The United Nations General Assembly high level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants
19 September 2016

Opportunities for NGOs

Background
On 19 September, the General Assembly will convene a Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants. This is the first time that the UN has convened such a high-level meeting on these topics and it is a historic opportunity to strengthen our systems of international cooperation. In preparation for the Summit, the Secretary-General issued a report *In Safety and Dignity: Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants* which includes a number of recommendations organized around 3 pillars:

1. Uphold safety and dignity in large movements of both refugees and migrants
2. Adopt a Global compact on responsibility-sharing for refugees
3. Work towards a Global compact for safe, regular and orderly migration

The GA Summit is informed by the UN Secretary-General's Report.

The process
The President of the General Assembly (PGA) has asked the permanent representatives of Jordan and Ireland to convene meetings with Member States to arrive at an outcome document to be adopted in the opening plenary session on 19 September.

The Summit itself [present thinking]: two concurrent plenary sessions, 6 roundtables on specific themes with opportunities for civil society representatives to contribute in all of these. Moreover, civil society, academia and the private sector will be able to contribute their views on the outcome document, including through informal meetings under the leadership of the co-facilitators.

The United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN/NGLS) Office, together with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA) will, on behalf of the Office of the President of the General Assembly (PGA), coordinate civil society participation and the application/registration process for the interactive Multi-stakeholder hearings on 18 July as well as for the 19 September Summit. A civil society steering committee has been established to prepare both events.

ICMC, together with ICVA and the NGO Committee on Migration, are co-convening a civil society 'self' organizing process through an Action Committee working on common advocacy messages, open consultations, a survey, and a CSO strategy meeting on 17 July.

What else is going on?
- US President's Leaders' Summit on Refugees, 20 September, New York
- Private sector event organized by Concordia from 19-20 September, Grand Hyatt, to focus on refugees & migrants, not to be confused with the regular meeting of the UN Global Compact (UN private sector forum) to meet on 19 September.
High Level Plenary Meeting: September 19, 2016
Why it matters for refugees and hosting States
Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

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Global Compact on Responsibility-sharing for Refugees

2. What is the Global Compact?
The Global Compact is a commitment by States to address the need for greater responsibility-sharing for refugees, in an agreed-upon manner. It does not seek new legal commitments, rather it is based on existing legal obligations of States under international refugee, human rights and humanitarian law; standards promoted in resolutions of the UN General Assembly (GA) and UNHCR’s Executive Committee; as well as on past best practices. Through the Global Compact, MS re-affirm their commitment to existing legal obligations and standards and commit to responding to large movements of refugees in a more predictable and comprehensive manner, which safeguards the rights of refugees, while effectively and predictably supporting countries and regions affected by large movements.

3. What is new about it?
While there are several examples of comprehensive responses to large movements of refugees, these remain the exception and not the rule. The Global Compact seeks to change that. In essence, it moves from a piecemeal and rather ad hoc approach by States, to a more predictable and comprehensive one, engaging a wide range of stakeholders.

By adopting the Global Compact, States re-commit to uphold the fundamental principles of international refugee protection, in particular the principles of non-refoulement and access to asylum and refugee protection, and agree to support comprehensive refugee responses to large movements of refugees, based on international cooperation and equitable, but differentiated, burden-sharing.

4. What form will it take?
This will be determined by MS as they discuss the outcome document.

5. Is it only for Member States?
While the SG’s request is directed at MS, the intention is to involve all relevant actors in the CRRs on the basis of a ‘whole of society’ approach, including the UN, international organizations, national and local authorities, civil society partners, academia, the private sector and the media.

6. What are the timelines for adoption?
It is envisioned that the Global Compact on Responsibility-sharing for Refugees would be adopted at the 19 September High Level Plenary Meeting. The Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is anticipated for 2018.

These different timelines reflect the different stages of development in the legal regimes for refugees and migrants. The normative legal regime for refugees is already quite advanced, grounded in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, as well as regional refugee instruments. In contrast, the normative legal regime specific to migrants remains relatively nascent, with more discussion among States and other stakeholders required. The Global Compact on Responsibility-sharing for Refugees does not create new legal norms or envision a fundamentally different international architecture for refugee protection. Rather, it provides an overarching framework to these norms, grounded in the principles of international cooperation and responsibility-sharing and based on past practice.
November of each year. In the interim, it is expected that MS, UN agencies, international financial institutions, and others, will take the necessary actions to translate the commitments contained in the Global Compact and envisioned under a CRR into concrete actions and outcomes.

13. Is the resettlement and admission pathways goal realistic?
The Global Compact calls for providing resettlement spaces or other legal pathways for admission to at least 10 per cent of the global refugee population annually.

UNHCR is ready to work towards this target with States. As resettlement operations have grown in recent years, UNHCR has focused on strengthening its operational capacity and the planning and management of predictable global resettlement activities.

There has also been openness to new processing modalities, and a realization of the value of considering admission pathways outside the traditional resettlement framework.

**Humanitarian pathways** - which include traditional resettlement, but also other humanitarian admission programmes, private sponsorship programmes for individuals in humanitarian need, special humanitarian visas, and medical evacuation - provide protection for refugees with compelling needs.

**Additional pathways** may not be specifically based on protection vulnerabilities, but may equally advance protection and solutions for refugees and serve as an important expression of solidarity. Such pathways may include family reunification, including for extended family members, labour mobility schemes, and academic scholarships and apprenticeships.

These additional innovative and diverse avenues to admit refugees – which have been, and will continue to be, explored in close collaboration with States, IOM and other partners - have proved successful, particularly in the context of the Syria situation, and offer the promise of more solutions for refugees.
18. Can there be a CRR without a Global Compact?
Yes, and in fact there have already been comprehensive responses, with the response to the Syria situation being a current example. The aim of the Global Compact, however, is for this approach in dealing with large scale refugee movements to become the norm rather than the exception, thereby improving refugee protection and enhancing support to hosting States.

19. Can a CRR be regional?
Regional organizations and processes can be critical elements of an international response, ensuring that regional dynamics, including the drivers of displacement and the capacities of States in the region to respond, are fully and properly considered. The specific nature of any regional response, however, will very much depend on the situation. The recent Bali Ministerial declaration, for example, came out of the experience last year in response to the large movements that took place in the Bay of Bengal/Andaman Sea. That declaration had a strong emphasis on refugee protection, as well as on combating trafficking and smuggling, and protecting the rights of migrants. Other regional organizations – African Union, Economic Community of West African States, South African Development Community, Mercado Común del Sur, League of Arab States, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, European Union, Council of Europe – have also engaged, at different levels, on displacement issues and could play a role in any future responses.

20. How will UNHCR activate a CRR?
UNHCR has and continues to draw on good practice from past and current comprehensive plans of action, applying the elements that are outlined in the SG Report to a given circumstance. The advantage of the Global Compact is that there will be a commitment by States to support such comprehensive planning and response from the outset and not after years of protracted displacement.

21. Are there examples of CRRs?
There have been a number of examples of comprehensive refugee responses designed for specific situations, covering all regions of the world (e.g., CPA, CIREFCA, ICARA, 3RP). The Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) for Indo-Chinese refugees is considered by many to be one of the most successful of such responses. It brought together donor and resettlement countries, as well as countries of first asylum and of origin, to address the large movements of refugees that began in the 1970s. As a result of commitments by all, the CPA ensured temporary refuge for those in need of it within the region, linked to commitments for admission to third countries, be it from countries of first asylum or directly from the country of origin (Viet Nam). An estimated 700,000 people ultimately benefited from the programme.

More recently, the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) was launched in response to the Syria crisis, bringing together both humanitarian and development partners to create a durable and multi-faceted resilience-based response to the Syria crisis. Grounded in response plans developed at the national level, the 3RP ensures that programmes are implemented and monitored in a coordinated, regional framework. Millions of refugees, and the communities that host them, have benefited from 3RP programmes, and will continue to do so as overall resilience is strengthened.
26. **What is the US President's Leaders' Summit on Refugees?**

United States President Obama is convening a Leaders' Summit on Refugees, to be held in New York on 20 September and co-hosted by Canada, Ethiopia, Germany, Jordan and Sweden. The Leaders' Summit on Refugees will be distinct from, but complementary to, the General Assembly's High-Level Plenary Meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants. Participants will include States that have made new and significant commitments in support of refugees during 2016. The goals of the Summit are to secure:

1. broader and deeper commitments to funding international humanitarian organizations and UN appeals;
2. expanded opportunities for resettlement and other forms of humanitarian admissions for refugees; and
3. enhanced opportunities for refugee inclusion and self-reliance, particularly through access to education, legal employment and livelihoods.

Following the General Assembly High-Level Plenary Meeting on 19 September, the US President's Leaders' Summit on Refugees will provide interested States with an opportunity to showcase some of their tangible commitments and actions in the areas above.