

UNHCR SOUTHERN AFRICA CONSULTATIONS WITH NGOS AND MULTISTAKEHOLDERS

10-11 SEPTEMBER 2019

DISCUSSION PAPER

Date: 10 September

Time/Room: 1:30pm – 3:30pm/Nelson Mandela Foundation, BoardRoom

Session Title: Strengthening Partnership for Economic Inclusion of Refugees

Executive Summary:

Recent studies demonstrate that refugees can have significant positive economic effects on host communities. Any negative impacts should be understood and measures put in place to mitigate them. With the arrival of refugees, demand for goods and services can increase and so the opportunity for host economies to benefit from increased economic activity. Refugee labor availability helps local economies fill possible gaps in their labor markets. With humanitarian assistance delivery, relief programs for refugees generate development benefits for local communities in the form of clinics, schools, roads, transportation and agriculture. The presence of international humanitarian actors also brings the benefit of innovation, modern technologies and increased efficiencies, as seen in the financial service sector, renewable energies and telecommunications.

The need for economic inclusion, self-reliance and resilience has always been valued in relief programs implemented by UNHCR and partners, but were never more relevant than in today's complex refugee climate. Economic benefits from refugee presence can often be dismissed by concerns and perceptions that refugees are a burden on host countries, and these concerns result in strict government policies, negative public attitudes and xenophobia. If economic efforts for refugees are not accompanied by policy reform, private sector investment or development programs for host communities, negative attitudes and xenophobia could lead to further isolation of refugees. Nationals in refugee-host regions often experience poverty and unemployment, and efforts or contributions should target refugees and hosts communities.

The adoption of the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) provides a timely opportunity to rethink the relief approach and strengthen the nexus with development actors and the private sector in a way that reinforces potential economic benefits for both refugees and host communities. It is imperative to understand and engage in operationalizing the Global Refugee Compact. The regionalization efforts of UNHCR recognize the importance of being closer to refugees and partners to strengthen protection, resilience and solutions. The forthcoming Global Refugee Forum seeks to broaden the base of support and will rely on the role of NGOs to mobilize a wide range of stakeholders to contribute to the objectives of the Global Compact for Refugees to create comprehensive responses. This session is an opportunity to gain new insights on how the UN, NGOs, civil society and the private sector can engage with and leverage each other's comparative advantage in the achievement of these objectives.

Objective of the Session: Discuss the elaboration of a list of all possible actions advancing the economic inclusion of refugees into their host economies

Outcomes of the Session

1. Agreement by participants on possible actions promoting economic inclusion of refugees, the results of which could be used to inform advocacy, policy, private sector investment and economic development programs

[Examples of actions could include:

- a. Implementing out-of-camp polices and opening up of refugee camps by host countries – what it would cost and what benefits it would bring
- b. Transforming refugee camps into villages or settlements – costs and benefits
- c. Issuing work permits for refugees, providing access to formal labor markets and filling labor gaps
- d. Facilitating business license registration for refugees and host communities
- e. Facilitating credit, loans and financial services for refugees and host communities
- f. Designing joint development programs for refugees and host communities
- g. Obtaining pledges by countries to join international financing instruments for refugees – what does it cost and what benefits it would bring
- h. Generating economic data and evidence about positive impact of refugees on host countries' economies
- i. Expanding research on host regions to improve understanding economic conditions, sectors and industries specific to local communities hosting refugees
- j. Private sector investment in refugee employment, value chains or refugee hosting areas.
- k. Others]

Co-facilitators – UNHCR and Oxfam Mozambique

Moderator: H.R.H. Prince Jaime Bourbon de Parme, Senior Adviser, Private Sector Partnerships, UNHCR

Speakers:

Mr Jos Ver Beek, World Bank Representative and WTO Manager in Geneva

Ms. Mathobela Mandisa, Head of Stakeholder Relations for Old Mutual Emerging Markets

Ms Jaqueline Bjika Zadamda, Refugee Entrepreneur, Congolese living in Mozambique

Ms. Helena Chiquele, Normas Sociais – Lead/ Directora de Programas Interina, Oxfam Mozambique

Ms Pierrine Aylara, UNHCR Country Representative Zambia

Further Reading:

- “Yes in my backyard? The Economics of Refugees and their Social Dynamics in Kakuma, Kenya”, World Bank and UNHCR, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/308011482417763778/Yes-in-my-backyard-The-economics-of-refugees-and-their-social-dynamics-in-Kakuma-Kenya>
- “An Assessment of Uganda’s Progressive Approach to Refugee Management”, World Bank, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/ugandas-progressive-approach-refugee-management>

- “The Economics of Hosting Refugees: A Host Community Perspective from Turkana”, World Bank, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/695271488823317264/The-economics-of-hosting-refugees-a-host-community-perspective-from-Turkana>
- “Kakuma as a Marketplace. A consumer and market study of a refugee camp and town in northwest Kenya”, International Finance Corporation, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/482761525339883916/pdf/125918-WP-Kakuma-as-a-Marketplace-PUBLIC.pdf>
- “Rwanda – Economic Activity and Opportunity for Refugee Inclusion”, World Bank, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/817901558950692659/Rwanda-Economic-Activity-and-Opportunity-for-Refugee-Inclusion>
- “Desk Review on Livelihoods and Self-Reliance for Refugees and Host Communities in Kenya”, World Bank, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/685581553241680189/pdf/135485-WP-P169281-PUBLIC-Livelihoods.pdf>
- “Private Sector & Refugees Pathways to Scale”, International Finance Corporation, https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/region_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/sub-saharan+africa/resources/psr-pathways-to-scale
- Refugee Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion, UNHCR Global Strategy, <https://www.unhcr.org/5bc07ca94.pdf>