



**Permanent Mission of Estonia to the
United Nations Office and other
International Organisations in Geneva**

Global Compact on Refugees, 1st thematic session

Remarks by ESTONIA

Geneva, 10th July 2017

Thank you, Mr. Co-Chair,

Estonia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the European Union.

Allow me to thank UNHCR for thorough and timely background documentation and all panellists for their insightful remarks.

Estonia stands firmly behind the New York Declaration and the adopted Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. Both documents need to translate into action, now. In this regard, we thank the UNHCR for its leadership and we extend our appreciation to the nine official roll-out countries that are already implementing the CRRF.

On burden- and responsibility sharing arrangements, Estonia lives up to its commitments and has been contributing to international relief efforts since 1998 through humanitarian and development aid instruments. We tripled our contributions between 2011 and 2015 in response to the global needs. The Syrian situation response and Afghanistan are among the priority areas of the Estonian development aid and relief actions. In 2016, Estonia started resettlement activities and participates in intra-European solidarity and responsibility sharing efforts.

This said, Estonia fully recognises the need for further global burden and responsibility sharing. We believe that the key elements of successful burden sharing are partnerships at all levels, innovative funding, early and timely disbursement of all humanitarian pledges, better cooperation between humanitarian and development actors, inclusion of refugees to development planning and financing, experience sharing and capacity building, political will and leadership, complementarity with other global initiatives such as the 2030 Agenda, and abidance with international law, including the 1951 Refugee Convention and Human Rights Law.

Allow me to underline two elements of the European burden sharing efforts that the European Union already mentioned earlier in its statement. One is the Common European Asylum System reform that Estonia as the current Presidency of the Council of the European Union is committed to bring forward, sparing no effort. Second is a new approach to forced displacement that the EU adopted a year ago. This approach is development-oriented and aims at moving from aid-dependence to self-reliance. UNHCR has positively acknowledged that the new EU approach to

forced displacement is well in line with the CRRF, supporting its roll-out and such initiatives are examples of current good practices.

Concerning the core gaps and lessons learnt, I wish to make 3 points.

Firstly, the CRRF as well as the Global Compact on Refugees is a Global Public Good, and responsibility and burden must be shared. The burden sharing must not remain a responsibility of only governments, but include all key stakeholders on the local, national, regional and international level: a comprehensive response can only be achieved by including all relevant actors. A good example of regional cooperation regarding the CRRF was the recent IGAD Summit, which resulted in the Nairobi Declaration. The IGAD Summit was also a good practice showcasing political will and leadership in the area.

Secondly, there is a need to assure coherence between the global compact on refugees and the one on migrants, although these are well two distinct processes.

Thirdly, although UNHCR is working with IDPs in certain contexts, especially in situations of mixed flows of displacement, the IDPs are not covered by the two compacts. Therefore, we believe that the international community has to find ways to tackle the wider approach to IDP situations in the coming years as the protection needs, effects and impact of displacement, are similar regardless whether the displacement is cross-border or internal.

Thank you!