

Conclusion No. 117 (LXXV) on durable solutions and complementary pathways (2024).

UNHCR

Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme

October 2024

The Executive Committee,

Recognizing the mandate of UNHCR to provide international protection and seek durable solutions for refugees; to identify and protect stateless persons and to prevent and reduce statelessness; and to contribute to inter-agency responses by protecting and assisting internally displaced persons under State leadership;

Noting with concern the increasing number of refugees worldwide in recent years and the limited number of those finding durable solutions; *noting* with particular concern the growing number of refugees in protracted displacement; and *recognizing* the impacts thereof on refugees and, in many cases, on host countries and communities;

Considering that international cooperation in solving international problems of a humanitarian nature and uniting our strength to maintain international peace and security are among the purposes of the United Nations, as defined in its Charter; *noting* that violent conflict continues to be a major driver of displacement across borders; and *considering* that the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees underscores the importance of international cooperation for achieving solutions to the situation of refugees;

Recognizing the major efforts made by host countries to welcome, assist, protect and provide access to services to asylum-seekers and refugees, amidst the ongoing financial pressures faced by host countries and by UNHCR, and *recalling* the urgent need for support to host countries to facilitate durable solutions;

Reaffirming its commitment to international solidarity and more equitable responsibility- and burden-sharing involving all members of the international community, and recalling the importance of international cooperation, in particular to support communities and countries hosting refugees, in ensuring protection and assistance and achieving solutions for refugees;

Recognizing that States need to demonstrate strong political will to address the root causes of displacement for the purpose of achieving durable solutions;

Noting that a combination of solutions, taking into account the specific circumstances of each refugee situation, need to be pursued; although voluntary repatriation in conditions of safety and dignity remains the preferred solution in the majority of refugee situations;

Recognizing that complementary pathways are not a substitute for but are additional and complementary to voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement, and can play an important role in facilitating solutions for many refugees;

Recalling the right to seek and enjoy asylum, which paves the way for durable solutions;
Recognizing that solutions are often interconnected and may be realized on a progressive basis;
Recalling the Global Compact on Refugees, which defined the facilitation of access to durable solutions as a primary objective and recognized that eliminating root causes is the most effective way to achieve solutions; and *recalling* the second Global Refugee Forum of 2023, where member States and other stakeholders committed to take concrete measures to facilitate access to durable solutions for refugees in a wide range of multi-stakeholder pledges;

Recalling relevant Executive Committee conclusions on durable solutions and the role they continue to play in guiding UNHCR in its mandate to protect and seek solutions for refugees;
Recalling the multi-year work plan of 2023 for Executive Committee conclusions and the significant costs and challenges faced by countries hosting refugees, and *acknowledging* that measuring the impacts of hosting, assisting and protecting refugees can inform ongoing efforts to achieve durable solutions;

(a) *Calls upon* States, in cooperation with UNHCR and other partners, to enhance efforts to prevent displacement and facilitate durable solutions for refugees at the earliest possible stage, including from the outset of a displacement situation;

(b) *Stresses* the need for States, with support from UNHCR and the international community, including donors, and peace and development stakeholders, to create conditions conducive for voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity, based on a free and informed choice; and further *calls* for enhanced and additional humanitarian and development cooperation among countries of origin, hosting States and donor partners to enable the sustainable reintegration of returnees in countries of origin;

(c) *Welcomes* the important work done by States with support from relevant stakeholders to contribute to local integration, including facilitating socioeconomic inclusion, mindful of hosting communities; and to the establishment and implementation of conducive legal, policy and institutional frameworks and facilitation of naturalization, consistent with Article 34 of the 1951 Convention and in accordance with relevant national laws and policies; and *calls* for additional efforts, including from UNHCR and the international community, to support this work;

(d) *Calls upon* more States to engage in offering more refugee resettlement places, with the support of UNHCR, while adhering to protection-centered resettlement criteria and while using flexible processing modalities, in the spirit of equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing;

(e) *Calls upon* States to engage in, facilitate and expand opportunities for refugees to take up complementary pathways, with support from relevant stakeholders, which are additional to voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement through laws, policies and practices;

(f) *Calls upon* States to facilitate all possible complementary pathways, recognizing that such pathways can lead to durable solutions on a progressive basis, including the following:

(i) needs-based pathways, including humanitarian pathways, based on broad protection, vulnerability and context-specific criteria;

(ii) refugee labour mobility and education pathways for refugees to take up employment and/or education in another country;

(iii) sponsorship pathways, to which a wide range of stakeholders should be encouraged to contribute, including to support the integration of refugees; and

(iv) family reunification, based on principles of family unity, as an important pathway to durable solutions; and calls on States to facilitate effective procedures and clear referral pathways for reunification with family members, as well as to consider efforts to bring together persons in relationships of dependency, where appropriate and in accordance with national law; and to promote access to procedures and flexible requirements to restore refugees' family unity and enjoyment of their right to family life;

(g) *Calls upon* States, UNHCR and other relevant stakeholders to identify the particular obstacles and challenges to realizing durable solutions that are faced by refugees, especially women, and children, persons with disabilities, older persons, and other refugees in vulnerable situations; and work with them to develop and implement measures to overcome such barriers;

(h) *Calls on* UNHCR to continue the efforts to measure the impacts of hosting, assisting and protecting refugees;

(i) *Calls upon* States, in cooperation with UNHCR and with sustainable and predictable financial support from the international community, including donor partners and development partners, to take concrete measures to support and facilitate the following important elements, which can enable all forms of durable solutions and complementary pathways:

(i) enhanced engagement in regional and international cooperation, support platforms and solutions strategies, including to address root causes in all relevant dimensions in, and to prevent displacement from, countries of origin;

(ii) inclusion of refugees, enabling access to national services and the economy, to encourage refugees' self-reliance and ability to pursue solutions of all kinds, where possible, including access to labour markets, in coordination with the private sector

(iii) work with humanitarian, development and peace stakeholders, as well as international financial institutions, to enhance prevention, resilience, protection and durable solutions, including by:

- providing assistance to host countries for implementation of protection and solution-focused refugee policies, as well as sustainable local integration;

- supporting countries of origin, including through building infrastructure and creating livelihood options, in their efforts to reinforce conditions which can foster an enabling environment by boosting confidence among prospective returnees for voluntary repatriation and reintegration; and

(iv) access to information, legal advice and support for refugees on their rights and obligations throughout relevant processes; and access to the means to establish legal identity through documentation including birth registration, which can play an invaluable role in enabling refugees to find durable solutions;

(v) issuance of machine-readable travel documents to enable refugees to pursue complementary pathways and durable solutions in ways that ensure protection from refoulement;

(vi) education and training for refugees, including for girls, boys, women and persons with disabilities, to foster resilience and to expand opportunities for post-secondary education, alongside host communities;

(vii) systems and tools, as used by UNHCR, States and other relevant stakeholders, to promote durable solutions, including intentions surveys, comprehensive, high-quality and disaggregated

data-gathering and analysis that capture both the needs and capacities of refugees in accordance with data protection and privacy principles and inter-agency cooperation, among other things, supported by States;

(viii) enhance investments, in collaboration with the private sector, to broaden access to employment opportunities for returnees, refugees and host communities;

(j) *Encourages* UNHCR to work with development actors, international financial institutions and the private sector, to bring education and vocational training opportunities to refugees and host communities to develop skills that enhance their self-reliance and access to durable solutions and complementary pathways;

(k) *Calls on* UNHCR to enhance strategic partnerships, including coordination, among States, relevant United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, the private sector, civil society, including, among others, faith-based organizations, and other relevant partners, to work together effectively in the planning and implementation of durable solutions;

(l) *Recognizes* the importance of meaningful participation of refugees and host communities in matters concerning them to realize durable solutions and complementary pathways; and

(m) *Requests* the High Commissioner to report on the implementation of this conclusion to the Executive Committee.