



The Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework: a regional application of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework

WHAT IS THE COMPREHENSIVE REFUGEE RESPONSE FRAMEWORK (CRRF)?

The CRRF is Annex 1 to the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted in September 2016 at a high-level meeting of the UN General Assembly.¹ It contains a comprehensive set of commitments to be implemented in situations involving large-scale movements of refugees. It lists a number of actions and best practices in four areas: reception and admission measures; support for immediate and ongoing needs; support for host countries and communities; and enhanced opportunities for durable solutions. While presenting common elements of a comprehensive response, the CRRF is adaptable to each specific context.

The CRRF seeks to ensure a more predictable and comprehensive response, one that is based on the principles of international cooperation and burden- and responsibility-sharing. With one of its four objectives to ease pressures on host countries, the CRRF eschews short-term responses in favour of a sustainable approach involving development assistance in addition to humanitarian action. This approach is based on the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders, including but not limited to national and local authorities, international and regional organizations, international financial institutions, civil society, the private sector, academia and refugee and host communities themselves. Finally, whilst the CRRF is aimed at refugees, the New York Declaration includes a set of commitments that apply equally to migrants and refugees. States have pledged to engage in intergovernmental negotiations for the adoption of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in 2018.

¹ General Assembly Resolution 71/1, *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*, A/RES/71/1 (19 September 2016) available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1.

WHY IS CENTRAL AMERICA A GOOD SITUATION FOR APPLICATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE REFUGEE RESPONSE FRAMEWORK?

Central America presents a unique emerging situation: The countries of the North of Central America (NCA) are experiencing socio-economic turmoil and high levels of violence, resulting in a multi-causal large movement of persons, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees and migrants throughout the region. Host countries are confronted with a growing number of displaced persons, creating pressure at national and regional levels.

Addressing this complex situation requires a mixture of humanitarian and security measures, socioeconomic incentives, and macro-economic support. Such a comprehensive approach would aim at enhancing immediate protection whilst working for tangible improvements in local conditions, eventually allowing voluntary return in safety and dignity, which would ultimately reduce the pressure on host countries. In addition, host countries would benefit from assistance for their reception mechanisms and asylum systems, and to enhance opportunities for self-reliance and local integration. As such, application of the CRRF in the region presents an excellent opportunity to combine humanitarian and development approaches, in line with the “New Way of Working²”, and to further progress toward the four objectives set out in Annex 1 of the New York³.

In the San Jose Declaration and Action Statement⁴, States in the region acknowledged the need for comprehensive and coordinated actions to enhance protection and respond to the most urgent needs of asylum-seekers, refugees, IDPs, migrants and deportees in the NCA, and made a number of commitments to this end. The Declaration, which builds on earlier commitments made in the Brazil Plan of Action⁵, highlights that the region is well disposed to facing the current situation through cooperation and responsibility-sharing mechanisms. Further, a wide range of active stakeholders--from international organizations and financial institutions, civil society, private sector and academia--are actively engaged with these mechanisms. The region is therefore fertile ground for an application of the CRRF to take root.

WHAT CAN THE CRRF BRING TO THE REGION?

The formulation and adoption of a comprehensive refugee response for Central America would be an excellent opportunity to operationalize existing political commitments, to identify progress, gaps, and priority actions, and to develop a comprehensive resource mobilization plan, as well as new responsibility-sharing and cooperation modalities.

Addressing the root causes of violence, as well as the multiplicity of factors that are forcing persons to move from the NCA, is a complex task requiring both short-term humanitarian action to bring protection to persons at risk, as well as long-term development work to address underlying socio-economic conditions. It needs a variety of stakeholders to be actively engaged in both aspects, each bringing their expertise and resources to the table.

² The New Way of Working can be described, in short, as working over multiple years, based on the comparative advantage of a diverse range of actors, including those outside the UN system, towards collective outcomes”, New Way of Working, OCHA, 2017, p.6, available at https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/NWOW%20Booklet%20low%20res.002_0.pdf.

³ These objectives are: “Ease pressures on the host countries involved, to enhance self-reliance, to expand access to third-country solutions, and to support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity”. (Para 18 of Annex I of the New York Declaration).

⁴ Available at <http://acnur.org/t3/fileadmin/scripts/doc.php?file=t3/fileadmin/Documentos/BDL/2016/10693>.

⁵ Available at <http://www.acnur.org/cartagena30/en/brazil-declaration-and-plan-of-action/>.

HOW DOES THE CRRF RELATE TO EXISTING COORDINATION MECHANISMS AND FRAMEWORKS?

The regional application of the CRRF will build upon existing coordination mechanisms and frameworks such as the Brazil Plan of Action, San Jose Action Statement, and national development plans and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). The CRRF will not subsume any of these mechanisms, but rather complement and strengthen them by bringing more stakeholders and resources to the table, which will add depth and sustainability to the responses being implemented. The CRRF would thus act as a broad frame, which will be developed, implemented and monitored through existing mechanisms and frameworks.

HOW WOULD APPLICATION OF THE CRRF FOR CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO BE DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED?

Participating States in the region have agreed to develop a regional CRRF model, known as the "Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework" (CRPSF). The CRPSF is being developed by each participating State through an inclusive a consultative process at the national level. These consultations are taking place across various sectors – government, civil society, and the private sector – with participation from regional and international partners. Informed by these consultations, each State is developing a national action plan, setting out the strategy it will pursue to strengthen protection, promote prevention measures and bring about solutions to forced displacement. Furthermore, the CRPSF will include commitments from cooperating States and plans for engagement from other relevant regional and international actors in support of these national action plans as well as regional cooperation.

The CRPSF will be presented and adopted at a regional conference, hosted by the Government of Honduras, the Organization of American States (OAS) and UNHCR, on 26 and 27 October 2017 in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. The meeting will draw participants from governments from across North and Central America, along with other interested States, civil society, the private sector, regional actors, and development and humanitarian organisations.

The Regional Conference should be seen as part of an ongoing process, and the CRPSF as a living document that will be further developed with additional inputs from all stakeholders. Resource mobilization efforts will also follow.

WHICH COUNTRIES IN THE AMERICAS ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE CRPSF?

The following countries are participating in the CRPSF: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Panama. UNHCR welcomes the participation by these States and hopes that other affected States in the region may also join.

UNHCR is currently engaging with main stakeholders, including States from inside and outside the region, to see how they can support as “cooperating States”.

WHAT PREPARATIONS ARE UNDERWAY FOR THE CRPSF?

National consultations have already started in the countries in which the CRPSF is being rolled out and will run through September 2017. These consultations are taking place under the leadership of the respective governments, most having established inter-institutional committees with relevant line ministries and national institutions, as well as civil society and other relevant stakeholders, supported by UNHCR, the Organisation of American States (OAS), and in some cases, the UN Resident Coordinator. The national consultations aim at a national action plan developed by each State and which will figure as a country chapter in the CRPSF. In parallel, consultations are taking place with

regional organizations and institutions such as the Inter-American Court on Human Rights, the Regional Conference on Migration, the Inter-American Bank, the Central American Council of Ombudsmen and the Catholic Church, among others.

HOW WILL THE CRPSF CONCRETELY CONTRIBUTE TO RESPONDING TO THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA?

The CPRSF will build on the commitments made in the New York Declaration and on existing regional responsibility-sharing mechanisms, such as the San Jose Action Statement and the Brazil Plan of Action, to support States in delivering on these commitments, while adding sustainability to their interventions.

The CRPSF will also leverage new and existing partnerships with a multitude of actors to work together on this comprehensive action-oriented response. Through these active partnerships, it is hoped that the CRPSF will truly embody an “all-of-society approach”, contributing not only financial resources, but also technical support (e.g., to strengthen asylum systems) and increased opportunities for third country solutions, including increased resettlement spaces and complementary pathways to admission.

HOW WILL THE AMERICAS CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES?

While envisioning that the CRRF will be applied “for each situation involving large movements of refugees,” the New York Declaration further provides that the General Assembly will work towards the adoption in 2018 of a global compact on refugees, based on the comprehensive refugee response framework and its implementation in a range of specific situations. Lessons learned from the practical application of the CRPSF will feed into the High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges, to be held on 12-13 December 2017 in Geneva. This meeting will take stock of the progress made since the adoption of the New York Declaration and contribute to the development of a global compact on refugees.⁶

All States in the region will be able to contribute with their experience and good practices. In addition to UNHCR’s global collection of good practices and thematic discussions taking place between July and November 2017, stocktaking exercises will be organized by States parties to the Brazil Plan of Action between August and December 2017 in Ecuador and Argentina on three chapters of the Brazil Plan of Action covering quality of asylum procedures, durable solutions, and statelessness. The outcomes will be validated and shared by States in the region in an event scheduled to take place in Brasilia, Brazil in February 2018. These outcomes will also serve as a regional contribution to the development of global compact.

HOW ARE PERSONS OF CONCERN CONSULTED AND INCLUDED IN THIS PROCESS?

Refugees and affected communities are at the centre of the CRRF. UNHCR is encouraging governments to include and consult with populations of concern as they develop their national action plans. For example, Honduras launched surveys to gather information on Hondurans abroad and on deportees, to be used in designing the national action plan. Consultations have also begun with women, youths and community leaders of internally displaced persons in Honduras, and with asylum-seekers and

⁶ Additional information on preparation of a global compact on refugees is available at <http://www.unhcr.org/towards-a-global-compact-on-refugees.html>

refugees in Mexico. In addition, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Honduras is launching online surveys with the Honduran diaspora living in the US. Panama and Costa Rica are also conducting consultations with asylum seekers and refugees.

HOW CAN COOPERATING STATES AND REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS SUPPORT THE CRPSF?

Interested States and other partners can provide financial, technical and other support to affected States and communities to:

- **Build viable and efficient national asylum systems:** It is vital to build and strengthen systems for receiving, processing, identifying and protecting those who are fleeing violence in the countries of the NCA.
- **Ensure adequate reception mechanisms in countries of transit:** This includes profiling mechanisms to detect persons with specific needs, and providing humanitarian assistance, shelter, safety, and other targeted interventions along the route.
- **Improve conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity:** Many of the NCA citizens being deported continue to face continuing protection risks upon their return. Ensuring adequate identification and referral mechanisms for vulnerable returnees and providing humanitarian assistance and livelihoods solutions to those identified are key priorities.
- **Address the structural causes of violence and forced displacement:** International and regional financial institutions can support NCA countries in addressing the structural causes of forced displacement and strengthening the resilience of host communities and communities at high risk. All efforts should be made to ensure that existing grants and loans to NCA countries include a protection and community-centered approach to development.
- **Expand third country-solutions for persons in need of international protection:** Resettlement countries from inside and outside the region are encouraged to participate in the protection transfer arrangement (PTA) and existing in-country processing mechanism that offer solutions to persons at heightened risk from the NCA. As the need currently exceeds the capacity of the PTA in Costa Rica, States are urged to offer more places for this life saving mechanism. States are also encouraged to provide alternative and complementary pathways for admission, such as family reunification, particularly for unaccompanied minors.
- **Foster new partnerships for the regional refugee response in the Central America and Mexico:** Governments are encouraged to bring new private sector actors, civil society, regional and international organisations, including UN Agencies, to the table to create and leverage new partnerships, with a view to better include the affected population in existing national programs, and to help them exercise their rights and access essential basic services.
- **Support long-standing regional solidarity and responsibility-sharing mechanisms in the region:** The international community should recognise the extraordinary regional solidarity and responsibility-sharing mechanisms that already exist in the Americas--including the Brazil Plan of Action and the San Jose Action Statement--and increase support to participating States and affected communities through financial, technical and political means, and by making increased re-settlement and complementary legal pathways available.

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