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High Commissioner's Programme**

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Solutions*Summary*

This paper provides an update on developments in the area of solutions and efforts by UNHCR, States and partners to achieve them. It summarizes the progress made and challenges faced since the last paper on solutions (EC/69/SC/CRP.10) was presented to the Standing Committee in June 2018. It covers voluntary repatriation, local integration, resettlement, complementary pathways, resilience and inclusion, and outlines the opportunities presented by the Global Compact on Refugees to make further advances towards solutions, including in the context of the upcoming Global Refugee Forum.

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I. Introduction

1. Ongoing conflict, persecution, violence and violations of human rights over the past year have continued to cause increased levels of forced displacement globally. At a time when the need for international solidarity has never been greater, the politicization of displacement issues, the lack of significant advances in peacemaking and the increase in mixed population flows all contribute to a challenging environment for the achievement of adequate protection and the advancement of solutions for the forcibly displaced.

2. This paper provides an update on developments in UNHCR's approach to resilience and global efforts to achieve solutions. It discusses both the progress and challenges involved, as well as the opportunities that lie ahead as a result of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) to foster solutions through tangible expressions of solidarity. It should be read in conjunction with the paper on UNHCR's engagement with internally displaced persons (IDPs) (EC/70/SC/CRP.11) and the note on international protection (EC/70/SC/CRP.10).

II. Advancing solutions in the context of the Global Compact on Refugees

3. The [two year progress assessment](#) of the comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF) highlights how the application of the CRRF has produced renewed momentum and triggered substantial progress at the global, regional and national levels for both refugees and host communities. It also notes the gaps in implementation of legal and policy frameworks, due to administrative or other practical barriers, which need to be addressed. With the affirmation of the GCR by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2018, a new framework for States and partners to engage in solutions to forced displacement and more predictable responses to large-scale refugee movements and protracted situations has been established.

4. Efforts have been made to ease the pressure on host countries, including through the dedicated financing instruments of the World Bank and the notable increase in development financing more broadly in recent years. Significant legal and policy developments have occurred in some of the countries applying the CRRF, leading to a more systematic inclusion of refugees in development planning processes at the national and local levels; improved access to national health care, education and civil documentation; and greater livelihood opportunities as a result of more regular employment, freedom of movement and reduced encampment. These developments foster resilience among both refugees and local host communities. The GCR has also been accompanied by renewed momentum by a number of States to increase resettlement opportunities and complementary pathways to protection and solutions. Unfortunately however, the challenging political and security environment in some countries has limited the prospects for voluntary returns to take place in safety and dignity.

5. The Global Refugee Forum (GRF) will be an important step in the implementation of the Global Refugee Compact, paving the way for the principle of burden- and responsibility-sharing to be translated into concrete action, and for material, financial and technical support to be brought to bear to build resilience and advance solutions. UNHCR, States and partners are mobilizing efforts around situations and themes that could be focus areas for pledges and contributions.

III. Highlights of progress and challenges in achieving solutions

A. Voluntary repatriation and return to country of origin

6. The GCR highlights the overriding priority of creating the enabling conditions for voluntary and dignified repatriation, in full respect of the principle of non-refoulement. During his briefing to the United Nations Security Council in April 2019, the High Commissioner emphasized the importance of addressing the root causes of conflict as one of the main drivers of forced displacement and removing obstacles that prevent people from returning to their countries of origin. Efforts to pursue voluntary repatriation are sometimes hindered by scenarios where circumstances are partially improving but where peace and security are not yet fully established. Such challenging situations are often not conducive to safe and dignified returns. In other instances, significant protection risks in countries of asylum may lead refugees to return to their country of origin under pressure.

7. Previous experience has shown that returns to conditions which are inadequate for sustainable reintegration often lead to renewed displacement, both internally and externally, with discrimination and marginalization sometimes triggering factors. UNHCR analyses the intentions of refugees and IDPs to return, as well as the factors potentially impeding their reintegration. This analysis is vital to determining the Office's operational role in supporting their decisions when the conditions are in place. Based on the most recent analysis, it is clear that while the majority of Syrian refugees hope to return, many do not expect to do so in 2019 given their continuing concerns regarding security, as well as access to shelter, basic services and livelihoods. In Myanmar, implementing the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, including establishing a clear and voluntary pathway to citizenship, ensuring freedom of movement for all communities, and encouraging inclusive rights-based development and social cohesion, will be key to creating conditions under which the voluntary repatriation of Rohingya refugees in safety and dignity will be possible.

8. An emphasis on return monitoring allows UNHCR to provide relevant and reliable information to those who have yet to return to their areas of origin and to support countries of origin in addressing the barriers that impede reintegration. Return monitoring in relation to the 57,000 refugees who returned to Burundi between mid-2017 and 2019 found that many did not possess civil documentation and had limited access to justice and to basic social services such as education and health. UNHCR is working with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on a joint multi-year project aimed at improving access to social services, security, justice and livelihood opportunities for returnees and local communities. In Honduras, UNHCR continues to support national efforts to prevent the occupation, illegal sale and destruction of housing and land that displaced persons were forced to abandon, which present serious obstacles for future returns.

9. Notwithstanding the challenges, in 2018 UNHCR facilitated voluntary repatriation to Afghanistan, Burundi, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Myanmar, Rwanda, Somalia and Sudan. The past year has also seen significant numbers of spontaneous returns, including to Nigeria, South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic. Two years after the signing of the Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and Reintegration of Returnees in Somalia, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and its Member States are invigorating efforts aimed at addressing the root causes of forced displacement in the subregion.

B. Local integration and other local solutions

10. Over the past year, there have been some positive examples of successful local integration and other avenues to local solutions, such as more flexible civil registration and documentation policies. In the Americas, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador and El Salvador established procedures for refugees to convert their temporary migratory status into

permanent residency. On the African continent, the adoption of Ethiopia's new refugee proclamation in January 2019 will allow some refugees to locally integrate, while the Gambian authorities are simplifying the naturalization requirements for refugees. In Asia, close to 880,000 undocumented Afghans in Pakistan were registered by the Government, of whom over 520,000 received civil documentation. A flexible visa regime is also being established, providing refugees with potential alternative legal stay arrangements. Recently, the Government allowed Afghan refugees with "proof of residency" cards to open bank accounts in Pakistan.

11. At the regional level, the reaffirmation of the [Abuja Action Statement](#) in January 2019 called for proactive approaches to local integration and pursuit of alternatives to camps. In 2018, UNHCR cooperated with local authorities in Europe to promote access to labour markets and explore the role of youth and sports in integration. It also further supported the development of the "cities of solidarity" framework in cities across Latin America and beyond. The key role of cities and local authorities in supporting solutions for refugees and IDPs was highlighted at the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges in 2018. At a high-level meeting of ministers in charge of refugee affairs in the Great Lakes region of Africa, governments recognized that successful local integration requires legal stay arrangements, freedom of movement and inclusion in national services and systems, as well as community policing and land management.

C. Resettlement

12. The GCR reaffirmed the importance of resettlement as a tangible responsibility-sharing mechanism. Although the current trends show promise in being able to support expanded access to third country solutions, resettlement opportunities continue to be overtaken by the increasing needs. In 2018, over 81,300 refugees were submitted by UNHCR to 29 resettlement States, representing an 8 per cent increase compared to 2017 but covering only 6.7 per cent of the global resettlement needs.

13. In this challenging context, UNHCR continued to advocate increased resettlement, which is responsive to the needs identified, from three priority situations: refugees in the Middle East and North Africa region, as well as Turkey, countries along the central Mediterranean route and the CRRF roll-out countries. In response to the High Commissioner's call in September 2017 for 40,000 resettlement places for refugees at risk along the central Mediterranean route, the majority of places were made available by early 2019. As of 30 April 2019, over 3,600 individuals were evacuated from the detention centres in Libya (mostly through the emergency transit mechanism) to Niger, where over 2,000 refugees have been referred for resettlement.

14. UNHCR continued to develop its [resettlement data portal](#), providing up-to-date resettlement data and visibility of resettlement activities. UNHCR maintained its involvement in the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, supporting community-based sponsorship programmes in Germany, Ireland and Spain, and strengthened partnerships with non-traditional actors, such as academic institutions and the private sector, to expand resettlement. UNHCR has continued its work with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on supporting new and emerging resettlement countries, such as Argentina, Brazil and Chile, to build robust and sustainable programmes through the Emerging Resettlement Countries Joint Support Mechanism.

D. Complementary pathways to protection and solutions

15. The GCR recognizes other pathways for admission as a complement to resettlement and emphasizes the need to increase their availability for refugees. To that effect, UNHCR engaged with a number of countries such as Ireland (on humanitarian admission), Sweden (on family reunification) and Japan (on university education pathways). Partnerships with civil society, such as those with Talent Beyond Boundaries, RefugePoint and United World

Colleges, helped expand employment and secondary education opportunities for refugees in third countries. Acknowledging the importance of reliable data to inform the expansion of complementary pathways, UNHCR and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) released a joint report on first entry permits to OECD-Member States granted to nationals from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic. From 2010 to 2017, some 566,900 first residence permits were granted on family, work and education grounds, compared to some 350,400 persons from the five populations arriving in OECD countries through resettlement processes.

IV. Inclusion and access to national systems

16. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development remains of critical importance to UNHCR's effort to promote inclusion. Allowing marginalized populations to contribute to, and benefit from, inclusion in sustainable social and economic development processes is central to the pledge to "leave no one behind". The commitment to leave no one behind is a key entry point for directing attention and advocating resources to support the displaced and stateless populations within the framework of the sustainable development goals (SDGs). UNHCR has developed a guidance note that sets out the Office's engagement in the SDGs. This paper highlights the importance of inclusion and partnerships to pursue solutions for persons of concern and to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

17. In an increasing number of operations, UNHCR is seeking opportunities to include refugees in national education and health systems. Commitments to include refugees and other persons of concern in national education systems were made at the 2018 Global Education Meeting organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and at the United Nations 2019 high-level political forum for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. In the Middle East, the Dubai Roadmap for Education 2030 in the Arab Region adopted in 2017 continues to guide commitments in this area. UNHCR has increased enrolment in primary education, reaching over 1 million refugee children and is supporting access to higher education for more than 10,000 refugee students through scholarships and connected learning.

18. In partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNHCR is working to include refugees in national social protection systems, with a focus on access to health care and health insurance schemes. In collaboration with development partners and governments, UNHCR is also exploring the feasibility of including refugees in social and affordable housing programmes in various countries. Efforts are being made to ensure that water, sanitation and hygiene interventions equally benefit refugees and host communities, and mitigate the environmental impact and health risks. In Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, the Government, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and UNHCR are building wastewater treatment plants to improve sanitation services for all. To foster the socio-economic inclusion of refugees, UNHCR is increasing its engagement with social enterprises to enable refugee artisans to access global markets through the [MADE51](#) initiative launched in 2018. UNHCR is also working on securing access to financial services for refugees in close collaboration with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). Financial institutions have already opened bank accounts and developed lending schemes for refugee clients in Jordan, Malawi, Morocco and Tunisia.

V. Strengthening partnerships for advancing solutions

19. In line with the GCR, UNHCR is seeking to strengthen relationships with a wide range of partners. These include networks of cities, international and regional organizations, international financial institutions, faith actors, civil society, the private sector and academia. Most importantly, it is working more closely with refugees and host communities to explore their needs. UNHCR's decentralization plan and efforts to adjust its internal planning and

programming tools will allow for longer-term collaboration with partners through multi-year projects and initiatives.

A. United Nations system and other international organizations

20. UNHCR is working closely within the United Nations system and with non-governmental organizations to pursue solutions, including in the context of the policy and operational work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. Together with UNDP, UNHCR is implementing a multi-year action plan that addresses a broad range of issues, including the rule of law, local governance, GCR arrangements, livelihoods, early warning and preparedness. The action plan includes collaboration on the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) for the Syria crisis; the UNHCR, UNDP and Myanmar tripartite memorandum of understanding to support Myanmar in creating the conditions conducive to return; and the Regional Refugee Response Plans for the Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria and South Sudan situations. Collaboration with ILO and UNCDF are key to supporting the economic inclusion of refugees by creating the conditions to attract investments in forced displacement contexts. Country-level engagement with the World Bank and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and board membership with the Global Partnership for Education, have provided catalytic opportunities for UNHCR to influence systems-building and joint humanitarian and development engagement in 32 country programmes.¹

B. Financial institutions and development partners

21. The partnership between UNHCR and the World Bank continues to grow, through close cooperation on data and analytics, human resource development, policy dialogue and programming of the two financing facilities for refugee host countries launched in 2016. To date, 14 countries have been approved by the World Bank for funding under the international development assistance refugee and host-community sub-window (IDA18),² with projects covering education, health, water and sanitation, jobs, urban and rural development, and social protection. Cooperation also continues with the World Bank on the Global Concessional Financing Facility (GCFF). Originally focused on Jordan and Lebanon, Colombia recently became the first middle-income country outside the Middle East and North Africa region to access the GCFF financing facility. Discussions are underway to extend the GCFF facility to Ecuador, a country at the forefront of the response to the Venezuelan situation. UNHCR and the World Bank have also progressed on the establishment of the Joint Data Centre for Forced Displacement in Copenhagen and continue to pursue cooperation on registration and identity management through the Identification for Development (ID4D) programme. The two institutions are also working together in the areas of education, social protection, energy and private sector engagement through the International Finance Corporation.

22. The UNHCR-World Bank partnership has provided valuable lessons that will continue to guide collaboration with other multilateral financial institutions, especially the African Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank. UNHCR continues to collaborate closely with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), as well as with bilateral development donors, including the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the United States Agency for International

¹ Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, the Congo (Republic of), Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Jordan, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, Yemen and Zambia.

² Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, the Congo (Republic of), the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Niger, Pakistan, Rwanda and Uganda, with Kenya still pending.

Development (USAID), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, the German development bank KfW, the Agence française de développement and the Korea International Cooperation Agency. The objective is to encourage key development actors to address forced displacement more systematically through inclusive development interventions benefiting both refugees and host communities, in line with the core principles of the GCR.

VI. Conclusion

23. Addressing the root causes of and finding solutions to forced displacement requires long-term commitments and an investment of resources in comprehensive, multilateral and multi-sectoral collaboration and action. UNHCR continues to play a catalytic role in support of States, host communities, refugees, IDPs and stateless people, including by strengthening linkages with humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors, and key partners in strategy development, planning and programming. Despite the limited progress in achieving durable solutions for persons of concern in recent years, the groundwork for advancement has been laid by the affirmation of the GCR. New approaches to burden- and responsibility-sharing and strengthened international cooperation, with an emphasis on inclusion in national systems, gives hope for the future. UNHCR is determined to work closely with all stakeholders to ensure that the current positive momentum around solutions translates into further concrete achievements.
