

Engagement on the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees

June 2018

In 2016, the Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations collaborated closely with the Episcopal Church Representative to the United Nations on advocacy toward the development of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. The New York Declaration was a critical commitment from member states of the UN to work toward safe, orderly, and regular migration and it set up the process for the development of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact on Migration. We participated in the UN General Assembly Summit around the New York Declaration, joined with NGO partners and with other faith-based partners in an advocacy strategy, and hosted a program with Episcopal Migration Ministries for UN officials and other partners to showcase the work of the Episcopal Church with refugees and global migration.

The New York Declaration was not only a significant declaration for support of migrants, but it gave advocates in the U.S. and other countries a tool to pressure their respective leaders to increase commitments to refugee and migrant protection. The Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations advocates to the U.S. Government on the very issues outlined in the New York Declaration, including urging the U.S. to protect migrants and refugees around the world through financial support for housing, education, and healthcare, maintain asylum processes, and maintain the refugee resettlement program.

This work on the New York Declaration paved the way for the current ongoing intergovernmental negotiations between member states, hosted by the UN General Assembly, as well as the collaboration and advocacy of civil society organizations, to develop both the Global Compact on Migration and on Refugees. At the moment, two countries, Switzerland and Mexico, are charged with chairing this intergovernmental process, which is designed to draft these two separate, and equally important, Global Compacts. Since last year, they have shepherded a process of consultations with member states and other stakeholders that has resulted in draft Compacts that continue to be negotiated. We are nearing the end of this consultation and negotiation phase, with the second draft of the Global Compact on Migration, and the third draft of the Global Compact on Refugees, recently released. From these, and another round of intergovernmental negotiations, a final draft of each Compact will be produced for adoption by the UN General Assembly, in September and at an intergovernmental conference on migration later this year. The Episcopal Church is continuing to be a part of the development of these Global Compacts.

For the development of the Global Compact on Migration, we are looking for commitments to accountability, to addressing root causes of migration, efforts to counter xenophobia and discrimination at every level, special protection for children with use of alternatives to detention, and for policies that uphold the basic human dignity of each person. While the U.S. has officially pulled out of its participation in the development of the Global Compact on Migration, the Episcopal Church continues to have a strong commitment here as we recognize the need for strengthened collaborative efforts to welcome and protect migrants around the world.

Our priorities in the Global Compact on Refugees are similar to that of the Global Compact on Migration. The Global Compact on Refugees will create a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) which will allow implementation of innovative refugee protection tools and a Programme of Action underpinning the Framework that sets out actions that can be taken. The Global Compact on Refugees will be presented at the 2018 UN General Assembly, in September 2018. Our priorities include seeing strong mention and inclusion of civil society and faith-based organizations, including accountability measures, commitment to end current crises and prevent conditions that allow for war and persecution, and a strengthened commitment to resettlement and responsibility sharing from all member states.

The crux of the issue in both the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact on Migration is implementation and accountability. The Compacts are designed to be non-binding and outline ways that member states can voluntarily commit to participating in these efforts to protect refugees and migrants. We continue to focus our work on ensuring that member states implement and uphold agreements made in the New York Declaration and the Global Compacts, long after the summits end.

Find more information about the Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations here:

advocacy.episcopalchurch.org

Find more information about the Episcopal Church Representative to the United Nations here:

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