



Global Programme of Action as part of the Global Compact on Refugees – important elements Non-paper by The Netherlands

The Global Compact on Refugees will consist of two parts: 1) The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), contained in annex 1 to the NY Declaration; and 2) a concrete Global Programme of Action which will underpin the CRRF and facilitate its implementation in order to create more equitable and predictable burden- and responsibility-sharing.

Based on its overall views on the Global Compact on Refugees, the application of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, and the thematic discussions which took place in July, October and November 2017, as well as the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges in December 2017, the Netherlands envisages that a Programme of Action should be ambitious and realistic, and as operational and action-oriented as possible. The Programme of Action should include actionable commitments by states, but also encourage other actors (international organisations, UN agencies, development actors, private sector, civil society, refugees themselves, host communities etc) to play their part to contribute to a truly comprehensive, new way of working.

The Programme of Action would preferably contain the following – non exhaustive – elements:

- The Netherlands looks in principle favourably to the establishment of a **Global Refugee Response Group**, and notes that discussions on such a Group are ongoing. The group could be convoked by UNHCR, if need be upon request of a country facing a (potential) large influx of refugees, in the earliest stages (or ideally even before the outbreak) of a large refugee situation. The convocation of the GRRG should 'trigger' the attention and follow-up action of all actors concerned and can, as a result, send an important signal of solidarity and support to the country concerned. Initially, the GRG could convene in Geneva for reasons of convening power and inclusivity but it should ideally be **quickly transferred or in any case have a very close connection to the national or regional level** for actual implementation of the country- or regional specific refugee compact (see below). Such localized Support Groups ought to be formed in order to support both central and local authorities in preparations and contingency planning. Any new GRRG should be light, agile, and flexible, and established only in the case of a genuine response gap. Duplication with existing mechanisms should be avoided.
- While acknowledging that all UN member states have a key role to play, a wide variety of actors can contribute to refugee responses. Support groups should therefore be as **inclusive** by nature as possible (including, where possible, states, regional and local authorities, international organisations, UN agencies, IFIs including the Worldbank, relevant development actors, representatives of the private sector, civil society, and representatives of refugees and host communities themselves). At the same time **flexible** enough to respond to the **specific national or regional** elements and needs of the crisis.
- From the outset, or even prior to the crisis, UNHCR and/or the response group should present a **quick but comprehensive needs assessment** of the crisis. In certain situations this can also be done in existing

protracted refugee situations. It is important to underline that – while the vast majority of these needs will remain financial – the needs assessment should go further and also include legislative, material, technical, operational and perhaps even political needs.

- A **standby mechanism in the field of technical assistance** (a UNHCR-managed comprehensive database of actors – from state actors to international organisation to private sector to civil society - being able to provide support in a wide variety of fields such as, for example, registration, data-collection, status determination, reception, dealing with specific protection concerns such as SGBV, etc) should be used to connect specific needs with available expertise. The PoA should create the establishment of an **asylum capacity support group** and states should be encouraged to contribute to and/or make use of the group where possible.
- The new way of working should go beyond simply presenting donor countries with an overview of the financial needs. Based on the comprehensive needs assessment, a **new form of solidarity conference** could be convened (sending an important message of solidarity and action to the country concerned). Such a conference should go far beyond 'traditional' financial pledges by states (which will of course remain key – and financial support should be as predictable and flexible as possible) and would be open also to pledges of **other, less traditional ways of support**, including the provision of opportunities for resettlement or other legal pathways but also material, technical, training and expert deployment, or political support. Furthermore it should also allow other actors to pledge. Countries facing the (potential) refugee influx could **themselves also be encouraged to pledge commitments** and policy plans (for example, to include refugees in national services such as healthcare and education) – after which those pledges could be 'matched' with pledges of support. Such a conference should be a common effort, rather than just single pledges.
- The logical outcome of a needs assessment and 'new' type of solidarity conference could be the establishment of a **country- or regional specific refugee compact**: based on the GCR but specified and operationalised to the specific crisis situation. The country-specific refugee compact should be age, gender and diversity sensitive. The implementation of the country-specific compact should be regularly measured through a national, 'light' monitoring mechanism, to be sustained also after the outbreak of a crisis. All the relevant stakeholders at the regional, country and local level should be involved in executing the specific refugee compact.
- Contributions by donor countries to large scale refugee situations can take many different forms. States providing financial contributions should be encouraged to do so, as much as possible, through **unearmarked and predictable funding**. Furthermore host communities should be included in donor programming. Capacity-building and technical support, as well as resettlement and other forms of humanitarian admission are other ways to practise solidarity.
- States hosting refugees should be encouraged to **include refugees in their national development plans and their national service delivery systems**, such as health and education.
- In terms of identifying international protection needs, a clever and practical system of ensuring **qualitative data collection and sharing and national registration** should be set-up in the PoA, including **expanding the use of biometrics**. The OCHA Centre for Humanitarian Data could play a role in this respect.

- The PoA should have the ambition to send **refugee children to school**. Access to primary and secondary education should be fully available to refugee children. Preferably refugees should be included in national programmes to ensure sustainability in the long term, rather than develop parallel systems for refugees. Host countries should receive adequate support in providing for education for both refugees and host communities. Vocational training should also be strengthened, more focused on the specific context of the local and regional labour market.
- **Opportunities for work** should be created. Self-reliance of refugees and their host communities should be strengthened. This includes providing for work permits for refugees, involving the private sector, fair working conditions and providing jobs to the affected host communities in close dialogue with all the stakeholders involved. Host countries should be supported in this process.
- **Special attention for the most vulnerable** must be part of the global refugee response. The most vulnerable refugees, among them women and (unaccompanied or separated) children, should receive special attention, including protection against sexual and gender-based violence, special support for victims of trafficking and psycho-social support.
- **Tripartite agreements** in the context of voluntary repatriation could form part of the country-specific refugee compact and supported accordingly.
- **Refugees themselves and organisations representing them** should be encouraged and supported to play a role in decision-making processes which affect them.
- **Resettlement and humanitarian admissions** programmes (whether large or small) should become much more common. Even small resettlement or humanitarian admission programmes make a difference in terms of responsibility sharing. In view of the positive fact that the number of resettlement countries has doubled over the last ten years, the Programme of Action should include the ambitious aim that the **current number of countries actively involved in resettlement end/or humanitarian admission is increased significantly again** over the next ten years.
- Resettlement states should be encouraged to progressively increase the size of their **resettlement programmes**.
- **Technical support, twinning programmes, joint donor missions, and the exchange of best practices in the field of resettlement and humanitarian admission**, for example through the ERCM, the ATCR, and other means, should actively be encouraged.
- **The private sector should be encouraged** to actively contribute to responding to large refugee situations. A **global platform of businesses** could be an excellent way of doing so, and could have a representative in any future Global Refugee Response Group.