

At the Summit for Refugees and Migrants hosted by the General Assembly in New York on 19 September 2016, United Nations Member States unanimously adopted the “New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants”. The New York Declaration affirms the principles, standards and practices of the international refugee regime. Together, the commitments agreed to by Member States that apply to refugees reflect an understanding that protecting those who are forced to flee, and supporting the countries and communities that shelter them, are shared international responsibilities that must be borne more equitably and in a more predictable manner.

Annex I contains what Member States have agreed are the elements of “a framework for a comprehensive and people-centred refugee response” that is to be applied to “each situation involving large numbers of refugees”. It calls upon the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to initiate the application of this framework to a range of specific refugee situations and—in consultation with United Nations Member States and relevant stakeholders—tasks the High Commissioner with developing “a global compact on refugees” for inclusion in his annual report to the General Assembly in 2018 so that it can be considered by the General Assembly in conjunction with its annual resolution on the work of UNHCR.

The Declaration also stresses that the comprehensive refugee responses should involve a multi-stakeholder, “whole-of-society” approach that includes “national and local authorities, international organizations, international financial institutions, regional organizations, regional coordination and partnership mechanisms, civil society partners, including faith-based organizations and academia, the private sector, media and the refugees themselves.

Therefore, it is essential that civil society organizations participate in the implementation of the CRRF and the various stages in the development of the refugee compact. The below illustrate some examples of how civil society organizations can contribute:

CRRF, NGOs and national level:

- Gather **good practices** implemented by NGOs which can be replicated across the case study countries (e.g. in Jordan – INGO/NNGO/Private Sector/UNHCR - quadrupartite collaboration on Connectivity for Refugees). Such good practices should be shared with the UNHCR Country Offices hosting the roll-out, with the Secretariat (if already operational). Methodology/tools to collate good practices are being developed by CRRF Team;
- Explore/expand **non-traditional partnerships** to include CRRF’s “whole of society approach”, i.e., academia, the private sector, bilaterals. Eg, NGOs/Private Sector, NGOs/Academia, NGOs/Local Government/bilaterals, National Societies/Private Sector. Share methodology of identifying and reaching out to new partners like community-based groups.
- **Integrate INNOVATION** in the design of new projects, capitalize on the use of novel technologies to help host communities and refugees;
- Promote **inclusion of refugees** into national and district development plans of governments;
- Actively engage in **advocacy and communication** initiatives on CRRF and in support of adopting the GCR;
- **Identify gaps and propose alternative solutions** on programmatic and process-related issues. How to include refugees better in the response and mainstream mutual accountabilities
- Exert strong **influence** to ensure political buy-in of governments regarding refugee policies, e.g., to ensure admission and reception of refugees. Examples: Finn Church Aid together with 40 NGOs are driving a very active campaign in Finland to increase the resettlement quota.
- Ensure the crucial nexus between humanitarian and development by crafting and **adjusting the organization’s existing operational and financial instruments**;

- Advocate for recognition of the importance of **addressing development challenges at the onset of humanitarian intervention**;
- Strive to **mobilize additional resources** to cover non-traditional partnerships and design of novel programmes benefitting both host communities and refugees
- Continue promotion to Member States in **maintaining their commitments to the Leaders Summit**;
- **Promote expansion of** complementary pathways (extended family reunification, scholarships, temporary protection etc.) with governments.
- **Facilitate gathering views from refugees and affected communities** and their participation in the discussions leading up to the refugee compact
- **Present inputs**, based on lessons learnt from the CRRF implementation, NGO experience and advocacy, feeding into the formulation of the Global Compact on Refugees. Discuss how lessons learned could be developed by UNHCR, NGOs and IFRC (jointly / separately).

Roadmap toward a global compact on refugees:

In line with the multi-stakeholder, “whole-of-society approach”, civil society organizations will be able to participate and contribute in the thematic discussions, the stocktaking (HC’s Dialogue) as well as the formal consultations. An informal format will be adopted for the thematic and the stocktaking discussions, permitting active and multiple engagement by civil society participants. The formal consultations will include all United Nations Member States and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have consultative status with the United Nations economic and Social Council will be able to participate as observers. In view of high number of participants in the formal consultations, consolidated interventions from the NGO community will be essential to facilitate discussions. The format of the thematic discussions, the stocktaking and formal consultations will be shared ahead of time.

In addition to the above, there are several other opportunities for civil society organizations to engage and contribute, such as:

- the annual 2017 and 2018 NGO-UNHCR consultations;
- the discussion at the UNHCR Standing Committee and its Executive Committee;
- Regular UNHCR briefings by the AHC-P and the Director of Comprehensive Responses at the United Nations (Geneva and New York)
- Interaction Forum (June 2017)
- ICVA forced migration WG
- Interaction refugee policy WG
- The UNHCR-NGO-IFRC Reference Group on the CRRF
- Various thematic initiatives driven by different NGOs like the Initiative for Child Rights in the Global compacts; WRC’s lead on gender inclusion into CRRF/GCR
- Various dedicated meetings between UNHCR and NGOs such as those organized by ICVA in Geneva
- Field driven leads like ReDSS formed Focus Group on CRRF/GCR within its coalition
- Participation of NGOs in CRRF Secretariats created in the case study countries
- Excom (NGO consolidated statement)
- regional workshops and seminars; and
- submission of policy papers and opinions
- HC’s Dialogue on Protection (December 2017)