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**Permanent Mission of India  
Geneva  
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**Statement by India made during the first round of formal consultations on the Global compact on refugees**

*(Geneva, Switzerland, 13-14 February 2018)*

Thank you Madam Chair.

At the outset, the delegation of India wishes to thank the High commissioner and the office for preparing the Zero draft of the Global compact on refugees and organising this formal consultation.

2. While we continue to examine the text of the zero draft internally and in light of the ongoing consultations, we have some general and specific comments and suggestions to offer for improving the text at this stage.

3. Bearing in mind the spirit of the New York Declaration, it would be appropriate to reflect the following, including what may seem obvious, in the ‘Chapeau’ of the compact –

- That the compact is intended to provide a framework for support, partnership and actionable commitments in the spirit of international solidarity based on equitable and genuine sharing of burden and responsibility among States.
- That the commitments made under this compact are legally non-binding and consistent with State’s rights and obligations under international law and their own legislations and taking into account their different national capacities and priorities.
- That we recognize the fact that a number of States not parties to the international refugee instruments have shown a generous approach to hosting refugees and that the commitments and obligations of those who are party to the Refugee Convention and its protocol and those who are not, differ.
- That the broad principles contained in the ‘Agenda for humanity’ and the ‘Grand bargain’ commitments made by UNHCR, particularly those related to bringing greater transparency, progressively increasing allocation of the program resources to national and local responders, expanding investments in institutional capacity building of national partners to help reinforce them and reducing the cost of procurement and logistics are important guiding principles.
- That our collective humanitarian efforts would endeavor to ‘leave no one behind’ and reach the ‘farthest behind first’.

4. Further, we would like to see greater clarity and consistency in the definition and usage of important terms in the text. Like for instance, the word ‘Refugees’ itself.

5. We must be fully conscious of the fact that persons displaced by natural disasters or climate change are not refugees. There needs are urgent but very different. Likewise, those internally displaced are not refugees. The role played by humanitarian actors in such contexts should only be with the consent and at the request of a State.

6. Areas of overlap with the Global compact for migration may need to be clearly identified, delineated and a clear way forward laid down, particularly in the context of mixed migration and forced displacement.

7. Also, the text of the compact contains 79 paras and 55 footnotes. It would be advisable to reduce the number of footnotes by incorporating those relevant into the main text and avoiding those which are not universal in nature or adopted through an open and inclusive State led consultative process.

8. The aspect of prevention and finding durable solutions to protracted refugee situations by addressing the root causes need to be strongly reflected in the programme of action. The compact should be clear and specific in terms of the actionable commitments of the donors and the countries of origin. Needless to add that the humanitarian interests of the refugees must be central to all such endeavors.

9. As for the procedure, we would like to suggest to the office to hold iterative negotiations during the first three rounds and text-based negotiations in the remaining last three rounds of formal consultations.

10. Finally, I take this opportunity to renew the commitment of India, a generous host to a large number of refugees and not their source, commitment for protection of refugees and cooperation with the international community. We look forward to a positive and win-win outcome through a constructive engagement.

Thank you.

**13 February 2018**

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