



CONCEPT NOTE

5th Annual Humanitarian Symposium on Global Compact on Refugees and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework

Nairobi, Kenya

25-28 November 2017

“A Common Vision and Perspective for Protection, Solidarity and Solutions for Large Scale Refugee Movements in Africa”

INTRODUCTION

1. The African region has developed pioneering regional legal instruments including the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and the 2009 African Union Convention for the Assistance and Protection of Internally Displaced Persons (the Kampala Convention) which aim to expand protection, assistance and solution for displaced population. In its Agenda 2063, the African Union envisions a future where Africa will be free from factors which generate forced displacement including insecurity, human rights violations and poor governance. It calls for Member States to promote free movement and expand services to Africans without any discrimination. The African Union has also adopted a Common African Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness in 2016 which lays emphasis on building partnership between humanitarian and development actors to establish effective protection and solution.
2. The African Union Commission (AUC) will hold its 5th Annual Humanitarian Symposium on 25-29 November 2017 in Nairobi, Kenya. In previous symposia Member States of the African Union (AU), officials of the AUC, representatives of various AU organs, regional bodies and partners actively participated. The symposium has served as an effective platform for capacity building, sharing of experiences on humanitarian initiatives and supporting the development of AU policy frameworks. This year’s symposium will focus on the New York Declaration for Refugee and

Migrants, its Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and the envisaged global compact on refugees (GCR). The concept note, jointly developed by the AUC and UNHCR, outlines the background of refugee movements and trends in Africa, summarizes major developments regarding the Comprehensive Refugee Response and identifies the objective and expected outcome of the Humanitarian Symposium.

3. The **New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants**, unanimously adopted on 19 September 2016 by the 193 Member States of the United Nations at its General Assembly, is a landmark political declaration and a milestone for global solidarity and refugee protection. It aims to improve and transform the way in which the international community responds to large movements of refugees. At the core of the declaration is a concrete international commitment to share the responsibility for hosting and supporting the world's refugees more equitably, including addressing the root causes of displacement. Annex 1 of the New York Declaration sets out a **comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF)** for responding to large movements of refugees, including emergencies and protracted refugee situations. It outlines specific actions needed:
 - to ease pressure on host countries and communities;
 - increase refugee self-reliance;
 - expand access to third-country solutions; and
 - support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.
4. The CRRF is in line with the African Union's Agenda 2063 which aims to bring about the socioeconomic transformation of the continent and the African Union Humanitarian Policy Framework which aims to preserve, protect and save lives, alleviate suffering and enhance physical and human security and dignity of affected populations affected humanitarian crises.
5. The organization of the Symposium follows a number of important steps taken by the AUC to promote awareness about the CRRF and the proposed GCR among its members and to support the effective participation of the members and AU organs in its development. On 21 June 2017 the African Union Peace and Security Council held an open session on refugees and humanitarian situations in Africa where the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees briefed the Council on refugee crises in Africa and the contribution the Council can make in addressing root causes. Similarly the AU Department on Peace and Security together with UNHCR organized the first briefing to the African Union Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and IDPs on 14 September 2017. The AU Commissioner for Political Affairs held a consultation with the 2017 Chairperson of the UNHCR Executive Committee Ms Ambassador Rosemary McCarney on 30 August 2017. At these consultations, the importance of AU engagement has been underlined, an issue that has also been highlighted in the statement made by the Commissioner during the 68th Session of the EXCOM in Geneva, Switzerland. The African Union is currently developing a common African Union position on the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.
6. AU member states, working together with UNHCR, are to initiate the application of the CRRF to specific refugee situations in close collaboration with a broad range of partners. To this end, the Symposium will explore and consider innovative approaches in the application of the CRRF in the

African context, with particular focus on enhancing international solidarity and responsibility sharing in a manner that promotes the self-reliance of refugees and provision of support to host countries and communities while responding to the protection and solutions needs of refugees. As of October 2017, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, have initiated applying the CRRF in Africa. Significantly, a CRRF regional approach is also currently being applied to the Somali Refugee Situation through the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Furthermore, an increasing number of countries have expressed interest in rolling-out the CRRF in Southern Africa. Opportunities to engage more regional organizations, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) will be explored. This demonstrates the leading role of Regional Economic Communities in the application of the CRRF. It would be important for the Symposium to explore ways in which this defining role can be further deepened and led by the African Union.

TRENDS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLUTIONS IN ADDRESSING LARGE SCALE REFUGEE MOVEMENT IN AFRICA

7. The African region faces immense challenges of forced displacement. By the end of 2016 there were 5.6 million refugees and asylum seekers and more than 12 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). Africa, however, is also a region where exemplary levels of solidarity are demonstrated towards those who are forcibly displaced. The number of South Sudanese refugees in Uganda has surpassed 1.3 million. Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda, host 4.9 million refugees, 28 per cent of the global total. As low-income countries, many of these African countries already face severe structural barriers to economic growth and development, and usually have the least resources to respond to the needs of people seeking refuge. Chad, for example, has the fourth-largest refugee population relative to its national population, but it was 186th out of 188 countries in terms of the Human Development Index (HDI). In 2016, 552,200 refugees in Africa returned to their countries of origin, often in less than ideal conditions. Since August 2016, over 250,000 Nigerian refugees have returned to Nigeria from Cameroon, many of them into situations of internal displacement. UNHCR has supported, since 2014, the voluntary return of more than 100,000 Somali refugees from Djibouti, Kenya, Yemen and other countries of asylum. In the case of Somalia, IGAD member states, with the support of international community, are supporting the implementation of a comprehensive regional approach to the Somali refugee situation.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOLIDARITY, RESPONSIBILITY SHARING AND SOLUTIONS IN AFRICA

8. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants calls upon UNHCR to work with States and other stakeholders in developing a comprehensive refugee response for large scale refugee movements and protracted refugee situations. Several African states, Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda, have well-developed road maps and plans on how they intend to apply the CRRF. The framework is also being applied in the context of the regional situation concerning Somali refugees where IGAD, with the strong support of UNHCR and the EU, has played a key convening role in supporting the development of the IGAD Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and Reintegration of Returnees in Somalia. The IGAD process has a

clearly developed regional results framework which is now being transposed into national action plans the relevant countries.

9. Furthermore, the New York Declaration also invited the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to propose a global compact on refugees in his annual report to the General Assembly in 2018 for consideration by the Assembly in conjunction with its annual resolution on UNHCR. UNHCR envisages that the global compact on refugees will consist of two parts: (i) the CRRF, as contained in annex I to the New York Declaration, and (ii) a programme of action, which will underpin the CRRF and facilitate its implementation by building a platform of cooperation to enable more equitable and predictable burden- and responsibility-sharing. UNHCR is presently engaging with a wide range of relevant stakeholders to identify the kinds of measures that could be included in the programme of action.
10. African countries actively participated in the adoption of the New York Declaration and supported the application of the CRRF. The African Union Commission held a briefing on CRRF for members of the African Union Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons on 14 September 2017. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr Filippo Grandi, briefed members and observers of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union during an open session held on 30 August 2017. Both during these meetings and at a consultations between the chairperson of the African Union Commission and the High Commissioner it was underscored that both the AU and UNHCR will work together to ensure the active participation and involvement of the AU and its organs in the development of the Global Compact on Refugees.
11. The African region has strong legal and policy frameworks for the protection of and delivery of solutions to refugees and internally displaced persons. These include the 1969 OAU Convention, relevant regional human rights instrument, the 2009 Kampala Convention on internal displacement and AU policy frameworks and instruments concerning refugees, displaced persons and migrants. As seen in the context of recent large scale movements, the roles of local communities, faith-based institutions and the private sector is crucial in realizing the application of CRRF and development of the global compact on refugees. This supports the ‘whole of society’ approach pursued in the application of the CRRF in several roll-out countries in Africa. Regional mechanisms such as the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have proven to be effective conveners of key regional stakeholders to support protection and solutions for regional refugee situations.

OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOME

The 2017 AU Annual Humanitarian Symposium will have the following objectives:

1. Share information on lessons learnt regarding the **application of CRRF in roll-out countries** in Africa (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda).
2. Identify and discuss **measures that could be included in the programme of action** of the global compact on refugees.
3. . Receive the views of African policy, academic and technical experts on the implementation of the CRRF in the African region.
4. Share the experience and aspiration of **African refugee youth** as has been underscored by the AU focus on recognizing the demographic dividend in Africa.

5. Identify ways and means to **improve access by refugees to social services** through the power of education and innovation and improve the inclusion of refugee in national development plans and programs.
6. Identify innovative means by which African countries can demonstrate international solidarity and responsibility sharing in delivering solutions to refugees trapped in protracted situations of displacement.
7. Share approaches designed to address root causes in order to advance the creation of conducive conditions for the voluntary repatriation of refugees to their countries of origin.
8. Explore ways in which the African Union and Regional Economic Communities can further deepen and enrich the process of CRRF application in Africa.

The symposium is expected to examine, finalize and adopt an ***“A Common Vision and Perspective for Protection, Solidarity and Solutions for Large Scale Refugee Movements in Africa”***

FORMAT OF THE SYMPOSIUM

The three-day 2017 AU Humanitarian Symposium will involve the following:

- **A High-level Thematic Panel on mobilization of regional and global solidarity for refugees** which will involve the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union, the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner (Protection), UNHCR HQ Director CRRF, World Bank Director for Africa, representative of the African Development Bank and Representative of the International Labor Organization.
- **A series of briefings by member states on the Application of CRRF** by current and prospective roll-out countries. The briefing will also involve sharing of information by operational civil society partners and will also feature voices of refugees including the youth.
- **Group sessions** on main components of the African vision for and contributions towards the global compact on refugees. The thematic focus for these sessions will include:
 1. The role of youth refugees and local communities.
 2. Expanding employment and livelihood opportunities for refugee populations.
 3. Unleashing the power of innovations and education.
 4. Enhancing political and security architecture for solutions for large-scale refugee movement including protracted situations.
 5. Experiences and lessons-learned on regional and sub-regional solutions for large scale refugee movement.
 6. Operationalizing the responsibility sharing provision of the OAU Refugee Convention in order to enhance prospects for solutions on the African continent (Article II-4);
- **Consideration and adoption of a draft document** outlining African Union Common Vision on the Global Compact on Refugees and CRRF.

Participants of the symposium will include AU member states, UN agencies, the World Bank, African Development Bank, INGOs, local NGOs, representatives of faith based organizations, the private sector, refugee representatives, youth, media, researchers and the academia and the media.