MAIN HIGHLIGHTS AND ACTION POINTS FROM THE 1ST MEETING OF THE DAC TEMPORARY WORKING GROUP (TWG) ON REFUGEES AND MIGRATION

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This document is submitted for INFORMATION under Item 3 of the Draft Annotated SLM Agenda [DCD/DAC/A(2016)14].

It summarises highlights and future action points from the first meeting of the DAC Temporary Working Group on Refugees and Migration.

This cancel and replace version updates text in paragraph 4.

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The first meeting of the DAC Temporary Working Group on Refugees and Migration, held on September 9th, made encouraging headway towards the goals set out in the group’s terms of reference. The next meeting of the TWG will take place on the 11th of October 2016 and will be held in conjunction with the SLM. The following is a summary of highlights and outcomes from the first meeting (please refer to the agenda of the 1st TWG meeting [DCD/DAC/TWGMR/A(2016)1]).

A. ODA reporting of in-donor country refugee costs (Sessions 2 and 3)

1. The two sessions on in-donor refugee costs allowed participants to exchange views on the challenges and opportunities regarding greater alignment of reporting methodologies. Based on the findings of the December 2015 survey, the DCD Secretariat highlighted the areas that have led to questions of interpretation under the current directives, including refugee categories, types of expenditures included in the per capita costs, methodologies for calculation and application of the 12-month rule. The participants discussed the introduction of a follow-up questionnaire to increase understanding of how each country is funding and reporting on refugee-related costs.

2. It became clear that to resolve divergences in members’ interpretation of the reporting guidelines, ambiguities in definitions need to be clarified. This is essential also to ensure greater transparency and credibility of ODA reporting towards their own constituencies, as well as broader constituencies. With that in mind, members highlighted the need for the development of detailed reporting guidelines on who (refugee, asylum seeker, etc.) and what (shelter, training, etc.) is to be accounted for. The need for clarity on the distinction between short-term sustenance and integration activities for beneficiaries of in-donor ODA was also emphasized. Furthermore, to facilitate better comparative analysis the follow-up questionnaire should incorporate precise questions on the various expenditures and specific cost lines, without implying any commitment to harmonisation of cost levels. Members also flagged the importance of collecting information on challenges faced by countries in terms of data collection, data availability and calculation of costs. While developing detailed reporting guidelines, building on the work of the Working Party on Migration, members’ existing practices should be taken into account.

3. Members agreed to provide initial feedback and overall comments regarding the follow-up questionnaire to the Secretariat by the 16th of September. On the 21st of September, the Secretariat will send a revised questionnaire, to be approved on a non-objection basis by 26th of September. The deadline for DAC members’ responses to the questionnaire is the 28th of October.

B. Priority areas for better programming to deliver comprehensive solutions to the refugee crisis. (Sessions 4 and 5)

4. Session 4 showcased work done across the OECD in response to large scale movements of migrants and refugees. During Session 5, the DCD Secretariat presented some initial insights on priority programming areas in response to refugee crises as outlined in the TORs. In the discussion, members highlighted the need to ensure continued partnership between the OECD and different internal and external development and humanitarian entities. Members also noted the importance of identifying the value-added by the OECD in further researching each proposed area, emphasizing, for instance, the expertise of the organization in the area of good governance. While recognizing the urgency of the Syrian crisis, members reiterated that it is important for the TWG to focus on other partners, and not to lose sight of the challenges faced by LDCs, including in Africa, that are countries of origin, transit and destination, as defined in the
TORs. They emphasized the importance of developing recommendations that are evidence-based and can be used by practitioners in headquarters and in the field.

5. Members provided inputs on their priority areas for research. Their consolidated responses indicate that research areas are prioritised in the following order: coherence, productive and business opportunities, education, financing instruments and working in urban environments. The Secretariat will now proceed to review these priority areas, in consultation with other relevant Directorates and Working Parties, and make recommendations on points of action, as well as the format and content of the “how-to guides”, for the TWG to consider.