CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Sixth Round of Formal Consultations

on the Final Draft of the Global Compact on Refugees

Geneva, 3-4 July 2018

STATEMENT OF LEBANON

Read by H.E.Mr. Salim BADDOURA

- At the outset, we would like to thank the UNHCR for the GCR new draft. We have definitely come a long way since the zero draft.
- At this crucial stage and notwithstanding our national position vis-à-vis the draft, we cannot but appreciate and commend the UNHCR, Mr. Volker TÜRK and his team for their dedication, hard work and listening skills.
- The GCR new draft acknowledges, at least in words, that the humanitarian response to refugees' crisis should constitute a matter of concern, not only to a limited group of States, but to mankind as a whole, in a spirit of continuous international solidarity and global cooperation.
- As a major host country, Lebanon has engaged in the consultative process on the GCR, throughout the past year, with a constructive, albeit principled approach that was predicated on the following principles:

- The GCR should be a vehicle for translating the principles of burden and responsibility sharing, as well as international cooperation, in a predictable, assured, sustainable and durable way.
- The GCR should serve to ease the plight of the refugees, without overlooking the interest and well-being of their host communities.

- The GCR should respect the sovereignty of the States, and not be used in order to impose new legal obligations and additional conditions and burden.
- The GCR should be used to foster durable solutions, and not only to serve as a blueprint to manage the crisis.
- Nothing in the GCR should be interpreted in a way to force on major host countries the integration of refugees, or their indefinite presence.

- Despite its bright sides, the GCR new draft doesn't fully live up to the momentum created by the New York Declaration, and the process it has then initiated.
- The arrangements for more burden and responsibility sharing, as outlined in the new draft, are not, in our opinion, robust enough, since we fail to see how it could be marshaled in order to divide the responsibility towards refugees, fairly, equitably and predictably, among all States, in order to redress an unfair situation whereby a limited number of countries, usually low or middle income, have to bear the brunt alone, because of their geographic proximity to the conflict and the humanitarian crisis that ensued.
- Moreover, there cannot be a true implementation of international solidarity, while an increasing number of States are closing their borders to refugees.
- But without preempting the future, our impression, given what we have heard and witnessed during countless rounds of formal consultations and informal exchanges of views, is that it will probably be difficult for these arrangements to make a sizable difference on the ground, in the absence of genuine political will that still needs to be seen.
- On a more practical level, and even if some elements have been introduced for a more realistic periodicity for the Global Refugees Forum, we still see that other important technical modalities are yet to be discussed, for such a crucial meeting to be a real

intergovernmental space where refugees' issues can be properly discussed. We believe that the search for such practical elements should be the object of future consultative processes.

- As for the measures foreseen in the new draft and related to the development of host communities, we still need to see how these measures are going to relate with the development agenda of host countries, in a way not to impede or to undermine it. And it's important to stress that the development segment of the GCR should not be used to impose new conditions on host States.
- We are still not comfortable with part B that sounds prescriptive on host countries, even after the introduction of many changes in language. At that stage, we would definitely need to put the following comments on record:

• As a major host country that has put efforts beyond its capacities to support its Syrian neighbors displaced into its territory, Lebanon simply will not be able to cope with any additional burden. Every extra effort needed will be contingent upon the international aid provided in support.

• The GCR, and more specifically its part B, should in no case run counter the incentives for refugees to return to their countries of origin, whenever it is possible, especially in host countries like Lebanon where refugees' integration is not an option, and where repatriation is the most appropriate durable solution.

- Having said this, in our view, the ultimate success of the GCR, and of the dynamics that it tries to initiate, hinges heavily on its capacity to deliver in terms of achieving durable solutions.
- At this crucial stage of our consultations, "prudence" is the main leitmotiv of Lebanon. We have in front of us a text that, even if it has painstakingly evolved, doesn't live up to the initial expectations. It is the kind of tool which the applicability still needs to be tested and proven, especially in large-scale refugees' crisis.
- We are fully aware of the troubled international times the GCR has been elaborated in. And even though we highly commend the spirit

of dialogue that has presided over our consultations (and not negotiations), we are worried that the search for consensus at all cost has its flip side, insofar it could mean that the GCR will not be a game changer after all. At the same time and for the same reasons, we cannot but nurture some serious concerns as regards for the GCR actual implementation, in a global environment which is highly volatile, and in times where multilateralism as we know it, is subjected, every day, to multiple and worrying stress tests.

- I would like to close my statement with more practical concerns about how our last consultations and requests submitted by member States today and tomorrow, are going to feed in the process. At that stage, further clarity on future steps is of utmost necessity.

Thank you Mr. Chair