

## **Conclusion of the Executive Committee on international cooperation from a protection and solutions perspective**

*The Executive Committee,*

*Noting* the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants on 19 September 2016;

*Considering* that achieving international cooperation in solving international problems of a humanitarian character is among the purposes of the United Nations as defined in its Charter, and *considering* that the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees acknowledges that the grant of asylum may place unduly heavy burdens on certain countries, and that satisfactory solutions to a problem, of which the United Nations has recognized the international scope and nature, cannot therefore be achieved without international cooperation;

*Reaffirming* the importance of the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees at the centre of the international legal framework for the protection of refugees, and recalling Article 2 of the Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;

*Reaffirming* its commitment to international solidarity and responsibility- and burden-sharing involving all members of the international community, and recalling the importance of international cooperation, in particular to support communities and countries hosting large refugee populations, in ensuring protection and assistance and achieving solutions for refugees;

*Recalling* also that international cooperation is important for States with internally displaced persons, stateless populations, as well as other people of concern to UNHCR;

*Stressing* the importance of the protection of human life and dignity as a priority issue by reaffirming, inter alia, the principle of non-refoulement, as well as the importance of providing assistance and seeking comprehensive approaches towards the implementation of durable solutions, as appropriate, from the outset of a displacement situation, while ensuring that no-one is left behind;

*Recognising* the multifaceted dimensions of solutions, bearing in mind the need to address the root causes of forced displacement, including in light of the importance of political will, as well as security implications for neighbouring countries hosting refugees, and finding practical and comprehensive approaches to resolving the plight of refugees and realizing durable solutions for them, consistent with international law, including international refugee law, and relevant General Assembly resolutions referring to the work of UNHCR;

*Recalling* also the guidance set out in its previous conclusions, in particular Conclusions No. 18 (XXXI) 1980, No. 40 (XXXVI) 1985, No.52 (XXXIX) 1988, No. 56(XL), No. 80(XLVII) 1996, No. 67 (XLII) 1991, No. 100 (LV) 2004, No. 101 (LV) 2004, No. 104 (LVI) 2005, No. 105 (LVII) 2006, paragraph (i) (i), No. 107 (LVIII) 2007, paragraph (b) (xiii), No. 109 (LX) 2009, No. 111 (LXIV) 2013, and No. 91 (LII) 2001; and taking note of resolutions of United Nations General Assembly relating to the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;

1. *Commits to* further strengthening of international cooperation and solidarity and equitable responsibility and burden sharing; and further urges all States and UNHCR to increase their efforts to implement these important principles, including through the provision of much needed support to host countries by mobilizing financial and other necessary resources, and ensure protection and assistance and realize durable solutions for refugees and for other persons of concern, as appropriate, in order to enhance the coping ability and resilience of host communities, as well as provide assistance in a more predictable, timely, sustainable and equitable and transparent way;

2. *Recognises* the need to assist States to conduct, consistent with legal frameworks, early and effective registration and documentation of refugees, taking into account the specificity of each situation;

3. *Acknowledges* the important contributions of asylum countries and countries hosting and providing protection to large numbers of refugees, in particular, developing countries with limited resources that continue to do so in protracted situations consistent with international law, including international refugee law, and established principles and standards;

4. *Notes* that well-functioning asylum systems and international protection systems as a whole depend on efficient and expeditious return in safety and dignity to countries of origin of persons found not to be in need of international protection, *recalls* the obligations of States to receive back their own nationals, and calls for strengthened international support and cooperation to this end;

5. *Encourages* States to channel flexible or unearmarked funds in a timely and predictable manner that will enable UNHCR to achieve its mandate on protection and solutions while responding to humanitarian situations;

6. *Recalls* the voluntary character of refugee repatriation and the right of refugees to return to their own countries, and recognizes in the context of voluntary repatriation, the importance of resolute efforts in the country of origin, including rehabilitation and development assistance to foster the voluntary, safe, and dignified return and sustainable reintegration of refugees, and to ensure the restoration of national protection;

7. *Recalls* that voluntary repatriation should not necessarily be conditioned on the accomplishment of political solutions in the country of origin, in order not to impede the exercise of the right of refugees to return to their own countries;

8. *Calls* upon States and all other relevant actors to commit themselves, in the spirit of international solidarity and burden-sharing, to comprehensive, multilateral and multi-sectoral collaboration and action, in addressing the root causes of protracted refugee situations, in ensuring that people are not compelled to flee their countries of origin in the first place, to find safety elsewhere, and in resolving the protracted refugee situations which persist, in full respect for the rights of affected persons;

9. *Encourages* the international community to cooperate to mobilise adequate and sustained support to enable the sustainable reintegration of refugees following their voluntary return, in particular through strategies with the enhanced involvement of development actors working in cooperation with UNHCR and other humanitarian actors and concerned States, and with appropriate links between humanitarian and development activities;

10. *Welcomes and encourages* further expansion and strategic use of resettlement as an important instrument of protection and of responsibility- and burden-sharing at a global level, in particular from countries hosting large refugee populations, including through the engagement of a wider range of resettlement countries and other stakeholders, notably civil society including refugee sponsoring organizations;

11. *Calls* for States to consider creating, expanding or facilitating access to complementary and sustainable pathways to protection and solutions for refugees, in cooperation with relevant partners, including the private sector, where appropriate, including through humanitarian admission or transfer, family reunification, skilled migration, labour mobility schemes, scholarships, and education mobility schemes;

12. *Encourages*, with a view to protecting refugees and other persons of concern and achieving solutions, supporting host communities and strengthening linkages among stakeholders and between humanitarian and development action, through comprehensive, multi-year, multi-partner strategies, planning and programming, supported by predictable financial assistance;

13. *Notes* the significant gap between the needs of refugees and the available resources, encourages support from a broader range of donors and measures to make humanitarian financing more flexible and predictable, welcomes the increasing engagement of the World Bank and multilateral development banks and improvements in access to concessional development financing for affected

communities, and encourages mobilization of private sector investment in support of refugee communities and host countries;

14. *Encourages* the taking of measures to extend the finance lending schemes that exist for developing countries to middle-income countries hosting large numbers of refugees, bearing in mind the economic and social costs to those countries;

15. *Notes* the benefits of consultation and participation of persons of concern in planning and programming by UNHCR, which affects such persons, and to which such persons can contribute;

16. *Recalls* progress made towards addressing statelessness in recent years, including through accession to statelessness conventions and measures at regional and national levels, and the value of international cooperation to prevent and reduce statelessness and find solutions for stateless people, including through UNHCR's Global Campaign to End Statelessness, and encourages continued efforts in this regard.

17. *Requests* UNHCR to report regularly on the implementation of this Conclusion within existing reporting mechanisms.

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