

UNHCR, ExCom 2018, General Debate
Norway's intervention,
by State Secretary Marianne Hagen
1 October 2018
(Check against delivery)

Thank you, Chair,

Norway shares the concerns expressed by the High Commissioner in his statement.

The number of forced displacements remains alarmingly high. Protracted refugee situations give serious cause for concern. Meanwhile, the international community is struggling to provide adequate protection and humanitarian assistance and to find sufficient resettlement places.

Norway sees the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework as an important step forward in this regard. I would like to take this opportunity to applaud all the countries that have adopted the CRRF. They are the vanguard, setting an example for the rest of us to follow.

Norway has engaged actively in the consultations on the global compact for refugees. While the compact is not perfect, we believe it is the best that can be achieved. It represents progress towards a fairer system of responsibility sharing between states. Not only the major host communities and the top donors should have to carry the burden. Norway supports the global compact, and hopes to see it universally endorsed later this year.

Chair,

Norway recently launched its new humanitarian strategy. Protection of refugees will continue as a central priority for Norway. Let me give you three examples of our priorities for the time ahead:

First, education: This is crucial for refugees, in particular those in protracted situations. Many refugee-hosting countries have generously integrated refugees into their national education systems. Yet funding gaps persist, and donors need to step up. Norway has doubled its aid for education in the period 2013 to 2017, and for several years has allocated at least 8 % of the humanitarian budget to this sector.

Second, financing: The growing gap between humanitarian needs and available funds cannot be filled without innovation and reforms to improve cost-effectiveness. In many situations, cash assistance is a valuable tool, as it reduces transaction costs, while also empowering affected populations and benefiting local markets.

Third, protection: Norway will sharpen its focus on protection in situations of crisis and conflict. We will give priority to operational protection measures and work to safeguard global protection regimes. In this regard, I would also like to point out that the credibility of refugee protection also relies on a fair system for the return of asylum seekers who are not found to be in need of international protection.

Chair,

Internal displacement remains a major concern. There are almost twice as many IDPs as refugees in the world, yet ~~both~~ strategies and concrete assistance fall seriously short of the needs. Our commitment to leaving no one behind must include action to support the internally displaced and their hosts. This will require concerted efforts in the UN system and by member states to increase assistance and identify strategies for durable solutions.

Together with various other states, Norway has encouraged the UN Secretary-General to appoint a high-level panel to identify strategies for durable solutions and increase assistance to IDPs. We encourage other states to support this initiative.

Chair,

Norway remains committed to providing un-earmarked funding to enable well-coordinated, rapid and effective assistance. Of the 99 million US dollars we provided to UNCHR in 2017, 41 million were un-earmarked. Much of the rest was softly earmarked. This is in line with our commitment to the Grand Bargain.

Finally, Chair,

Norway is one of the largest donors to the Syria crisis response, and UNHCR has been one of our principal partners. I am pleased to announce that we have decided to provide another ~~10~~ 14 million US dollars to UNHCR's work in Syria and its neighbouring countries.

Thank you.