

Statement by Denmark
First draft of the Global Compact on Refugees

Agenda item 3:

Check against delivery

Thank you Madam Chair,

- We align with the statement made on behalf of the EU and its member states. We welcome the comprehensive section on solutions, including the call for support to countries of origin and in particular the references for the need to ensure that voluntary repatriation is safe, dignified and sustainable. We stress in this connection the need for a free and informed choice, including through gender- and age-responsive information.
- Further, like Sweden, we believe that in a refugee context the terminology should refer to voluntary repatriation – and not simply return. Return normally relates to those without a right of stay.
- We also welcome that the draft calls for the involvement of development actors in order to strengthen sustainable reintegration of those who have decided to repatriate. However, we feel that it would be of immense value if the text recognizes that sustainable reintegration in reality is a process often ending up being as protracted as the preceding forcible displacement situation. It is often characterized by the same challenges as forcible displacement, e.g. related to access to land, housing and livelihoods, and thereby this can lead to massive secondary displacement and multi-year delay to sustainable reintegration.
- In this connection we would also highlight the need for putting in place policies and programmes that specifically consider women's and girl's needs and capacities and the unique risks that they may face upon return. For instance, livelihoods programmes upon return should be gender-responsive.
- There are no quick fixes for sustainable reintegration – and it is for that very reason crucial that the needs and challenges related to voluntary repatriation and reintegration are reflected not only in political settlements but also as a cross-cutting objective in local and national development plans until such a time when reintegration is deemed to be fully achieved, often

years after peace was initially secured. This will ensure a whole-of-society approach and the sustained engagement of development actors in support of reintegration efforts.

- Let me wind up by once more stressing that we look forward to engaging in the onward process on the Global Compact on Refugees and thank the UNHCR for its commitment, its hard work and its steadfastness in steering this important work.
- I thank you.