



European Union

GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES

Second Formal consultations on the Global Compact on Refugees:

Geneva, 20-21 March 2018

EU Statement

– CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –

Global Compact on Refugees

Formal consultations on DRAFT 1 (Geneva, 20-21 March 2018)

EU Statement

Excellency, Mr Chair,

The Candidate Countries Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina align themselves with this statement.

At the outset of this second round of formal consultations on the Global Compact on Refugees, I wish to share some observations, on behalf of the EU and its Member States, on the text shared as "draft 1".

We are strongly convinced that the Global Compact on Refugees is an opportunity to modernize refugee responses, going beyond the traditional, humanitarian stakeholder approach and bringing a much more robust involvement of development actors. For the EU, this is fully in line with the EU approach to forced displacement and the humanitarian/development nexus.

The EU and its Member States are also convinced that the Compact can be a unique opportunity to strengthen cooperation internationally in the area of asylum with those states that are not actively engaged in the global refugee response, signatories of the Geneva refugee Convention or members of the UNHCR Executive Committee.

We welcome that UNHCR has incorporated many of the comments made during the first round of consultations and strengthened the language in many sections of the first draft. We note with appreciation that there is no reference any longer to "interested states", and other examples of optional and conditional language. We believe that this was necessary and that important steps have been taken towards an ambitious outcome and increased responsibility sharing. We also welcome that the draft confirms that global responsibility sharing is best achieved through a wide range of commitments, not limited to assistance in-kind to major host countries. Finally we note with satisfaction that the revised draft also refers more to protection, data and monitoring. Draft 1 provides for a very good and solid basis for further discussions.

*Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

[On Agenda item 1: Introduction: background, goals of the global compact on refugees, and prevention and addressing root causes - Part I of draft GCR]

Our first discussion this morning relates specifically to Part I of draft GCR: the introduction, with the background, goals, and prevention and addressing root causes.

We agree with UNHCR on the fact that environmental degradation and natural disasters are major causes for displacements as a whole. This is why we would avoid the term “refugee movements” to prevent any confusion on the root causes of refugee movements.

The EU and its Member States welcome that equitable and predictable responsibility sharing is at the core and we thank UNHCR for proposing in the draft concrete measures to improve responsibility sharing. The text rightly highlights that countries not traditionally contributing to the refugee response need to engage since the Global Compact should be a global commitment of all States and beyond, all stakeholders; at the same time, we welcome the voluntariness of the commitments as a key feature of matching of efforts, mutual commitment, togetherness.

Moreover, proposed actions build on already existing best practices in a number of refugee responses worldwide and reflect the structure of the CRRF. The proposals fit adequately with the ongoing efforts towards UN reforms. We welcome focus on addressing the root causes as a key element of our collective efforts, linked to the Agenda 2030 and the reference to States' legitimate security concerns. We would encourage referring to the role of UNHCR in UN coordination for refugees. Reference to ending encampment should also be reinserted.

We welcome that the scope of "pledges" is broader than providing financial support and includes the many other aspects necessary for a comprehensive response. We welcome the important reference to "widening the support base" and establishing a more predictable and equitable burden- and responsibility sharing among the international community as a whole.

We wish to express satisfaction that draft 1 includes now a more prominent reference to the existing international refugee law and the basic protection standards related to refugee response, including the principle of non-refoulement. This should be strengthened by including a call for the universal ratification of the 1951 Convention as traditionally in the Omnibus resolution as well as a reference to key humanitarian principles. We would also welcome an explicit reference to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We welcome the reference to comprehensive responses as lessons-learnt, and would encourage an explicit recognition of the importance of the paradigm shift represented by the courageous steps made by countries rolling out the CRRF in these initial phases of the GCR.

The EU and its Member States welcome the reference to the ongoing efforts towards UN reforms and are convinced that the GCR fits adequately into these.

We also applaud to the reference to root causes and the inscription of these efforts in the Agenda 2030. Development action in favour of countries of origin should be prioritized to enable conditions for voluntary return and address the root causes of crisis.

More detailed comments will be shared in writing.

Thank you.

[Agenda item 2: Programme of action: Mechanisms for burden- and responsibility-sharing (Part III.A)]

Excellency, Mr Chair,

We are now discussing the mechanisms for burden- and responsibility-sharing in the Programme of action.

The EU and its Member States welcome the efforts in draft 1 to propose and articulate more clearly how global, regional and national mechanisms could interact.

As regards the proposed tools, we would recommend specifying that these tools can be deployed through, not necessarily in addition to, the proposed mechanisms (whether global, regional or country-specific). We welcome the reference to UN efforts to end discrimination and promote a response that is gender, age diversity and disability sensitive and takes into account the best interest of the child. The same considerations should also strongly inspire the Global Compact. We would like to stress that any response should incorporate lessons learnt from existing mechanisms, and build on them but avoid duplication and overlap. In this regard, we would seek clarification on the possible costs of the proposed initiatives and structures and the implications for UNHCR in potentially contributing to provide this and other commitments.

Concerning the Global Refugee Summits, the EU and its Member States express appreciation for the efforts to propose a concrete modality to improve the mobilisation of political will and leadership on refugee issues of the full range of stakeholders, at high level, including host countries and countries of origin, and in particular beyond those countries who traditionally engage in the global refugee response. We would request clarification on the exact complementarity/linkages between these Global summits and the proposed solidarity conferences. We consider that Global Refugee Summits could be convened by the Secretary General of the United Nations, regularly, possibly every five years, in order to ensure adequate participation and mobilisation of global leaders. We welcome to link stock-taking in Global Refugee Summits with a request for contributions, in order to enhance accountability and potential for positive change. However, we deem it important that progress measurement covers the entirety of the future Compact and is not limited to pledges. We would request clarification on the reference to the dates for first Refugee Summit (2019 or 2021) and what exact is expected at these two dates.

Concerning national arrangements, they should be based on the commitment to a whole-of-society approach and therefore also facilitate the efforts of host communities as a whole. We appreciate positively that composition and working methods of national arrangements would be determined by host States.. We consider that the very logic of this mechanism implies involvement of other actors as well as UNHCR. National arrangements need to be supported by capacity building in areas of protection where applicable and fully take into account the need for international protection and humanitarian assistance to be delivered in accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. We support the regional refugee response efforts as pertinent in a number of situations. We would encourage to state more precisely how regional organisations can strengthen burden and responsibility sharing and contribute to the implementation of the programme of action. We would welcome a reference to the importance of aligned and mutually reinforcing national, regional and global arrangements to foster regional responsibility sharing and the implementation of durable solutions.

We would seek clarification on the difference between the comprehensive plan and the country/region compact, and the role of hosting States in that respect. We would request the confirmation that comprehensive response plans are not a precondition for the activation of the global support platform.

We consider that national and regional arrangements should be primarily considered whereas the Global Support Platform or Platforms should be activated in case additional support is required.

The EU and its Member States welcome the proposal of a Global Platform as an outcome of the GCR, and more specifically the improved articulation proposed in draft 1. Global Platforms engagement would need to be tailored to the specific situations. However, the text should better clarify the actual role of the platform and how it would be articulated and encompassed with other mechanisms. We consider that the Platform should be a lean structure with well-defined objectives that should build on the potential of (and avoid any duplication with) existing structures. The Platform should be activated only as necessary, in close consultation with affected host countries, on the basis of context-specificities and possible stakeholders to be involved.

We welcome the proposal to place "solidarity conferences" within the context of the sustained engagement of a support platform, as a tool at the disposal of host states and supporting actors. However, further clarification should be provided on their linkages and complementarity with existing mechanisms, notably pledging conferences. The organisation of solidarity conferences could be led also by states and not only and exclusively by UNHCR, in order to maximise the potential of mobilisation.

We would ask seek clarification on the role of the UNHCR Executive Committee for the follow-up of the application of the GCR.

Referring to the multi-stakeholder-approach that we consider most justified, we welcome the reference to active engagement of persons of concern in responses. We would request clarification on the proposed academic network and alliances, in terms of their scope, cost and funding.

We welcome the strong reference to data, and data protection, in Draft 1. We would encourage adding references to data aimed at assessing needs and vulnerabilities, which would be gender, age and disability sensitive. We would also encourage a reference to Interoperability of methodologies to enable sharing of data, with due regard to data protection, also in relation to other parallel exercises in the UN context.

In reference to "measuring the impact:" We would recommend to stick to the formulation of the para 20 of the 2017 Omnibus resolution and avoid the misleading reference to "cost", which does not do justice to the positive effects of resources mobilised for infrastructure, services and sourcing at local markets.

More detailed comments will be shared in writing.

Thank you.

[Agenda item point 3: Follow-up arrangements (Part IV)]

Excellency, Mr Chair,

Some aspects related to the "follow-up arrangements" have already been abundantly discussed in the last two days.

We will focus on the following three points.

First of all, the EU and its Member States welcome the efforts to mobilise support and would recommend adding references to the World Humanitarian Summit, the Agenda for Humanity and to the "new way of working". We should seek to ensure both participation of and accountability to refugees.

Then, we welcome the efforts to ensure disaggregated data for reporting on progress on the SDGs. We consider that UNHCR should develop a more detailed framework of indicators and targets for tracking progress, already for the first Global Refugee Summit in 2019. It is indeed essential to report back, and a system is needed for that purpose, possibly a digital platform, as was referred to earlier. We would therefore encourage indicators and targets to be developed before 2019 in order to enhance credibility and accountability. As regards indicators, we would request clarification that data collection would to the extent possible avoid parallel systems and build on national efforts, supported by other stakeholders, including UN organisations.

Finally, we are convinced that follow up mechanisms should ensure a role on follow up of the GCR for the UNHCR Executive Committee. We would encourage enlarging UNHCR Executive Committee membership to make sure that beyond episodic Summits, the global refugee issue is subject to regular monitoring and follow-up, as a concrete sign of the commitment to addressing globally the refugee issue.

Let me conclude in highlighting that we thank UNHCR and the co-chair for their excellent work as well as all colleagues for their very constructive and cooperative spirit. We look forward to the next formal consultations and the changes proposed by the co-chairs in the revised draft in May.

Thank you.