national policies focused on addressing vulnerabilities in the quest for leaving no one behind. This will recognize that returnees have specific vulnerabilities – but also that the way to address these is not to establish targeted service provision systems and

livelihood support projects – but rather to deal with them within the framework of national programmes, for instance for social protection.

- A few weeks ago, I had the privilege to spend a few days in the northern part of Uganda, focusing on the reception and inclusion of refugees from South Sudan. Great praise to the government of Uganda and to UNHCR, but also a clear demonstration of some of the shortcomings in involving development actors in what we could call “second line of response”.
- Even in Uganda, a prime example of the CRRF roll out, it is not easy, and it does not go quickly. We need to acknowledge that – as Daniel Endres also pointed to. We’re breaking new ground, preparing a paradigm shift, and it will take time. We need to be honest about this. It doesn’t detract from the idea or from what we want to achieve. It only adds credibility. Change is difficult. Change takes time.