

**Standing Committee of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's  
Programme (72<sup>nd</sup> Meeting), 19 – 21 June 2018**

**Presentation of Conference Room Paper - Solutions: *Ending Displacement and  
Statelessness***

**Introductory remarks by DRS Deputy Director Mamadou Dian Balde**

**Madam Chair, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,**

Thank you for the opportunity to follow up on the remarks made by the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection earlier today and the Director of the Division of Resilience and Solutions, and to introduce the Conference Room Paper on "*Solutions: Ending Displacement and Statelessness*".

A year has passed since we presented you a report on "Resilience and self-reliance from a protection and solutions perspectives". Since then we have seen some achievement in solutions, in addition to an important global momentum and interest in resolutely pursuing solutions for refugees, internally displaced and stateless people. This reinvigorated focus has been facilitated by the New York Declaration, the practical application of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and the consultations leading to the development of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR).

As we have heard this morning, the advances, some of which I highlight later, are unfortunately accompanied by deep and persisting challenges. The challenges range from limited progress in peace efforts, and root causes of conflicts and violence not addressed. They also include limited success in addressing the many barriers to solutions (administrative and others).

**Madam Chair, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,**

Allow me in the next few minutes remaining to highlight some selected situations that show how States, partners and UNHCR have provided and continue to provide opportunities for solutions, for refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons. They will center around seven (7) broad observations:

*First, voluntary repatriation and reintegration for refugees and returnees*

The past year has seen an increase in the number of refugees returning to their countries of origin, with some 667,400 refugees returning to their countries of origin:

- Of this number, UNHCR supported voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity for refugees to a range of countries.
- UNHCR also noted a significant number of self-organised returns. Some of the returns took place in very complex circumstances, under hazardous security situations or where the sustainability of the reintegration is not guaranteed.

In some protracted refugee situations, such as for example in Chad and Sudan, Voluntary Repatriation Tripartite Agreements were signed, providing a framework within which to plan for voluntary repatriation. Letters of Exchange were also used as a framework to support voluntary repatriation for smaller refugee populations.

UNHCR continued to work with States, refugees and with other national and international actors to identify the barriers to durable return and to facilitate and support conditions that are conducive to voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity. And to sustained reintegration, in cooperation with countries of origin and development partners, as highlighted in the Nairobi Declaration and Plan of Action for Somali Refugees.

*Second, local solutions for refugees*

As highlighted this morning by our Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, local integration is the main solution pursued in industrialized countries, even though numbers and statistics are not always available.

The past year has seen important pledges from many other States on local integration. Ethiopia pledged to allow local integration for refugees who have lived 20 years or more in the country. This pledge, which has just been approved by the Council of Ministers, is expected to benefit at least 20,000 refugees.

Another notable example is the granting of citizenship to refugees living in a protracted situation in Guinea-Bissau, with 7,500 persons expected to benefit from the opportunity.

In Turkey, the naturalization of refugees with skills is another great example of opportunities provided refugees who can contribute to their own families, become self-reliant and contribute greatly to the communities which generously host them.

#### *Third, resettlement*

Over 65,000 people departed to resettlement countries last year, and UNHCR supported several specific complementary pathways, assisting states and other stakeholders to promote and establish appropriate systems and mechanisms for the expansion of complementary pathways to admission.

We of course echo the various calls made by many States earlier today for a broadening and increasing of opportunities for resettlement and complementary pathways for the many refugees which need them.

#### *Fourth, solutions for stateless persons*

In the past year, there have been notable achievements with respect to the eradication of statelessness. A reported, 56,500 stateless people acquired nationality during the year. In addition, positive law reforms, including reforms to eliminate gender discrimination from nationality laws, have been enacted by a number of States. These reforms will help to prevent and reduce statelessness.

Several states have acceded to one or both of the Statelessness Conventions; and new regional plans of action which have been developed [that](#) reflect states' commitment to make progress and pursue solutions on statelessness.

#### *Fifth, solutions for internally displaced persons*

As we have heard in the previous session from my colleague Steve Corliss, the High Commissioner has committed UNHCR to more decisive and predictable engagement with regard to internal displacement, including in relation to solutions.

Over the past year, some concrete advances on solutions for IDPs have included the drafting of national laws on Internal Displacement, which are currently under consideration for adoption in Honduras, Mexico, and Mali.

Nigeria undertook consultations with IDP and host communities on the contents of a draft IDP policy, and Niger is planning on doing the same in for the development of their IDP law.

UNHCR is supporting several other states, including South Sudan, Chad, and the Central African Republic, to develop national frameworks on internal displacement as part of the 3 year Plan of Action for Advancing Prevention, Protection and Solutions for IDPs, which was launched in April (2018) during the 20th anniversary of the Guiding Principles.<sup>1</sup>

*Sixth, resilience and inclusion to benefit all persons of concern*

UNHCR worked throughout the year with a widening pool of partners to build and support the self-reliance and resilience of persons of concern. To help them live dignified lives while waiting for any of the solutions.

Together with many partners, UNHCR supported the inclusion of refugees in national and local development plans and frameworks; and into national systems for education, health, social protection, legal aid services, and through livelihoods and economic inclusion.

With regard to education in particular, UNHCR is broadening its partnership with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), ECW, UNICEF, UNESCO, Regional institutions and other stakeholders to reduce the gaps in access to primary, secondary and tertiary education. These gaps were broadly shared in March with the release of our report, “Her Turn”, a call to make refugee girls’ education a priority.

Municipalities, civil society, the private sector, humanitarian actors and displaced communities all play critical roles in creating welcoming societies and supporting social cohesion between refugee and host communities. UNHCR has been encouraged by some important networks and initiatives from different sectors of society that are advancing inclusion and sometimes local integration. One example is the network of cities and municipalities, which started with Sao Paulo, Milan and New York and has now reached 40 partner cities, working to adopt policies that support integration and inclusion, and to share good practice among each other.

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<sup>1</sup> Driven by the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs, UNHCR and OCHA, the three-year Plan of Action has been developed in consultation with various UN entities, international NGOs, NGO consortia, academia, Member States, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and other internal displacement experts.

The goal of the Plan of Action is to reduce and resolve internal displacement through prevention, protection and solutions for IDPs consistent with the Guiding Principles. The objectives centre around four priority issues: IDP participation; national law and policy on internal displacement; data and analysis on internal displacement; and addressing protracted displacement and securing durable solutions.

Mexico City signed an agreement with UNHCR aimed at fostering the inclusion of asylum-seekers and refugees in social security programmes, while a similar initiative was undertaken in São Paulo. The OECD published research from 72 European cities on formulating locally-based approaches to integration. The report's accompanying Checklist can be used by cities and regions in their efforts to promote more effective integration.

Efforts to engage the private sector also intensified. Jordan's Azraq refugee camp became the first refugee camp powered by renewable energy, funded by the IKEA Foundation's Brighter Lives for Refugees campaign. Extensive consultations with employers and others who play a key role in promoting the integration of refugees in local and national labour markets in Europe and Canada led to the recent publication of a *multi-stakeholder action plan for employers, refugees, civil society and governments*<sup>2</sup> that focuses on engaging with employers in the hiring of refugees.

#### *Seventh, building and highlighting the evidence for solutions*

With a view to unlocking opportunities for solutions, UNHCR is contributing to efforts to develop the **evidence base** needed for analysis and enhanced operational response to forced displacement. Several important processes now under way include the following:

- The establishment by UNHCR and the World Bank of a **Joint Data Centre on Forced Displacement**, to contribute to global data collection and analysis of forced displacement situations, and in particular to improve the provision of critical socio-economic data necessary for informed policy and resource allocation; and
- The project called "**Informing responses to support durable solutions for IDPs**," which aims to 'operationalize' the IASC Framework on durable solutions for IDPs through the development of an agreed set of indicators, tools, and methodologies for comprehensive approaches to data collection for durable solutions analysis in internal displacement contexts.

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<sup>2</sup> Published in April 2018 by OECD and UNHCR

**Madam Chair, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,**

The specific situations I cited above and those highlighted in the conference room paper are not exhaustive. There are many more examples of communities, cities, local governments, private sector, persons of concern themselves, NGOs, intergovernmental organizations within and outside the UN, joining efforts in supporting refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons strive and not only survive.

Some of these resilience and solutions opportunities do not all require solving the world problems, even if this a goal we are all striving for. Many of these resilience and solutions opportunities are within reach. Again, to support persons of concern to strive and not only survive.

The lessons learned from the practical application of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and the development of the Global Compact for Refugees offer additional opportunities to increase, fine tune and broaden the search for solutions for persons of concern.

Thank you.

*Geneva, 19 June 2018*