



Towards a global compact on refugees: Thematic discussion four (14 November)
Measures to be taken in pursuit of solutions
(Comprehensive refugee response framework pillar four)

Panel four: How can we make local solutions work for refugees and the communities in which they live?

Intervention from Oxfam International:

Thank you Madam Ambassador for the floor.

In supporting refugees, Oxfam is providing support to families who have been displaced, and to those struggling to make a better life for themselves, whether as refugees or members of the communities that host them.

Humanitarian aid is indeed important, and needs to be combined with medium and longer-term investment to make local solutions work. We need to rethink the whole system to increase refugees' self-alliance and resilience: refugees must be protected physically and legally, provided accesses to education and health care, as well as predictable sources of income in decent working conditions.

In many cases, local communities are not much better off than refugees that they are hosting and require support to build sustainable local development opportunities. All governments must act in solidarity. It is only when host countries believe that other nations will act in solidarity, together we can ensure greater access to protection, assistance, and durable solutions, and our commitment can become a reality to predictably and equitably support refugees and host communities wherever they are.

This is why Oxfam believes that for the Global Compact on Refugees to be successful, within its Program of Action should be the establishment of a platform (Annex) to facilitate joint work toward equitable and predictable responsibility sharing, human development, and durable solutions.

Thank you.

Oxfam International's proposal toward the Global Compact on Refugees

Building a Lifeline:

A new global platform and responsibility sharing model for the Global Compact on Refugees

“To address the needs of refugees and receiving States, we commit to a more equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world's refugees, while taking account of existing contributions and the differing capacities and resources among States.” – paragraph #68, New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, United Nations, September 19, 2016

In 2016, the leaders of 193 governments committed to more equitable and predictable sharing of responsibility for refugees as part of the New York Declaration – to be realized in the upcoming Global Compact on Refugees. But despite months of negotiations, the New York Declaration did not result in a concrete system identifying how the responsibility and burden for refugee protection and assistance would be shared more equitably and predictably. With an unprecedented 23 million refugees in the world today, it is time for States, international agencies and organisations to move beyond talking about the desirability of a mechanism for equitable and predictable responsibility sharing to debating what methodology, distribution, and indicators are needed to make it happen; and how humanitarian and development funding, resettlement and alternative pathways, can be co-aligned to reinforce the resiliency and development of both host communities and refugees. In the summit's follow-up at the UNHCR organised thematic consultation on responsibility sharing in July 2017, a few States, such as Germany, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and India, recognized their responsibility to share in the protection and care of refugees and called for durable solutions, including a mechanism and practical ways to ensure equitable and meaningful burden and responsibility sharing.

Oxfam's proposal for a global platform on refugee protection, human development and durable solutions

To be transformational and truly reflect the ambition and whole-of-society approach articulated in the New York Declaration, the Global Compact on Refugees must go beyond band-aids, and commit leaders to taking of their fair share of responsibility for the protection, support, and human development of refugees and host communities through both short and long-term humanitarian and development funding. Without the establishment of a new global platform and a transparent, predictable and equitable responsibility sharing model, however, realizing the rights of refugees and their host communities will be impossible.

Oxfam is urging states to establish through the Global Compact on Refugees a global platform that will be responsible for developing and implementing this mechanism¹.

To have any significant impact, the Programme of Action must include a concrete mechanism for responsibility sharing, and a global platform co-chaired by member states that are already meeting their fair share and/or making concrete steps toward realizing their responsibilities, supported by UNHCR with a small secretariat. A Steering/Reference Group composed of stakeholders from different sectors – international humanitarian and development organisations, international financing institutions, experts on migration pathways, private sector, civil society organisations, and refugee representatives – will develop new policy approaches to key issues: protection, human development and durable solutions through a whole-of-system approach. Their implementation will be facilitated by the secretariat with the monitoring framework and indicators for the application of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework as references.

Without a global platform that brings together refugees, agencies, institutions, and private sector to support governments with a common vision and purpose, there is no reason to think that the lives of refugees and experiences of host communities will be positively impacted. Unless States when developing the Program of Action rethinks the whole system, builds a new platform for joint work, defines operational mechanisms for responsibility sharing, and as follow-up truly implement the Global Compact on Refugees, this process will be a lost opportunity of historic proportions.



The power of people against poverty

¹ To assign a preliminary fair share of refugee responsibility, Oxfam takes each nation's GDP and population as the primary measures of its ability to receive, protect and assist refugees, and/or contribute funding to the reception and care of refugees in another nation. These two 'hard' weighted numbers (quantitative) are then nuanced by SDG qualitative indicators. This approach is being proposed by Oxfam after reviewing dozens of academic, organisational, and state-based proposals over 25 years, including the EU's approach, and consulting with over 30 CSOs, academics, UN agencies, government offices, refugees and refugee-led organizations, and other stakeholders.