

Pakistan's comments on Rev-1 of draft declaration for UN Summit on refugees and migrants

Distinguished

Co-facilitators,

I thank you for rev-1 of the draft Declaration, which is much shorter and better streamlined. Rev-1 has also taken into account some of the proposals from our last meeting, such as recognizing refugees and migrants as separate legal entities and appreciating the disproportionate burden on countries host to large scale protracted refugee situations.

At the same time, we notice some unnecessary and avoidable intrusions, such as the reference to LGBT group in para 2.2. The inclusion of controversial and sensitive issues will unnecessarily complicate the negotiation process.

Coming to the substantive issues, I would like to once again reiterate that the issue of timely and sustainable return of refugees in protracted refugee situations is of utmost significance for my country, as we have been host to nearly 3 million Afghan refugees for nearly four decades now. In this context, we would like to point out that para 4.9, which deals with protracted refugee situations. is weak, diluted and compromised in its current form. The return of refugees has been made conditional on "where possible". This qualifier should be deleted and replaced with a clearer formulation i.e "For this purpose, countries of origin and the international community should cooperate with the host countries and create necessary conditions for the timely and sustainable return of refugees". Furthermore, the reference to 'refugee camps' should be deleted from this paragraph.

Secondly, para 1.6, as currently formulated, marginalizes the issue of protracted refugee situations. This paragraph should be restructured to put equal emphasis on both acute refugee crisis and protracted refugee situations.

Third, I will reiterate our earlier proposals on deleting all references to IDPs as well as references to outcomes of any summit or conferences which were not held on the basis of intergovernmental process.

Finally, let me flag it once again that a clear and robust provision on timely and sustainable return of refugees in protracted situations and the responsibilities of countries of origin is of great significance for my country and it would be very difficult for us to subscribe to a document which fails to include, or somehow dilutes or qualifies, this provision.

I thank you.