



**Note for the file**

**COMMITTEE ON CIVIL LIBERTIES, JUSTICE AND HOME  
AFFAIRS**

**UNHCR First Thematic Discussion leading Towards a Global Compact  
on Refugees**

**Geneva, 10 July 2017**

**Executive Summary:**

The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (New York Declaration), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2016<sup>1</sup>, called for the High Commissioner for Refugees, in consultation with States and other stakeholders, to develop a Global Compact on Refugees – including the development and implementation of a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) –. This Compact will be included in his annual report to the General Assembly in 2018. As part of this process, and as outlined in its “roadmap” document<sup>2</sup>, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has convened a series of thematic discussions in the second half of 2017 to inform the development of the global compact on refugees, and specifically its “programme of action”.

The first of these discussions took place on 10 July 2017 in Geneva, focusing on “past and current burden- and responsibility-sharing arrangements”.

Thanks to the active negotiations of the LIBE Secretariat, an invitation to participate at technical level was addressed to the EP allowing 2 representatives at staff level to participate at the conference. DG IPOL extended the invitation for one of the two places for the EP to be taken up by DG EXPO.

As general assessment, to secure participation from the Parliament at this first thematic consultation was very important. This can inform the foreseen debates in the relevant EP Committees and contribute to the continued involvement of the Parliament in the process at political level, following the set of actions as approved by the LIBE Coordinators in their meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> June.

---

<sup>1</sup> New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 September 2016, A/RES/71/1, available from: <http://www.unhcr.org/57e39d987>.

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR, “Towards a global compact on refugees: a roadmap”, 17 May 2017, available from: <http://www.unhcr.org/58e625aa7> (the roadmap).

## **1<sup>st</sup> Thematic Session- Summary of proceedings**

### **Panel and discussion on current burden- and responsibility- sharing arrangements.**

The main event was a day-long discussion on current burden- and responsibility- sharing arrangements. This opened with presentations from a panel composed of Mr. Mouin Merhebi, State Minister for the Affairs of the Displaced (Lebanon), Dr. Imran Zeb, Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees (Pakistan), Ms. Maria Nazareth Farani Azevêdo, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil in Geneva and Ambassador Mohamed Abdi Affey, UNHCR Special Envoy on the Somali Refugee Situation. Interventions from almost 80 UN Member States - including hosts to large number of refugees (Jordan, Turkey, Pakistan, Uganda) - highlighted the unequal distribution of refugees and the need to practically implement burden-sharing arrangements, and not only via financial contributions. Some states highlighted the need for 'burden-mapping', to assess the contribution of different states. Latin American countries highlighted the good practice of the Brazil Declaration<sup>3</sup> and Plan of Action as a regional instrument for protection and the promotion of innovative solutions for refugees and displaced people.

The EU delegation delivered a statement - to which some Member States were aligned - in support of the CRRF, and outlined its activities inside the EU (Dublin revision, relocation) and outside (new approach to forced and protracted displacement). Also the Estonian presidency took the floor<sup>4</sup>. In the context of the LIBE's field of competences, it must be underlined that Ms Maria Stavropoulou- Director of Greek asylum service took the floor representing Greece to present the greek experience on burden sharing arrangements- positives experiences on EU Relocation program. She stressed this experience shows that burden sharing arrangements are not only possible but positive. She finally mentioned 3 lessons: 1) Need for program to be inclusive, irrespective of country of origin; 2) needed procedures as uncomplicated and swift as possible; 3) Refugees should be inform on their future, as a certain sense of control on their own life is needed for a successful relocation process.

Other regional cooperation forum or national initiatives were mentioned during the meeting (Nairobi declaration for somali refugees<sup>5</sup>; Pakistan's RAHA programme (The Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA)<sup>6</sup>)

### **Special session on past examples of burden- and responsibility-sharing.**

In the afternoon, a side-event took place focussed on past examples of burden- and responsibility-sharing, notably Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indochinese Refugees (CPA), the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA) and the Humanitarian Evacuation Programme/Humanitarian Transfer Programme (HEP/HTP) for Kosovo. A number of interesting lessons were highlighted, including the need to take into

---

<sup>3</sup> See Brazil declaration: <http://www.acnur.org/t3/fileadmin/Documentos/BDL/2014/9865.pdf> and related information: <http://www.unhcr.org/brazil-declaration.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.genf.vu.ac.at/frontpage/cat-516/newwin-middle50/aid-1736>

<sup>5</sup> Nairobi declaration on durable solutions for solutions for somali refugees (25<sup>th</sup> March 2017): <https://www.igad.int/communique/1519-communique-special-summit-of-the-igad-assembly-of-heads-of-state-and-government-on-durable-solutions-for-somali-refugees>  
Annex: <https://www.igad.int/attachments/article/1519/Annex%20to%20the%20Declaration%20-%20Final%20Plan%20of%20Action%2011.04.2017.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/50927eb49.pdf>

account the overall political context and specificities of each situation, to make refugees themselves an integral part of the solutions and to integrate them into the overall peace process, the importance of available making legal channels for refugees in order to have an orderly movement of people.

### Summary panel and conclusions.

During the concluding session, Mr Volker Türk, Assistant High Commissioner for protection (UNHCR) summarised the key issues of the meeting, including:

- the New York Declaration is a solid starting point, but it is necessary to move to concrete actions; Refugees as a common global good and Global Compact on Refugees as a question of justice and equality.
- the importance of burden- and responsibility-sharing as fundamental principles;
- the need to secure sufficient, predictable funding for refugee-hosting countries, including through better humanitarian-development nexus in the context of the SDGs;
- the need for a participatory ‘whole-of-society approach’ that involves refugees themselves and also takes into account the vulnerabilities of specific groups (women, children);
- the importance of addressing the root causes and investing more in prevention of conflict;
- the need to strengthen rule of law, social cohesion and key national systems (education, labour policies) in hosting countries;
- the recognition that more safe, legal pathways are needed, including an increase in resettlement efforts humanitarian visas and private partnerships, but that voluntary repatriation is also part of the equation,
- and the importance of accurate and disaggregated data.

### **Annex- Background Documents**

- **Final agenda of the meeting:** <http://www.unhcr.org/595267267>
- **Concept Note:** <http://www.unhcr.org/59525f887>
- **List of written contributions**  
<http://www.unhcr.org/search?comid=595e23004&cid=49aea93aa7&scid=49aea93a57&tid=49ec6f1718&tags=CRRF-contribution>
- **Critical Article:** [http://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2017/07/10/new-refugee-framework-dead-water-without-more-international-support?utm\\_source=IRIN+-+the+inside+story+on+emergencies&utm\\_campaign=3e117a7649-RSS\\_EMAIL\\_ENGLISH\\_ALL&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_d842d98289-3e117a7649-15656645](http://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2017/07/10/new-refugee-framework-dead-water-without-more-international-support?utm_source=IRIN+-+the+inside+story+on+emergencies&utm_campaign=3e117a7649-RSS_EMAIL_ENGLISH_ALL&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d842d98289-3e117a7649-15656645)
- **World Bank report:**” Forcibly Displaced : Toward a Development Approach Supporting Refugees, the Internally Displaced, and Their Hosts”  
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/25016/9781464809385.pdf?sequence=10>