

Joint Communiqué

on the occasion of the launch of the

Support Platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries

Recalling that after forty years of uprooting, Afghan refugees continue to constitute the second largest refugee population in the world, and that the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries (SSAR), led by the Governments of the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, with UNHCR support, has served as an enabling platform for dialogue, consensus-building and partnerships in the context of the Afghan refugee situation since its endorsement by the international community in 2012;

Reaffirm their commitment to the SSAR as the principal framework for comprehensive responses in support of lasting solutions for Afghan refugees in the region, including voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration in Afghanistan as the most preferred solution;

Welcome the provision of the Global Compact on Refugees for context-specific, regional support platforms as an “arrangement to achieve more equitable and predictable burden and responsibility-sharing with host countries and communities, and to support the search for solutions, including, where appropriate, through assistance to countries of origin;”

Appreciate the activation today of a dedicated Support Platform for the SSAR by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as agreed by the three Governments;

Express their hope that the SSAR Support Platform will realize a fair and equitable burden and responsibility-sharing with host countries and communities; mobilize additional financial, technical and material assistance as well as resettlement and complementary pathways for admission to third countries; facilitate coherence across humanitarian and development interventions; and engage a broader base of stakeholders in the implementation of the three pillars of the SSAR as highlighted in the 2012 Joint Communiqué, namely:

- Support to voluntary repatriation;
- Investment in sustainable reintegration in Afghanistan; and
- Assistance to host countries.

With a view to mobilizing international support and more robustly implementing the three pillars of the SSAR, the Support Platform will seek to:

Promote and support voluntary repatriation and create conditions conducive to sustainable reintegration, including through strengthened cross-border initiatives that build the human capital, resilience and portable skills of refugees in host countries and facilitate the repatriation and reintegration of refugees in a sustained manner, with the aim of utilizing their capacity and skills in Afghanistan as an engine for the progress and development of their homeland;

Provide assistance to host countries and communities through additional investments into the national public service delivery systems of the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan, in the areas of education, healthcare, social protection and vocational skills development, and support their inclusive policies that

benefit both host communities and refugees, in a way that supports their voluntary repatriation to Afghanistan and enables them to contribute to their country of origin.

Enhance the capacity for voluntary return to and sustainable reintegration in Afghanistan, including in the Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration (PARRs) and through other relevant initiatives, including comprehensive return programs, with the objective of realizing an increase of voluntary repatriation in a safe, dignified and sustained manner.

Reaffirm that the voluntary return and sustainable reintegration of the Afghan refugee population is a central objective of the SSAR, and can contribute to the overall stability and sustainable development of Afghanistan;

Urge committed States and other stakeholders to support the efforts of the three Governments to enable solutions for Afghan refugees by mobilizing contributions and other support in the context of the SSAR Support Platform and by helping to mitigate conditions which may adversely affect the host countries' capacity to protect refugees.

Emphasize that enhanced burden and responsibility-sharing to ease the pressure on host countries are core objectives of the Support Platform, recognizing that voluntary repatriation remains the preferred solution, and that interventions and investments must be well-oriented, targeted and verifiable; and

Request UNHCR to assist the Support Platform, with guidance of the three Governments, and taking into account existing response efforts and coordination mechanisms.

16 December 2019
Geneva, Switzerland