



First Round of Formal Consultations on the Draft Zero of the Global Compact on Refugees

Geneva, 13-14 February 2018

STATEMENTS OF LEBANON

Read by H.E.M. Salim BADDOURA

Ambassador and Permanent Representative

Agenda Item 1: the program of action and the principal modalities for burden and responsibility sharing:

At the outset, we would like to thank the UNHCR for all the efforts and the hard work deployed since the adoption of the New York declaration, in order to develop the Zero Draft of the Global Compact on Refugees.

- Our understanding is that the GCR is a non-legally binding document that will be applied, when adopted, without prejudice to the sovereignty of States, their national security and their domestic legal framework.
- Having always in mind the international nature of any refugees' crisis, we see that part A on the "principal modalities for burden and responsibility sharing" tends unfortunately to equate burden and responsibility sharing with "the support of the international community." If the GCR is intended to "address a perennial gap in the international system for the protection of refugees" as stated in paragraph 1, it must also acknowledge that "support", financial, material or technical, important as it is, is not sufficient to do justice to the principle of burden and responsibility sharing.
- If host countries are to "make an immense contribution to the collective good", as stated in paragraph 12, they should be able to rely on an equitable mechanism, in order to go beyond simple

measures of humanitarian support to a comprehensive mechanism of responsibility sharing and compensation.

- The practical measures exposed in part A are steps in the right direction. Yet, the GCR Zero Draft does not identify a concrete mechanism that would not shy from assessing the respective capacities of countries, and that despite the insistence of host countries during previous discussions.
- Principles of international solidarity will remain a dead letter, unless States agree on a robust, concrete, predictable and equitable mechanism of burden and responsibility-sharing that would be holistic, forward-looking and sustainable.
- And a better display of such principles should involve a stable and independent framework capable of tackling efficiently refugees' crisis, regardless of countries political agendas.
- We look forward to a GCR that could redress the current situation, whereby some developing countries bear the brunt of hosting and assisting refugees, without being properly supported by the international community.
- While we welcome the strengthening of a multi-stakeholder approach, we do not take for granted that faith-based organizations "will play a crucial role" or ought to play such a role. This should only depend on the local context. Therefore, we propose to use in paragraph 29, the word "might" rather than "will" play a crucial role.

Agenda Item 2: support for the application of the CRRF: reception and admission, meeting needs and supporting communities, and solutions:

- As a major host country, Lebanon welcomes the emphasis put by the GCR Zero Draft on the needs of host countries, which signals a clear effort to broaden the traditional humanitarian assistance schemes, and put at the order of the day the necessity to boost the sustainable development agenda of host countries.
- As stated in paragraph 48, "the welfare of refugees and host communities are intrinsically interlinked."

- In paragraphs 14 and 15, in paragraphs 25 to 32 and in paragraphs 48 to 64, we sense that the GCR Zero Draft contains demands for a bigger and more sophisticated support to refugees. We also note that more obligations are imparted on host countries, entailing more burdens in planning and setting policies.
- These additional burdens are not paralleled by the establishment of a clear, concrete, practical and sustainable mechanism of funding of such efforts in host countries.
- Furthermore, no clear or concrete obligations or commitments are imparted on the international community, neither across the part dedicated to burden and responsibility-sharing, nor in any other part of the text. For example, paragraph 52 on education mentions vaguely “innovative financing mechanisms to increase investments yet to be explored.” Such mechanisms are crucial, but the general and vague language of the GCR Zero Draft leaves us with the impression that a big gap remains between good intentions and their translation into concrete steps.
- Paragraph 50 talks about including refugees in national systems. For countries like Lebanon where integration of refugees is not an option, such language could raise some concerns. The objective of the paragraph would be better served in replacing “include” by “facilitate the access of refugees to education, health services and livelihoods.”
- Paragraph 54 talks about supporting efforts to “encourage development funds to be directed to regions and communities that host refugees.” This could generate unfair disparity among the different communities in host countries. Therefore, development funding should be directed to the host countries that would dispatch it according to their national policies.
- As for the crucial part B.3 entitled solutions, we would like to reiterate once again the principled position of Lebanon in this regard. We consider that the safe return of refugees to their countries as the most durable solution to the refugees’ crisis, because it contributes to ease

the burden on the host countries, and afford the refugees the possibility to rebuild their country politically, socially and economically.

- Therefore, we would like to express our deep concerns about the language in the section dedicated to return, paragraphs 66 to 68, whereby return is made contingent upon a set of unrealistic preconditions that are almost impossible to meet in a post-war torn country, within an acceptable time framework. Without genuine efforts to devise return schemes not necessarily conditioned by the achievement of political solutions, when possible, host countries could find themselves forced to cope with a protracted refugees' crisis that will further hamper their economies and obliterate the future of their societies.
- As for resettlement, we need a stronger wording about the obligations of the international community in expanding resettlement programs in a proportionate way to the needs of refugees and host countries. It is also essential to depart from the actual status quo where resettlement efforts are subjected to political considerations, and to chart a concrete way of implementing these paragraphs.

Agenda Item 3: follow-up arrangements:

- We support the idea that the progress in the application of the Global Compact on Refugees should be assessed periodically.
- It is furthermore our understanding that the GCR should be result oriented, and that the UNHCR will be tasked with the regular assessment and follow-up.
- We have no doubt that the UNHCR will not spare its effort and will do its utmost to mobilize the needed support to the application of the GCR, once it will adopted.
- But unfortunately, we fail to see how these efforts could lead to tangible results in the absence of the solid basis constituted by burden and responsibility-sharing and funding mechanisms.
- When we go through the part on follow-up arrangements, we are left with a sense of vagueness and inconsistency.

- This is essentially due to the fact that the main parts of the GCR Zero Draft have not provided mechanisms that are robust and detailed enough, to lend themselves to non-less robust and accurate systems for assessment and follow-up.
- On a different note, we would like to see in the GCR more details about the modalities of the digital platform mentioned in paragraph 78.