

Oral Update on the Comprehensive Refugee Response
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Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank you Madame Chair, and all of the delegations, for this opportunity to engage with you on how we are following up to the New York Declaration and, specifically, how UNHCR is fulfilling the General Assembly's request that the Office "develop and initiate the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework in situations involving large movements of refugees."

As you know, the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection and I are holding regular **bi-monthly briefings and consultations with all UN Member States**, as well as our NGO and international organization partners, on the application of Annex 1 to the New York Declaration – the "CRRF" – and the preparations for the global compact on refugees.

The most recent of these meeting was convened on Monday and chaired by His Excellency Ambassador Comissário. At this meeting the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection presented a **proposed roadmap toward the adoption of a global compact on refugees**. This non-paper explains our thinking of what that global compact could look like, and it outlines the preparatory activities supporting and leading up to the compact's adoption. The first of these activities is, of course, the practical application of the CRRF.

Today I am pleased to join you to elaborate on the CRRF update that Volker provided on Monday.

- In recent weeks and days, **Ethiopia, Djibouti and now Honduras** have confirmed their intent to apply a comprehensive refugee response. They join **Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Somalia**.
- Like Member States, we firmly believe that regional and contextual diversity in the application of the CRRF is of critical importance. We appreciate that the inclusion of **Honduras** will enable us to build and learn from the strong base of regional cooperation that already exists, as evidenced in the **Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action** and the **San Jose Action Statement**.
- We also continue our discussions with important host countries in the Americas as well as other regions, notably Asia, on how to best apply the CRRF in their respective contexts.

I first would like to summarize the key developments in these **host countries** that have started to apply the Comprehensive Refugee Response:

- With one of the most generous and inclusive refugee policies worldwide, **Uganda** continues to host long-staying refugee populations. Since last summer, Uganda has witnessed a large-scale influx of refugees from South Sudan, with new arrivals averaging 2,500 refugees per day – and some days reaching as many as 6,000. It is now the largest refugee host country in Africa, recently surpassing 1,000,000 refugees. This has significantly strained the country's resources and its public services – including education and health, which remain open to refugees on equal footing with nationals. And despite this, Uganda continues to receive and offer refuge to those in need. Indeed, Uganda's approach has served as a model for countries in the region, recently hosting government delegations from Ethiopia, Tanzania and Malawi.
- To move towards a comprehensive response in Uganda, we are now working with the Government and key partners including the World Bank, to map the existing capacity of all actors in the refugee host communities and identify critical gaps, so that collectively we can mobilize support, especially in the emergency areas. A CRRF Secretariat under the leadership of the Office of the Prime Minister is steering this effort with the support of both humanitarian and development actors. The work of the Secretariat incorporates and builds from the both Government's Settlements Transformation Agenda and the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment Strategy (known as ReHoPE), which was developed by the UN and World Bank in support of the National Development Plan. The dedicated support provided by the EU and Japan to the CRRF in Uganda has been an important foundation.
- The unprecedented large-scale influx into Northern Uganda has depleted the resources of the local and national administration. Meanwhile, the emergency response of the international community – one of the pillars of the CRRF – is grossly under-resourced at only 10%, posing dire consequences for refugees and the host population alike. Providing urgent humanitarian support, and mobilizing development actors as well as the private sector, is an utmost priority. Only with this support can Uganda continue its generous policy, with the aim that host populations and refugees are able to live, and thrive, together.
- In **Tanzania**, the application of the CRRF represents a unique opportunity to implement the significant and broad ranging commitments made to refugees during the Leaders' Summit on 20th September 2016. Those commitments include enhanced access to education, work and livelihoods; continued provision of durable solutions to the remaining Burundian refugees from 1972; as well as the timely revision of the Refugee Policy and Act.
- We welcome the Government's decision to establish a Secretariat, which will be jointly led by the President's Office for Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG) and the Ministry of Home Affairs, to facilitate the engagement of all actors in a comprehensive response. We are working closely with the Government to articulate milestones toward implementation of the commitments, and equally encourage the international community to provide timely and generous support to enable their fulfillment. Additional financial support at this early stage of the CRRF roll-out is of critical importance.
- The application of a comprehensive refugee response for **Somalia** necessitates a regional approach, and the upcoming **IGAD Summit on Protection and Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees** presents a unique opportunity to this end. Even as the region confronts continued displacement and a devastating drought, we are greatly encouraged by the these States' commitment to pursue a coherent and comprehensive regional approach that will preserve asylum space in the region, while also facilitating development of the conditions that would eventually enable voluntary and sustainable returns to Somalia. Including refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees in national development plans -- and ensuring that returns contribute to stability -- will be key elements for a comprehensive solution.

- In this regard, it is imperative that the *new* Government of **Somalia** receive a genuine opportunity to lead the rebuilding of the country – an opportunity which would require the clearance of outstanding debts and renewed access to international financial markets.
- **Ethiopia's** recent decision to apply the CRRF was quickly supported by a joint World Bank-UNHCR mission to consider support to refugee and host communities under the IDA-18 refugee sub-window. Ethiopia's 9 policy commitments at the Leader's Summit -- which include an "out of camp" policy, local integration, issuance of work permits, access to education and local integration -- have been translated into a roadmap. This roadmap will be central for the gradual application of a comprehensive refugee response pursuant to the CRRF, and should be supported by humanitarian and development actors as well as by the private sector.
- In line with the New York Declaration and its Leaders' Summit commitments, **Djibouti** passed a refugee law in January that foresees fundamental rights for refugees, including freedom of movement, the right to work and access to services. This significant shift in policy will require support, so that access to key services by refugees can be realized.

You will have noted that my remarks thus far have focused on what **governments** are doing. And this is rightly the case. The CRRF is not fundamentally about UNHCR, but a comprehensive, whole-of society approach, led by the government.

UNHCR is, however, a **key actor** in this process, as are the wide array of stakeholders identified in the CRRF – including international organizations, international financial institutions, regional organization, civil society partners, the private sector, media and refugees themselves. Thus, an important part of our work is to **catalyze and enable a broader base of engagement**, and we are pursuing this at the global, national and local levels.

Let me briefly update you on some key developments:

- I have already mentioned the strong collaboration with the **World Bank**. Just as UNHCR is joining the dozen or more exploratory missions with the World Bank on the IDA-18 financing for support of refugee host countries and communities, the World Bank is now consistently participating in CRRF field support missions, through local and regional staff engagement as well as the World Bank's secondee to the Task Team. We have already seen this engagement significantly enhance our collective analysis and our ability to facilitate the inclusion of development partners, as well as line ministries, in the response. We are keen to see the further engagement of other international and regional financial institutions. We welcome, in this regard, the **African Development Bank's** engagement with the Somali situation and the IGAD Summit.
- At both global and national levels, we have been promoting **strengthened engagement with civil society**. We welcomed ICVA's participation in a joint mission to Uganda, and encourage additional efforts by the NGO consortia to reach out to and engage their memberships, including development-based NGOs. Like international organizations, NGOs are included in the regular Member State briefings, and the CRRF Task Team is providing additional, dedicated monthly consultations with NGOs. Of course the Annual NGO Consultations this year are dedicated to the CRRF, and the structure and outcome of those consultations are being jointly designed by ICVA, UNHCR and the NGO Rapporteur, with Task Team participation. We are particularly encouraged by the recent establishment of the **NGO-IFRC-UNHCR Reference Group on the CRRF**, which has among its objectives to increase the

range of actors in refugee responses and to propose means to enhance greater inclusivity and ownership of the process by local actors.

Before closing, I would like to **return to our common objectives** in applying a comprehensive refugee response. Member States very clearly articulated these 4 objectives as follows:

- (1) To ease pressures on host countries;
- (2) To enhance refugee self-reliance;
- (3) To expand access to third country solutions; and
- (4) To support conditions in countries of origin for voluntary return in safety and dignity.

Both collectively and individually, all of us engaged in the comprehensive response must ensure that our efforts drive toward these results. In this regard, we have articulated initial indicators or benchmarks, which will enable us to take stock of our collective progress. These consider, for example, the policy commitments of host governments toward greater inclusion and self-reliance. They include concrete support to host communities in addressing the additional strain on services and resources. And they look at access to solutions, notably resettlement and complementary pathways.

At the beginning of my remarks, I highlighted some of the strong commitments of CRRF host governments and initial actions already taken. **In closing, I must recall that New York Declaration is fundamentally about Member States' commitment to global solidarity, international cooperation and a more equitable responsibility sharing.** In this regard, I wish to express UNHCR's appreciation to the donor governments who have quickly come forward to support not only UNHCR but also the host governments and other actors, with both humanitarian assistance and development support.

Our common imperative now is **to secure timely support that will enable host countries to sustain and strengthen their response**, and to implement the generous commitments they have voluntarily undertaken.

Thank you.