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The Economic Mobility Pathways Project – Policy Principles and Lessons Learned

A Canadian Perspective on Complementary Pathways for Admission

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IRCC-UNHCR Partner's Dialogue on the Economic Mobility Pathways Project (EMPP)

Outcomes Document

I. Executive Summary

On 29 April, 2019, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Canada convened domestic partners to discuss the Economic Mobility Pathways Project (EMPP), and to think through the policy principles of complementary pathways for admission.

Complementary pathways are described in the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) as one way to facilitate access to protection and solutions for refugees. While Canada has a robust resettlement framework to provide protection and solutions for refugees, partners were eager to test third country employment opportunities as a complementary pathway that would demonstrate Canada's support for the GCR and countries hosting refugees in large numbers. IRCC, together with UNHCR and implementing partners RefugePoint and Talent Beyond Boundaries, endeavored to test this pathway and what it means to bring the worlds of refugee protection and economic immigration together through the EMPP.

Through this exercise, partners identified several core protection principles that framed Canada's approach to testing complementary labour pathways. These included complementarity to resettlement – that refugees admitted through this project would not encroach on the protection spaces Canada offers to refugees through resettlement; ensuring that refugees had access to protection and durable solutions by offering permanent residency; ensuring gender equality and balance; respecting the dignity of refugees and their autonomy; and, alignment with broader protection and solutions strategies.

At its core, the EMPP questioned whether refugees can access Canada's economic programs. It is widely understood that they can – many refugees possess the skills, talents, and requisite qualifications to meet the criteria for economic immigration. This is evidenced through the first candidate, who arrived to Canada with a job offer in March 2019, and by several more candidates in process. However, this project also demonstrated that while refugees may qualify for Canadian economic programs, they may face challenges in accessing them by virtue of the circumstances of their displacement – lost or expired documentation; limited funds; difficulty in obtaining proof of professional or academic experience; and, limited access to consultants or lawyers who may guide them through the immigration process. The EMPP challenged Canada and partners to address these barriers, and test whether administrative and financial flexibilities can assist refugees in overcoming them.

This paper provides a summary of the EMPP, the partners, and government branches involved in its implementation, and the lessons that have been observed thus far. It explores the policy dimensions and implications of merging two distinct, and traditionally separate worlds, and the innovative partnerships integral to the successful implementation of complementary labour pathways in the long term. In the domestic context, this document serves as a summary of the work accomplished to date, and identifies areas for potential consideration and/or replication in other national contexts. In the spirit of sharing promising practices and lessons learned with international partners, it also provides a useful tool for engaging in global discussions on complementary pathways more broadly, including with UNHCR, other interested States and other stakeholders. As the international community prepares to launch the three-year resettlement strategy under the GCR this July, this paper aims to contribute concrete ideas to support efforts to better share responsibility and find solutions for more refugees through complementary labour pathways.

II. Introduction

The GCR recognizes complementary pathways for the admission of refugees as one way to facilitate access to protection and solutions for refugees and are an expression of solidarity with host countries and communities who host refugees in large numbers. The GCR encourages more countries to offer other pathways to complement resettlement, and such pathways should be systematic, organized, sustainable, gender-responsive, and contain robust protection safeguards. By definition, complementary pathways for admission are safe and regulated avenues for refugees that complement resettlement by providing lawful stay in a third country where their international protection needs are met.¹ They are additional to resettlement and do not substitute the protection afforded to refugees under the international protection regime.

Complementary pathways include existing admission avenues that refugees may be eligible to apply to, but which may require operational adjustments to facilitate their access thereto. While at present there are limited international policy frameworks governing the use of complementary pathways, UNHCR is promoting that they should be predictable, sustainable and protection-sensitive.

Canada provides refugees with protection and solutions through its longstanding Refugee Resettlement Program, an integral part of Canada's humanitarian tradition. However, with global opportunities for resettlement in decline, and the scale and scope of forced displacement continuing to rise, the Government of Canada is exploring new ways to contribute. While the Resettlement Program will remain focused on assisting the most vulnerable refugees, some of Canada's other immigration programs have the potential to provide avenues for other refugees to come to Canada. In particular, Canada has a robust suite of economic immigration programs, under which immigrants are selected based on their human capital and/or ability to fill Canadian labour market needs. But refugees are likely to face challenges in applying for economic immigration to Canada, as these programs were not designed to take into account the circumstances of forced displacement. However, if administrative and operational mechanisms are introduced to assist in overcoming these barriers, then the permanent status, pathway to citizenship and robust settlement supports provided to economic immigrants can also provide meaningful protection and long-term solutions to skilled refugees who qualify for those programs.

In testing labour mobility pathways for refugees through the EMPP, Canada is exploring bringing together the two worlds of humanitarian and economic immigration. More specifically, Canada is testing to what extent a protection lens can be applied to its economic programs in order to be sensitive and more responsive to the circumstances of forced displacement while preserving the ability of Canada's economic immigration system to support economic growth and prosperity in Canada. Through the EMPP, Canada has gleaned important insights and lessons that can inform our policy thinking in the Canadian context moving forward, and that can contribute meaningfully to the conversation evolving on the global stage.

III. Testing Labour Pathways and Building the Evidence Base: Canada's Economic Mobility Pathways Project

The EMPP is a project (1) testing whether skilled refugees in East Africa and the Middle East can access Canada's existing economic programs, (2) documenting the barriers they may face in doing so, and (3) testing new approaches to overcome these challenges. It is understood that refugees face challenges accessing economic immigration programs due to the circumstances of their displacement (e.g. lost or

¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Complementary Pathways <https://www.unhcr.org/complementary-pathways.html>

expired documentation, interrupted education or work experience, lack of awareness of economic immigration programs). However, limited data exists regarding the extent and diversity of these challenges.

The EMPP was launched in April 2018 and aimed to identify approximately 10-15 skilled refugees in the Middle East and East Africa who meet the requirements of Canada's economic immigration programs. Skilled refugees who appear to have strong economic settlement potential have been identified and invited to further explore opportunities for admission to Canada. From the outset, Canada made a policy decision to operationalize existing economic migration pathways, designed to attract foreign nationals with high human capital and/or who meet Canadian labour market needs. This relies on the assumption that while existing pathways were not designed with refugees in mind, some complementary pathways already exist in the form of existing immigration schemes. Rather, many refugees meet existing requirements, and can access these pathways when the barriers they face due to the circumstances of their displacement are mitigated.

The EMPP is administered by the Government of Canada in collaboration with UNHCR, and implementing partners Talent Beyond Boundaries (TBB) operating in the Middle East, and RefugePoint operating in East Africa. Both organizations identified qualified refugee candidates and assisted in their referral and application to Canadian economic immigration streams. Additionally, TBB worked with its network of employers to connect qualified refugee applicants with relevant employment opportunities. Kenya and Lebanon were chosen for this project as a demonstration of responsibility-sharing with countries implementing the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework or acting in solidarity with the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) for Syrian refugees.

At the heart of this project, two distinct sets of stakeholders were brought together: on the one hand, partners that work on refugee protection and resettlement, and on the other hand, partners that focus on economic immigration to Canada and meeting labour market needs. Any success achieved through this project will be owed, in part, to the range and number of actors brought to the table, discovering that complementary pathways for refugees can fulfil the objectives of refugee and economic actors alike.

Protection Principles

In framing the EMPP project and Canada's broader thinking on complementary pathways, IRCC was careful to craft the parameters of this project and align broader policy thinking with several core protection principles:

1. **Additionality:** Resettlement must continue to focus on assisting the most vulnerable. Accordingly, the development of complementary pathways will occur outside Canada's humanitarian programs. The refugees arriving to Canada under the EMPP did not encroach upon Canada's resettlement quotas, as they arrived under economic immigration stream's levels.
2. **Permanent protection & durable solutions:** As existing migration streams are not designed with refugees in mind, complementary pathways need to safeguard the rights of refugees and their international protection needs, including respecting *non-refoulement* as a principle of international law. The EMPP has provided security and stability to refugees by offering permanent residence to all refugees arriving to Canada under this project. Permanent residence offers refugees arriving in Canada with a clear pathway to citizenship. However, many States are more open to receiving temporary workers. The opportunities and protection safeguards required in these types of streams require further consideration.
3. **Alignment with international priorities:** Through the EMPP, Canada sought refugees with skills and talents located in countries applying the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, or the 3RP

strategy – Kenya and Lebanon. In this regard, complementary pathways have the potential to align with protection and solutions strategies more broadly. Whether and how complementary pathways can further coordinate with livelihoods and education strategies² and programs in hosting States is a consideration which warrants further exploration. This could explore how education and livelihoods programming implemented in host states could, where possible, align with available opportunities for admission in third countries under economic streams.

4. **Gender Equality:** Consistent with the priorities of the GCR and with the priorities of the Canadian Government, the EMPP actively sought gender balance amongst the candidates.
5. **Dignity:** To respect the autonomy and choices of refugees, the EMPP sought to take a progressive approach to solutions and serve the objective of enhancing refugee self-reliance to assist them in attaining a durable solution.

IV. Thinking through Complementary Pathways – Early Lessons Learned

A. Enhancing Partnerships and Coordination – Engaging with the Private Sector

In testing complementary labour pathways, partners have thus far observed two outcomes: (1) by offering refugees a legal status (permanent residency) in Canada with a clear pathway to citizenship, refugees' protection needs are met, thereby providing them with a durable solution; and (2) by admitting refugees to Canada under an economic immigration pathway, there is potential to meet labour market needs, if supported by an effective matching of labour needs with refugees' skills, though this requires further data. Under this model, engaging the private sector is therefore an essential aspect of complementary labour pathways. In the experience of TBB, employers may be interested in complementary pathways for two main reasons: (1) to fill immediate or long-term labour needs; and (2) as an expression of social responsibility. In most cases, it is a combination of both factors that may lead an employer to identify amongst the refugee population, a qualified candidate to fill labour shortages. And indeed, for the right candidate, it was anecdotally expressed that many employers are willing to bear some of the costs associated therein, including training, obtaining permits, child care, etc. Additionally, TBB has found that many employers are eager to be engaged in the settlement process, for example, by meeting the individual at the airport, assisting them in finding temporary housing and connecting them to services. This demonstrates not only a willingness on the part of the private sector to be engaged in complementary pathways, but how private sector's perspective is critical to inform the development of complementary pathways. Required to sustain complementary labour pathways in the long-term is thus a mechanism to facilitate the connection between qualified refugees and available employment opportunities.

In the context of the EMPP, TBB began with a talent catalog of 10,000 candidates. They conducted an initial search using key words to match profiles with known employment opportunities. The individuals identified then met with TBB for an interview and to assess the likelihood of the candidate meeting the requirements of Canadian economic programs including language levels and educational background among others. TBB expressed that the process to match a refugee with an employer was much smoother and faster when the employment opportunity was identified first, and a qualified refugee to fill that position identified subsequently.

² UNHCR aims to ensure that all persons of concern are able to make a safe and sustainable living that meets their basic needs, contributes to their dignity, and provides for the full enjoyment of human rights. In particular, one of ways in which UNHCR has implemented livelihoods strategies is to provide training for employment and entrepreneurship appropriate to market needs.

Settlement agencies may also be equipped to engage with the private sector in this context, as many settlement actors work closely with local employers and services that are already in place to assist Canadians and newcomers find employment. Overall, leveraging partnerships with both traditional resettlement/humanitarian actors as well as forging new ones with a broader set of stakeholders (labour ministries, employers, private sector funding partners, and settlement networks) will be critical to the success of complementary pathways. Melding the knowledge bases of these new players with existing protection frameworks will be beneficial.

B. Building Protection-Sensitive and Accessible Systems – Unpacking our Assumptions

Canada's resettlement program is designed to target refugees who have high protection risks. Rather than looking at refugees' vulnerabilities, complementary pathways promotes thinking about refugees in terms of their ability to contribute to Canada by way of skills and talents. Partners observed the tremendous conceptual shift that EMPP promotes on the ground. In regular programming, these organizations see refugees motivated to highlight their vulnerabilities in order to secure resettlement. The idea that UNHCR and resettlement countries like Canada are thinking about refugees in this new way brings hope that speaks directly to the contribution refugees can make if given the chance. This conceptual shift brings to the fore a tension between resettlement and complementary pathways highlighted at this Dialogue – the factors enabling access to complementary labour pathways (skills training, qualifications, and experience) might appear to decrease the likelihood of selection for resettlement.

The shift from vulnerability to human capital potential also challenges some of the internal assumptions that project partners held about refugees. For the UNHCR, an organization committed to seeking protection and durable solutions for refugees, complementary pathways offer another means for refugees to find protection and a durable solution, predicated on their marketable skills and experiences. This does not fit the traditional lens of resettlement as a life-saving protection tool, but fits UNHCR's mandate to find solutions for refugees, including through livelihoods and education programmes. These programmes are led by different teams, requiring a new conversation within the Agency. For the Government of Canada, complementary labour pathways require that we challenge our internal silos dividing the worlds of economic migration and refugee resettlement, and reconcile the priority of building protection-sensitive systems with the competition-driven needs of economic programs. For NGOs built to operate in the world of resettlement and refugee protection activities, identifying refugees with skills and managing expectations about the complementary pathways process required a significant learning curve, although it must be acknowledged that NGOs working on education or livelihoods may have not yet been part of the discussion. Additionally, this shift may support a positive public narrative about refugees, moving away from the perception that refugees are only a cost to the host government, and toward the idea that refugees make valuable contributions in their host communities and countries.

Partners learned that while many refugees express a high degree of independence and agency, one of the challenges preventing the autonomous uptake of refugees to Canadian labour streams was a lack of information and understanding about the options available. Disseminating correct information about Canada's economic pathways, the steps involved to apply, and the costs associated therein, was critical in establishing confidence amongst potential candidates and to clearly delineate complementary pathways from resettlement. Access to information from a trusted source will be an important feature of any complementary pathway moving forward, especially given that autonomous uptake into third country employment opportunities is one of the longer term objectives. However, in the Canadian economic migration context, many immigrants have access to lawyers and consultants who can assist in navigating the immigration

process, and who perform many of the services EMPP partners undertook in the project, challenging whether ‘autonomous’ uptake can truly be achieved.

C. Enhancing the Evidence Base – Roles and Responsibilities

Partnerships formed through the EMPP have demonstrated the value of multi-stakeholder collaboration, as well as the importance of defining roles and responsibilities amongst partners throughout all stages of the complementary pathways process, from identification of refugees to preparing for departure and arrival of candidates. Testing complementary labour pathways identified three phases – identification of refugees and job opportunities; application to economic pathways in Canada; and pre- and post-arrival supports and services. There are a variety of actors equipped to engage on one or more phases of this process. The EMPP revealed that complementary labour pathways will be most successful when all three phases work concurrently and in conjunction with one another.

Government of Canada Role – The Government of Canada’s role in EMPP was largely to set the policy direction for the project, and to convene and coordinate between all partners involved. Within Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, several branches were involved in the project, merging the economic and refugee worlds together. Refugee Affairs Branch, responsible for refugee protection, asylum, and refugee resettlement, ensured the project remained complementary to broader policy efforts underway, was consistent with international protection principles, in-sync with UNHCR, and aligned with the overarching objective of the GCR to increase responsibility-sharing. Immigration Branch, developing and monitoring Canada’s economic immigration programs, ensured the project aligned with the policy priorities of economic immigration, that individuals arrived in Canada with the human capital and qualifications necessary to fill labour market needs and achieve economic independence. As project lead, Immigration Program Guidance, was responsible for ensuring operational implementation and oversight, providing functional guidance and coordination amongst project partners.

Provincial and Territorial Governments – The role of participating provincial and territorial governments varied, dependent on existing jurisdictional legislation, the immigration programs available and how closely connected they were to employers. Provincial and territorial governments nominated refugee candidates for permanent residence thereby allowing them to qualify for immigration pathways. These nominations were based on their assessment of the candidate’s ability to contribute to the economic growth and development of those jurisdictions. In certain instances, these partners could facilitate connections between refugee candidates and prospective employers.

UNHCR – The UNHCR grounded the project in the broader context of the GCR, informing the underlying policy principles and protection safeguards. The UNHCR field offices in Kenya and Lebanon were also active in verifying the status of all candidates put forward and in the Kenya context, also played the identification role in the camps (both Kakuma and Dadaab). The active engagement of UNHCR in this dual function of identification and verification of status (e.g. name check against databases) proved a very welcome role from the IRCC vantage, as it provided the government with a heightened degree of confidence in processing these cases (both from a policy/GCR alignment and an integrity point of view).

Talent Beyond Boundaries – Talent Beyond Boundaries connects skilled refugees with countries and companies that need their skills, forging new sustainable solutions for refugees to rebuild their lives while boosting the global economy. TBB’s role in EMPP ranged from recruiting and referring refugee talent from Lebanon to Canada, to engaging with employers in Canada. TBB also assisted refugees throughout the process including by providing interview support, and disseminating information.

RefugePoint – A traditional resettlement partner for the Government of Canada, RefugePoint has an extensive database of refugees in Kenya built for resettlement. For EMPP, RefugePoint reached out to the refugee community in Nairobi, and in refugee camps Dadaab and Kakuma to recruit potential candidates for referral to Canada. This entailed gathering and reviewing CVs, interviewing candidates and hosting workshops and information sessions.

Despite the overall success of this project in leveraging new and traditional partnerships, several challenges regarding roles and responsibilities remain. This includes how settlement actors can be effectively engaged throughout the complementary pathways process; the identification of funds in the long-term; and whether existing data systems such as UNHCR’s ProGres can be used for more than just verification of refugee status.

D. Enhancing the Evidence Base – The Operational Considerations³

Identification of Qualified Refugees

Early in the project, it was identified that partners’ databases are often developed with protection, basic services and resettlement in mind, focused on documenting refugee vulnerability instead of skills and economic characteristics. Additionally, information about refugees is normally captured during initial registration, and there is limited opportunity to record the development of relevant skills or new employment experiences that may occur later on, leaving much information out of date. However, leveraging existing information systems and expanding the breadth of information being collected at various points of the refugee registration or status determination processes, as well as through the tracking of services (such as education, livelihoods training, etc.) provided, could fill these gaps. Sharing information about refugees’ skills and experiences with partners involved could enable the identification of candidates, and linkages to relevant opportunities. Information sharing should be careful to consider confidentiality and rights to privacy given the sensitive nature of refugees’ personal data. UNHCR work underway towards enabling refugees to be able to update their “files” by themselves could be usefully explored in this regard (Kakuma kiosk). Using global labour lexicons was also suggested (using an ILO list of occupations to that all states annotate to reflect national terminology).

Disseminating information and managing expectations

One of the features of complementary pathways is that refugees can access the immigration pathway directly, making use of publicly available information and existing administrative mechanisms, and thus securing their own solutions.⁴ But the EMPP has revealed that many refugees lacked information about Canadian economic programs and how to access them. Moreover, the variety and complexity of the Canadian immigration pathways compounded misunderstanding. Partners discovered through the EMPP that disseminating information was critical in establishing confidence amongst potential candidates and to clearly delineate complementary pathways from resettlement.

Prioritizing the use of channels that are tailored to provide refugees with practical information on economic pathways and available post-arrival settlement services will be essential to facilitate refugees’ autonomous uptake into complementary pathways and empower them to make informed decisions. In addition, any

³ Please refer to Annex 1 for more information on the challenges identified and the solutions considered.

⁴ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Complementary Pathways
<https://www.unhcr.org/complementary-pathways.html>

challenges that result from one organization responsible for both resettlement and complementary pathways initiatives must be addressed. For example, Canadian resettlement partner RefugePoint typically disseminates the mantra “never pay” in order to avoid fraud in accessing resettlement. However, Canadian economic pathways legitimately charge fees, though some of these financial barriers were mitigated through the EMPP due to the fact that many refugees are unlikely to possess the funds necessary. Clearly disseminated information about cost and cost-solutions will hopefully reduce confusion amongst potential candidates, and instill confidence in their pursuit of complementary labour pathways.

Connections to Destination Countries and Employers

Refugees residing in host countries are often limited in their ability to make connections to opportunities in destination countries. Under the EMPP, partners have played an invaluable role identifying and supporting refugees throughout the process, including in making connections to Canadian employers. And yet, an appropriate immigration pathway must also be identified – in a jurisdiction where refugees have access to the supports they might need. Connecting with settlement agencies who have connections to employers and services in this regard could assist in this process.

Evidentiary Proof

The EMPP has already demonstrated that while some refugees meet program eligibility requirements, it can be difficult at times to obtain the evidence required to prove their eligibility. This is particularly true with respect to work experience requirements (requiring a letter from an employer), especially for refugees who may be unable to work legally in their country of asylum or have no access to previous employment records in their country of origin. While some proof of experience is still required, Canada is examining how flexibilities can be used to overcome these challenges, such as the collection of documents (i.e., pay stubs, letters from a supervisor, job ads, etc.) instead of the usually prescribed letter from an employer where that cannot be obtained.

Financial Requirements

There are a number of costs inherent to economic migration which applicants do not face through traditional resettlement streams. These may include fees for applications, language testing, funds to prove ability to settle, funds to travel to Canada, etc. Access to funds has been identified as a barrier in most EMPP cases and, as a result, project partners have tested innovative solutions, such as using donated travel points to pay for flights, or arrange pro-bono services from an immigration lawyer to assist in the application process. As we begin to consider how complementary pathways can be expanded, in particular third country employment opportunities, it will be critical to establish who can bear these costs in the longer term. Some large employers may be willing to contribute to these costs, though this may be more challenging for small or medium sized employers. However, if a mechanism existed to match refugee skills with employers, they might be more willing to bear some of these costs, as they benefit from filling a labour shortage. Partners stressed the need to ensure that any solution to mitigate refugees’ limited funds be applied equitably to all candidates, encouraging the consideration of sustainability and scalability of the solutions implemented. During discussion of potential solutions to several of these financial barriers, partners considered questions such as: how far should a government go in offsetting these costs; and, what could the role of third parties be in mitigating these costs?

Contextual Considerations

With the project being piloted in both Kenya and the Middle East, Canada has been able to test out proof of concept in very different protection landscapes. This was of particular significance in determining eligibility for the program. Under the EMPP, candidates are required to provide proof of UNHCR registration in order to participate. This was easily implemented in the Kenyan context given the existence of a formal refugee status determination process which is administered by the Government of Kenya and is accessible to refugee populations located in Kenya. In contrast, it became evident in the Middle East that this criteria could not be applied with similar ease given that certain refugee populations (e.g. Syrians in Lebanon) face obstacles accessing UNHCR registration due to restrictions around time of arrival. In these situations, UNHCR was able to verify that individual refugee candidates had a “recorded” status in their database. Where candidates refused to approach UNHCR to be “recorded” in Lebanon, these cases were pulled out of the project for integrity reasons at the request of IRCC.

V. Reflections & Conclusion

Overall, the EMPP has been successful thus far in challenging Canadian economic streams to respond to the barriers preventing refugee access to Canada through complementary pathways. The project has demonstrated the importance of engaging new and traditional partners throughout all stages of the process, and required all partners to rethink our assumptions about refugees and their ability to autonomously access complementary third country labour pathways. With regard to partners, EMPP revealed the importance of engaging partners active in the resettlement and protection space, as well as actors who have the knowledge and expertise in engaging the private employment/business sector. Additionally, actors that have intimate knowledge of the pathways available and the settlement services required post-arrival can provide critical support throughout the process.

The EMPP confirmed that while many refugees express a high degree of autonomy and agency, accessing complementary labour pathways independently is often prohibited by the challenges caused by displacement, including lost or expired documentation, limited funds, and difficulty in accessing opportunities in the country of asylum among others. The project has indicated that while economic pathways to Canada were not designed for refugees, many refugees meet the requirements of our economic programs, and may require only administrative and financial flexibilities to facilitate their access.

Despite the valuable early lessons learned thus far, some policy questions remain which require further consideration in order to successfully expand and enhance complementary pathways globally. These include to what degree governments should be flexible, or otherwise alter their programs to mitigate the challenges faced by refugee; who should bear the costs in the long-term; how can meaningful connections be made to education and livelihoods programming to upgrade skills and qualifications; how can apparent tensions between available opportunities be reduced; how can we sustainably facilitate the connection between refugees, employment opportunities, and complementary pathways to encourage autonomous uptake; and, how can refugees be made more autonomous in seizing labour mobility opportunities (as opposed to relying on immigration consultants)? These are considerations which are not restricted to complementary labour pathways, but would apply to complementary pathways more broadly.

VI. Next Steps/Going forward

As set out in the GCR, UNHCR has been tasked with developing a three-year strategy on resettlement and complementary pathways which seeks to increase the availability and predictability of complementary pathways including third country employment opportunities. While the title of the strategy refers to a three-

year time frame, in reality the strategy is expected to set the course for the next decade. UNHCR has established a reference group involving representatives of States and relevant stakeholders to develop this strategy which will be presented at the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement in 1-2 July 2019. The strategy, along with the preparatory meetings in Geneva, will assist the development of pledges and contributions, along with the identification of good practices and recognition of progress made which will be featured in the Global Refugee Forum 17- 18 December 2019. The EMPP and the lessons learned provide a useful example of the viability of employment opportunities as complementary pathway for refugees as well as the challenges and how they can be address in order to enable this route to be meaningful. The experience affirms key principles within the GCR including the engagement of new actors and the recognition of the important contributions refugees can make providing benefits not only for themselves but their host societies.