

Global Compact on Refugees
Agenda Item 1: The program of action and the principal modalities for
burden and responsibility sharing
U.S. Statement

The United States would like to thank UNHCR for its efforts on the first draft of the Global Compact on Refugees, which serves as a framework for states to help improve the lives of those who have fled their homes and are unable to return. We look forward to working with others during these formal consultations to explore more effective and efficient refugee responses and to expand the burden sharing among States and other stakeholders. We would like to share some general comments on the draft.

The U.S. recommends that the Global Compact on Refugees include language in the text that affirms the primacy of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. As noted by UNHCR and other member states, this process is not about creating new legal instruments but upholding and implementing the existing international refugee protection regime.

We also recommend the inclusion of language that affirms the *voluntary* nature of the actions suggested in the Program of Action, and that it is the sovereign right of each State to determine its actions according to its domestic laws and policies. We underscore our understanding that none of the provisions in this document create or affect the rights or obligations of States under international law. In this regard, the United States will continue to take steps to ensure its national security, protect its sovereignty and maintain the health and safety of its people, this includes exercising its rights and responsibilities to prevent illegal migration and secure its borders, consistent with our own domestic laws and international obligations. The United States recognizes that the purpose of the draft Global Compact on Refugees is to serve as guidance on how to make refugee responses more effective, efficient, and comprehensive, and promote greater burden-sharing. The United States is looking for the Global Compact:

- To find greater opportunities for refugees to return home voluntarily in safety and with dignity as soon as possible by improving conditions in countries of origin;
- To encourage other countries and partners to contribute funding for international technical and financial support to shoulder a greater proportion of the burden in refugee responses;
- To expand the involvement of development and private sector actors in refugee responses; and
- To support efforts that foster refugee self-reliance

The United States strongly affirms that the Global Compact on Refugees is separate and distinct from the Global Compact on Migration.

In closing, we would like to again thank UNHCR for this zero draft and believe this is a good start to achieving these objectives and serving as a complementary effort to broader UN reform.