



Statement from ICVA

Global Compact on Refugees – a step forward in translating words into collective action

Geneva, 16 November 2018 – This week marked an important step in the process of developing the Global Compact on Refugees. At the General Assembly in New York, UN Member States showed decisive support for the Compact. Looking ahead, ICVA now calls for all stakeholders to translate words into collective action. “Refugees worldwide and the communities that host them deserve solidarity from us all,” says ICVA’s Executive Director Ignacio Packer.

The Compact was developed in a truly inclusive and collective manner. Member States, UNHCR and other stakeholders – including NGOs and refugees – came together in a historic 18-month process to forge a Compact, outlining a common vision to address the challenges of forced displacement. The final text is a prime example of what functioning multilateralism can achieve, despite the inherent compromises.

“The development of the Compact has opened up a historic opportunity to reinvigorate the refugee regime as it provides a framework to catalyse international solidarity with refugees and host States,” commented Ignacio Packer. Despite having to balance the interests of various stakeholders, the Compact managed to retain this strong ambition. It particularly highlights that all actors stand to benefit from more predictable, equitable and sustainable responsibility-sharing.

In this perspective, broadening the base of support beyond traditional donors and host countries, while engaging in a multi-stakeholder approach will be key. Partnerships can have the multiplier effect required to expand our collective capacity to respond to refugee crises.

The implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework over the past two years has already demonstrated the potential of new approaches. “We have witnessed the mobilization of new political will and partnerships in many corners of the world, geared towards improving the daily realities of refugees. We now need to build on this positive momentum,” added ICVA’s Executive Director.

In doing so, it will be fundamental to keep the principle of *non-refoulement* at the center of the Global Compact on Refugees. In addition to being the cornerstone of the refugee protection regime, *non-refoulement* is also the foundation of responsibility-sharing, the first act of solidarity being to allow entry for those in need of protection.

NGOs are already working to operationalise the ideals of the Global Compact on Refugee, suggesting ways they can contribute to its implementation. “We are eager to collaborate with UNHCR, Members States and other stakeholders to make the Global Compact on Refugees a game changer in refugee response,” concluded Ignacio Packer.