

Statement by the Islamic Republic of Iran
Formal consultation five for a global compact on refugees

Agenda item 1: Introduction
Geneva, 12-13 June 2018

At the outset, I would like to appreciate UNHCR for presenting the revised version of global compact on refugees and for the inclusion of some of the views raised in the last round of consultations in draft 3. It is not a secret that the principal motive for a global compact on refugees was the promotion of burden - and responsibility- sharing in refugee protection. That is why the title of "the Global compact on responsibility-sharing for refugees" has been used a couple of times in the General Assembly omnibus resolutions on the Office of UNHCR.

In such a context, the main question is how GCR will enhance burden sharing in refugee protection. To be frank, we are still skeptical of the capacity of the current draft to make a real change in this regard, since it has not gone beyond hope and expectation so far. We need a short and action-oriented compact that effectively addresses this issue.

We are approaching the moment of the truth over GCR and it's not as complicated as it looks. It's just a matter of fidelity to the letter and the spirit of 1951 Convention after several decades. We do not have so many choices. The point is whether the Convention and the international refugee protection regime are still valid for the international community as a whole or not. If yes, we must act meaningfully for solving this chronic problem. And if no, then we shouldn't be shy to say it loudly and clearly. This could pave the way for negotiating an up-to-date and flawless instrument.

We should admit that the development of GCR, as a process, is not a good occasion to keep our charming silence on the structural inequalities of the present international refugee protection system. Given the heavy burden and costs of refugees for the host countries, GCR should clarify in its introductory part that preaching humanitarian approaches cannot be gathered with keeping refugees and asylum seekers away. Refugees do not deserve protection just when they are out of our territory. When required, asylum seekers should enjoy international protection everywhere. GCR must guarantee this world-wide responsibility. Otherwise we would reiterate that protection of refugees by hosting countries should be

acknowledged as "voluntary" in paragraph 4 in harmony with the voluntary nature of contributions.

Against this backdrop, we emphasize the importance of and the need for the reduction in the number of refugees who live in protracted situations and would like to retain the deleted language on this issue in paragraph 7. My delegation will raise concrete proposals under the next agenda item to enrich the contents of the GCR and the debates.

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Agenda item 2: Mechanisms for burden-and responsibility- sharing
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My delegation welcomes the inclusion of the linkage with the Executive Committee in paragraph 16 of draft 3. Apart from that, we see no substantial progress in building mechanisms for burden -and responsibility- sharing in the new text. Para 16 speaks of going beyond existing processes and changing the way of responding to large refugee situations, but it is not clear that how these multiple arrangements for pledging and voluntary contributions, may fit for such a purpose.

We would like the Compact while referring to key tools for responsibility-sharing after paragraph 31, calls explicitly for breaking the vicious cycle and ending the unfair practices which have overloaded some developing countries with refugees and subsequently making them dependent on unpredictable generosity of others. We wish, instead, sustained and equitable ways to protect refugees such as their distribution from the beginning to be stressed in the text. These ways will reduce global inequalities, social exclusion, and poverty.

We urge the Member States to agree on a Compact that enables fair, predictable and equitable responsibility sharing through establishing a standing mechanism. While the draft recognizes the primary responsibility of States in hosting and protecting the world refugees, it should devise a minimal or at least an indicative framework for dividing and distributing this international responsibility among States. Now the irony is that more than ten paragraphs (from 32 to 44) have been allocated to maximizing contributions of sectors which do not have a clear

responsibility and accountability in this regard without mentioning States as the main task holders.

In line with our interventions in the previous rounds of consultations, my delegation does not support multiple arrangements and, at the same time, would like to suggest some modifications to make the proposed global refugee forum a more effective and efficient mechanism. We think that forum is a place where views are exchanged, rather than taking actions and measures. We suggest, instead, a "Global Refugee Conference" or "International Conference on Refugees", to be held every other year as well as an annual senior officials meeting. The high-level segment of the conference is proposed to encompass pledges and commitments in cash and in kind, granting technical assistance to the hosting countries as well as refugee resettlement. The senior official meetings look for ways and means to materialize the pledges and commitments made. An annual or biannual national report by all countries on national contributions to burden and responsibility-sharing to the conference will enrich the Conference debates and decision-making process. The final report of the Conference clearly reflects a summary of the national reports as well as the commitments, views, and any decision which may come out of the Conferences.

In conclusion, the proposed mechanism and its components should have a clearly determined agenda on responsibility-sharing, under the supervision of UNHCR, to upgrade the hosting capacity of all States, strengthen the resettlement initiatives particularly for the most vulnerable groups, and guarantee the quality of protection for refugees worldwide. I hope all distinguished delegates and the Office will take this proposal into careful consideration and try to elaborate them so that it promotes protection of refugees and systematically enhance the burden and responsibility sharing with the host countries.

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Agenda item 3: Areas in need of support
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My delegation would like to reiterate that the evident imbalance between part A and B is still conspicuous and a serious challenge for global compact. We have an underdeveloped Part A on burden sharing arrangements versus an overdeveloped Part B with so many prescriptions on protection.

Paragraph 49 states that the success of the measures in Part B hinges on robust and well-functioning mechanisms of burden - and responsibility-sharing and commitment of the international community as a whole to providing concrete pledges and contributions. We should mention two important points in this regard. First we do not see such a robust mechanism in prospect. Second the role of the international community should not be reduced to providing pledges and contributions anymore.

The most important area in need of support is hosting refugees in its entirety. So we believe the necessity of utilizing the hosting capacity of all members of the international community should be highlighted in paragraph 49. The long standing approach of neglecting the huge capacity of the developed countries to host refugees has enormously damaged the interests of refugees and major hosting States by decreasing the quality of protection and overwhelming scarce resources of host countries.

It is a minimal expectation that GCR has to overcome obstacles to refugees and asylum seekers movement and their reception and admission in various countries. In order to do this, it should be articulated in the text that the capacity of those States which has not been activated so far should be utilized and the limited capacity of major hosting countries should be protected.

In paragraph 61, we wish the challenges of group-based protection and prima facie recognition of refugee status such as abuse of international protection to be highlighted. This issue once again shows the importance of reasonable distribution of large number of asylum seekers from the beginning which is absolutely essential for securing quality protection for refugees. We believe this should be a key concern for UNHCR, and if not addressed, durable solutions for refugees will be unlikely.

As requested earlier, we wish in paragraph 89, a reference to be made to the interim nature of international protection which cannot continue when the reasons behind recognition of someone as a refugee have ceased to exist.

Finally we would like to remind that two issues of the current disparity between refugee protection and durable solutions and a specific arrangement for voluntary repatriation in GCR are among major concerns raised by my delegation which also require adequate attention.

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Agenda item 4: Follow-up and review arrangements
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It goes without saying that there are some requirements for any follow-up and reviewing exercise like baseline data, targets and indicators, without which it is impossible to assess the progress made. In the context of global compact on refugees, we need to have some baseline data which can be collected through a burden mapping exercise on major refugee situation across the world.

My delegation would like to reiterate its position on the general nature of the four objectives of the Annex I of the New York Declaration and the necessity of inclusion of some specific and quantifiable targets for each of those four objectives in GCR to facilitate measuring progress in burden and responsibility sharing. While such a practice is a prerequisite for any follow-up and reviewing exercise and in the absence of any opposition to this proposal, we are wondering why draft 3 doesn't include any target. In the same line, deletion of references to indicators and the process that had been previously proposed to develop them from the text is not intelligible for us.

We think that in absence of a set of clear targets to define specific quantitative threshold that must be achieved, any follow-up and review arrangement will be pointless. On the other hand, GCR itself without quantifiable targets will be far from reach. Although indicators can be developed later on, targets must be defined now. My delegation would like to finish by proposing once again this target: the developing countries and the developed countries to host equal number of refugees by 2030.