



## **Supporting Refugees and Their Host Communities in the Horn and East Africa**

### **Co-Chairs' Summary**

1. The United Kingdom and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in collaboration with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the European Union (EU), brought together, at Lancaster House in London on 10 May 2017, representatives of countries of the Horn and East Africa, notably those applying the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, as well as international donors, international financial institutions and civil society committed to 'Supporting Refugees and Their Host Communities in the Horn and East Africa'.
2. Participants took stock of the refugee situation in the region and the progress made in delivering the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, especially its Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), the commitments made at the Leaders' Summit on Refugees and other pertinent frameworks, notably the IGAD Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and Reintegration of Returnees in Somalia. These together, express the political will of world and regional leaders to save lives, protect rights, and share responsibility for addressing the plight of refugees on a global scale, so pursuing a comprehensive refugee response. This should be predictable with development actors engaged from the start, and based on the principles of international cooperation, solidarity and responsibility sharing. Participants also considered how to drive forward durable solutions for refugees in the region while addressing on-going protection, assistance and other response needs.
3. Forced displacement is one of the defining humanitarian and development challenges of our generation. Across the world, there are approximately 65 million forcibly displaced persons today, including over 21 million refugees, 3 million asylum seekers and over 40 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Refugees often remain in exile for several generations, many in encampment surviving off short term assistance that neither prepares them for their return home nor allows them to contribute to the economy and life of their host communities in countries of asylum. Many host communities are already battling against acute conditions of underdevelopment, impoverishment and underinvestment and face severe pressure on their limited public and essential services. Environmental degradation and increased pressure over land, as a result of protracted displacement, exacerbates the stresses experienced by host communities and can lead to conflict.
4. The Horn and East Africa are both the source and host of one of the largest refugee populations globally. There are more than 3.5 million refugees and asylum-seekers displaced within the region and 5.3 million IDPs. Somalia and South Sudan are among the top five source countries for refugees in the world and over two-thirds of all refugees and asylum seekers in Africa are hosted in Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda. The region is also grappling with displacement coming from outside the region including from the Great Lakes and Yemen. This internal and external displacement could be dramatically compounded by the drought and risk of famine that are unfolding.

5. The international community needs to step up its efforts to support the countries in the region to provide asylum, protection and assistance to those who have been forcibly displaced and to drive for solutions so that refugees see a future for themselves and their children in the first safe country in which they have been granted asylum. Factors or conditions which lead them to embark on secondary movements to seek protection further afield, often exposing them to danger and exploitation by criminal gangs, must be addressed. Response efforts need to keep in sight the aim that most refugees will eventually be able to return voluntarily, in conditions of safety and dignity, to their homes, making it imperative to equip them with the knowledge and skills they will need to rebuild their lives and their country. The international community bears a shared responsibility to assist host countries and communities in responding to the social, economic and development impacts of large scale displacement.
6. Furthermore, as underlined in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the international community should also demonstrate solidarity and responsibility-sharing, including through providing resettlement opportunities for refugees in need and complementary pathways for third country admissions. To this end, a number of countries demonstrated their contributions.
7. A comprehensive new approach is needed to respond effectively to the scale of forced displacement. The 2016 Wilton Park Forum on New Approaches to Protracted Forced Displacement agreed five principles that are being operationalised by the practical application of the New York Declaration's CRRF. In Africa, the CRRF is being piloted in Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Djibouti and in response to the Somalia refugee crisis
8. The Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and Reintegration of Returnees in Somalia adopted by the IGAD Member States in March 2017 builds upon the CRRF with particular reference to Somali refugees in the region and Yemen. The Declaration and its accompanying Plan of Action call for, among others, the strengthening of asylum and protection for refugees in the region; their integration into national development plans and systems; the preference and search for out-of-camp solutions; actions to enable refugees' economic participation and self-reliance; and the creation of conditions conducive for voluntary and sustainable repatriation. There was a strong call to maintain momentum, deliver tangible results on the ground and regularly review progress.
9. Equally, stronger emphasis is needed to protect, assist and provide durable solutions for IDPs in accordance with all relevant bodies of international law, as well as national and regional instruments, for which the Kampala Convention was given special mention.

#### Addressing the Challenges of Forced Displacement

10. There was strong recognition of the contribution and solidarity that countries in the region have shown in hosting refugees over decades. These countries have been at the forefront of developing and improving approaches to support refugees, and their different experiences have helped shape the CRRF and will continue to do so.
11. However, there was also deep concern about new displacement. Over 1.7 million South Sudanese and over 400,000 Burundians have been forced to seek asylum as refugees in neighbouring countries due to conflict. The decision by the Government of Uganda and the United Nations to hold a Solidarity Summit in June 2017 was welcomed. The Summit will, among others, promote initiatives to help refugees become self-sufficient and contribute to their host communities. It will be an opportunity for the international community to demonstrate responsibility sharing.

12. The current drought in the Horn has caused growing levels of displacement in Somalia and the region. Participants welcomed the commitment by the States of the region in keeping their borders open and extending protection and assistance to newly-arriving refugees. Concerted efforts also needed to be made to sustain the response to the drought and risk of famine and to make adequate preparations for potential new arrivals both now and in the future.
13. Participants further underlined the need to provide more resources to support the response in the region to internal and refugee displacement. Emphasis was placed on increased political action to prevent and end conflicts as the single most important way of solving the displacement crisis in the region. Furthermore, refugee hosting countries, international organisations and donor institutions should invest ever more decisively in implementing the new comprehensive approach, with humanitarian and development actors working together, where possible, under the leadership of host governments and building on national systems. However financial support alone was not enough. Policy reforms to secure long-term solutions were equally important. Refugee policies, strategies and programmes with regional dimensions should be embedded within country development plans and long-term financing instruments should complement humanitarian instruments. New actors, including private sector and development institutions, must increase their engagement and foster new and innovative approaches.

#### Applying the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework

14. Participants echoed the importance of the CRRF in reinforcing, accelerating, innovating and supporting the implementation of initiatives and approaches for the response and solution to refugee problems. They welcomed the early implementation and progress in the CRRF in the Horn and East Africa. They recognised that refugee contexts, policies, and experience vary across the pilot countries; thus the CRRF has to be adapted to each specific context and expanded to new situations as appropriate.
15. New ways of working require area-based programming which includes refugees and host communities. The CRRF provides an important opportunity for all actors to demonstrate their commitment to this new approach by agreeing on collective objectives under the leadership of host governments. In addition to humanitarian assistance longer term investments in social and economic infrastructure, jobs and cash assistance to support greater self-reliance need to be the norm. This should be for the mutual benefit and resilience of refugees and host communities. For this to happen, development institutions need to engage as early as possible. The World Bank has a critical role to play in this respect, especially through its IDA 18 refugee window, as do other international, regional and national development finance institutions and the private sector.
16. Participants encouraged the continued sharing of good practices across the CRRF pilot countries to strengthen responses and contribute to the stock-taking of experience that will support the development of the Global Compact for Refugees in 2018. Participants encouraged greater investment in research and learning to build the evidence base of what works to inform policy and programming. The meeting particularly welcomed the opportunities for regional collaboration as reflected in the Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and Reintegration of Returnees in Somalia.
17. UNHCR was encouraged to continue, as called upon in the New York Declaration, to support this agenda and other related , and to develop, in consultation with States and relevant partners, modalities for the application of the CRRF to a range of specific refugee situations in both the pilot and other countries. In this respect, participants look forward to the High Commissioner's proposals for a Global Compact for Refugees as requested by the New York Declaration.

## Implementing IGAD Nairobi Declaration and Plan of Action

18. There was strong backing for the Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and Reintegration of Returnees in Somalia and its accompanying Comprehensive Plan of Action that were adopted by the IGAD Heads of State and Government in March 2017. This initiative reflects regional resolve to provide protection and deliver durable solutions for refugees, in particular the more than 900,000 Somali refugees in the region and Yemen who remain in one of the world's most protracted crises, as well as over a million internally displaced persons within Somalia.
19. The Nairobi Declaration and Plan of Action constitute the regional application of the CRRF for the Somali Refugee Situation. The “whole of society” approach of these outcome documents, when realised, will yield tangible results. The important commitments in the Declaration, building on those made at the Leaders’ Summit on Refugees, will strengthen protection in countries of asylum, and deliver durable solutions. This includes integrating refugees in national development plans, enabling development assistance and investment in refugee hosting areas, which have the potential to turn refugees from being passive recipients of humanitarian assistance to active agents of economic development. Many participants also emphasised the need to accelerate efforts to create the conditions conducive for the voluntary repatriation of refugees and sustainable reintegration of returnees in Somalia, so providing them an opportunity to rebuild their own lives and contribute to state building. There is also a need to increase resettlement opportunities and expand complementary pathways for third country admissions.
20. The imperative now is to implement the Nairobi Declaration and Plan of Action. There was support for the broad steps presented by IGAD, and reinforced by UNHCR and EU that are under way to develop national action plans that set out specific actions and investments required to implement the Declaration and Plan of Action, which would then be set within an IGAD regional framework. The immediate next step is for IGAD, Governments of the region and other partners to agree a roadmap for the implementation of this process, develop an overarching regional results framework, and map existing and planned investments.
21. It is critical that all commitments related to providing asylum and maximising opportunities for durable solutions are followed through and properly funded. Importantly, the comprehensive regional approach in the Plan of Action of finding solutions for the more than 2 million displaced Somalis is a huge undertaking that requires the combined efforts of all the IGAD Member States, strongly supported by the international community in the spirit of global responsibility sharing. This must also build on already existing initiatives, strategies and frameworks, for example, the 2014 Global Initiative for Somali Refugees and the State-led Durable Solutions Initiative in Somalia.