

43

Global Refugee Forum 17.-18.12.2019

Statement by Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Ms. Johanna Sumuvuori, Ministry for
Foreign Affairs, Finland
Assembly Hall, Palais des Nations

Thank you chair, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen

We are here today to find new ways to fulfil the four objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees: to ease pressures on host countries; to enhance refugee self-reliance; to expand access to third country solutions; and to support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

Finland's focus during this first Global Refugee Forum is on the following three considerations: an inclusive refugee response, protection and solutions, including self-reliance.

The Global Compact on Refugees mentions economic, social and cultural inclusion of refugees – of all refugees. Promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities is a long-term priority for Finland, both in our human rights and development policies. Therefore, we would again like to underline the importance of the inclusion of persons with disabilities from the start of a comprehensive refugee response. This is well recognized in the Global Compact on Refugees, and is an essential element of both protection and assistance.

The Global Compact on Refugees established commitments to a gender focused approach, calling for states and other stakeholders to promote meaningful participation and leadership of women and girls, including

women and girls with disabilities, and to support the institutional capacity and participation of national and community-based women's organizations. For this to happen, it is also necessary to ensure sufficient resources and capacity for the protection women and girls from violence, abuse and exploitation, of which women and girls with disabilities are even more likely to be victims. We also need enhanced measures to strengthen the agency of women and girls and promote women's economic empowerment.

During our ongoing EU Council presidency, we have also underlined these two areas as priorities for actions.

I have already mentioned economic inclusions and empowerment. These are necessary for self-reliance. In our delegation, we have Mr. Mustafa Abdulameer, a refugee from Iraq, who is the head of business program at a company called Startup Refugees. Mr. Abdulameer has not only managed to integrate into the Finnish society, both economically and socially, but works on helping other to do the same. He is more than an inspiration to others and I sincerely hope you will have an opportunity to exchange with him during the Forum.

We acknowledge that for all this we need solutions, we need to provide an opportunity for refugees to integrate. Therefore, Finland is pledging to increase our number of resettlement places during the course of 2020.

We also pledge to raise the level of funding for humanitarian assistance as stated in the Finnish government programme adopted earlier this year.

For UNHCR to have the capacity and resources to advance some of the discussed themes, we are also pledging to send an expert on disability inclusion to one of the regional offices, to help and support the surrounding country operations in establishing inclusive policies and practise.

We wish to thank those directly involved in the global refugee response, in particular UNHCR, but also UNRWA for their support to Palestine Refugees.

Finland will remain fully committed to carry its part and its share of the responsibility.