



Statement by the Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts

High Commissioner Dialogue Side Event - Risk and resilience in the city: Engaging and protecting refugee children and youth in urban settings

This is a statement on behalf of the Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts. The Initiative commends the organizers of this side event for focusing on the protection of refugee children and youth in urban settings. Children and young people face various risks, and we heard examples of some of them from our youth panelists. Factors such as gender, disability or being unaccompanied and separated can further aggravate the situation. Especially in urban settings and cities, children are often the first to fall through the cracks. They are left on their own to deal with the multifaceted risks, without receiving the information, guidance and support they need to make the right choices. They are sometimes the target of xenophobia and prejudices with people increasingly perceiving refugee and migrant youth as a potential security risk.

Yet, as the youth panelists told us, there are solutions. They start by listening to the children and youth concerned who, and as we heard today, are very clear in what needs to be done to improve their situation.

In this regard the adoption of GCR is in the Initiative's view a very strong tool to promote the participation of children and youth. Para 13 of the GCR speaking about the programme of action, emphasizes partnerships and a participatory approach, including through the meaningful participation of children and youth. A number of other measures foreseen in the GCR, if properly implemented, will enhance resilience and strengthen the protection of refugee children and youth and increase their access to care, protection, quality education and healthcare and other vital public services refugee children desperately need. As States start to implement the GCR, the Initiative calls on States to

develop action plans and pledges that prioritize investments and access to services for children on an equal footing with national children.

The Initiative stands ready to contribute throughout the GCR implementation to help ensure its success, in particular by supporting the essential participation of children and young people. We will continue to discuss with refugee and migrant children as well as national children and young people to ensure that their needs and proposed solutions are listened to and to support their engagement. We will share tools and best practice to support children and young people, including refugee children and youth to meaningfully engage as crucial stakeholders for the implementation of the GCR.

I thank you!

About the Initiative: The Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts is a multi-stakeholder partnership bringing together 30 civil society, trade union, UN and philanthropic organisations around a shared agenda - to ensure that children's rights are at the heart of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration, and to create a continuum of care, protection and support for refugee and migrant children.