



Oxfam statement at the side event

'Five ambitions for the Global Compact on Refugees: an operational INGO stocktaking'
during the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges (13 December 2017)

I. Concrete measures that GCR needs to establish in order to ensure a greater degree of international solidarity and responsibility-sharing for refugee protection – Oxfam suggests a beta model of how to measure the capacity of governments to both *physically protect*, and *financially support* refugees and host communities

We all know that, in September last year, the leaders of 193 governments committed to more equitable and predictable sharing of responsibility for refugees – as part of the New York Declaration.

They said that it should become a reality in the Global Compact on Refugees.

They did so because it is not right – it cannot be sustainable too – for Africa and Asia to host almost 21 million of the world's refugees.

They did so because it is not just that the United States and European Union, *together*, host less than 4 million.

But the New York Declaration was only the beginning. What would an equitable and predictable way of sharing responsibility be? 15 months after the New York Declaration, no-one appears to have answered those questions – for all the thought and hard work in the attempt.

Indeed, there's a reason that no one has managed to develop this model in the more 65 years since the refugee convention was signed in 1951. It is difficult. These are challenging questions, because it is hard this makes it all the more important for us to concentrate our minds and work together to develop, and then to operationalise a comprehensive solution. Let us not miss this opportunity because it will impact on millions of lives.

Oxfam, certainly doesn't have all the answers. But to stimulate debate, we have been working with others and grappling with what model could deliver a concrete responsibility sharing mechanism: We have developed a beta model of how to measure the capacity of governments to both *physically protect*, and *financially support* refugees and host communities.

This model is based on a new database of indicators covering 193 countries. It measures each country's capacity and resources available – to offer physical protection for refugees, and financial support for refugees and host communities.

It considers the GDP and population of every state.

It considers each nation's place in the Human Development Index, as one measurement of each nation's progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

Because it would be utterly wrong to expect poorer nations to assume the same responsibility as rich ones, even though that is the reality now.

The database also considers the Fragile States Index, so that we can exclude the most fragile states from responsibility to support refugees.

Because to include them would seem neither fair nor sustainable.

Indeed, the fact that one third of refugees reside in fragile states is a demonstration that the current system of refugee 'protection' is utterly broken.

Working out each country's capacity is only the first vital step.

Once it has done that, the database assigns a fair share to each country – a fair share of responsibility for physical protection, and for financial support for refugees and host communities.

Indeed, the database shows that most countries should be doing much more. 113 of the 193 countries analysed are doing less than half of what they could fairly be expected to do in terms of protecting refugees, when looking only at the numbers being hosted. And yet, based on the database, more than 50 countries are doing more than their fair share.

That is why we're also offering the idea of a new *government-led* global platform in support of refugee protection and human development.

To have any significant impact, the Programme of Action must include a concrete mechanism for responsibility sharing, and we suggest a global platform co-chaired by member states that are already meeting their fair share and/or making concrete steps toward realizing their responsibilities, supported by UNHCR with a small secretariat. A Steering/Reference Group composed of stakeholders from different sectors – international humanitarian and development organisations, international financing institutions (IFIs), experts on migration pathways, private sector, civil society organisations, and refugee representatives – would develop new policy approaches to key issues: protection, human development and durable solutions through a whole-of-system approach. They would also support governments when needed to transfer global policies to national level for implementation in their specific context.

We believe that this could promote collaboration – by bringing together the different UN agencies, international organizations and local actors that frequently work *alongside* each other, though not always *with* each other in a very real sense.

It could bring together IFIs and private sector actors who are taking on increasing responsibility related to forced displacement, but who do not currently have formal roles in UN structures.

II. Nothing about us without us – refugees need to be involved and participate in discussions about responses and solutions. Women and girls' voices count!

Putting refugees themselves and the voice of refugees at the heart of everything we do should be a norm, not be an after-thought. This should happen from the local where we work. By consulting with refugees and IDPs about our responses and their experiences in the host countries it helps improve our program effectiveness, also shape our global policy responses.

This is why the Grand Bargain's Participation Revolution work stream is so critical and can really add value to the CRRF. On the ground, Oxfam works with partners to support the establishment of protection committees, including groups of refugees, women and men and members of the host communities. Often we find that the concerns of refugees and members of host communities are similar, difficulties accessing Health care, education for their children, and poverty.

To come up with a concrete proposal to contribute to the UNHCR consultation processes in the past three months, Oxfam has listened to refugees and refugee-led organizations, over 20 experts from academia and civil society to develop some thinking on how refugees can be engaged into the negotiations on the Global Compact.

To ensure that refugee voices are able to shape the Global Compact for Refugees, the Network for Refugee Voices we have been working with have asked that

- **Refugee Delegation** must be given a seat at the formal consultations of the GCR;
- **Refugees must be consulted in a formal setting** ahead of each of the six formal consultations of the GCR. Each consultation will produce findings to guide the Refugee Delegation's interventions in the formal consultation phase.

We believe that this could be built upon in the longer term and it could *at last* give a real voice and representation to refugees and allow for systemic inputs – **A formal mechanism for engagement**. The model we have suggested is based on the major Groups that emerged from 1992, the Earth Summit first, independent and yet formally recognized. It's a model that has been followed in significant processes since then, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

It is time that refugees had such a voice.

A Refugee Major Group could be empowered to engage directly with states and UN processes, to ensure that refugee-led organizations have an authentic voice and meaningful participation can shape and track the processes.

And that women refugees have a voice most particularly.

For refugee women are often subject to intersecting discriminations and violence – as *women* and as *refugees* – and due to other elements of their identities, whether race, ethnicity, real or perceived sexual orientation, age, or disability.

There must be discrete opportunities for women refugees to organise, and reflect their own distinct priorities and experiences.

But one thing is certain. None one of us today have the luxury of time.

We have less than nine months to ensure that the Global Compact on Refugees includes a concrete, predictable, and fair mechanism for refugee protection and support. It's our responsibility to act.

Thank you.



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