

Second Quarterly Informal Briefing on the Global Compact on Refugees

Summary

7 June 2023, 15:00-17:00 hrs CEST

The second quarterly informal briefing on the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) in 2023 was held on 7 June 2023, bringing together States and other stakeholders to provide updates on the work of multi-stakeholder GCR initiatives, including their planning towards the next Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in December 2023. The session was opened by Mr. Arafat Jamal, Coordinator for the 2023 GRF, followed by an update from four thematic GCR initiatives and interventions from the floor.

Opening remarks

Mr. Arafat Jamal, Coordinator for the 2023 Global Refugee Forum

Mr. Jamal welcomed the wide and active participation of stakeholders in the second formal preparatory meeting for the 2023 GRF held on 17 May 2023, when many recalled that much remains to be done to support host countries who “pledge every day” in support of refugees. He also announced the launch of an online catalogue of some 30 multi-stakeholder pledges available on the [GCR digital platform](#) that serves as a tool to share information about pledges under development, ensure complementarity, and enable States and relevant stakeholders to join.

1. Group of Friends of Health for Refugees and Host Communities

Mr. Aiman Zarul, Technical Officer, Inter-Agency Policy for Emergencies Unit, World Health Organization (WHO)

Mr. Zarul announced the UNHCR and WHO co-led [Health Group of Friends](#), which aims to expand and enhance the quality of national health systems to facilitate access for refugees and host communities, including mental health and psycho-social support (MHPSS). He reiterated the urgency of building community resilience and equitable health systems that respond to the needs of refugees and host communities, highlighting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. He closed by inviting interested stakeholders to join the initiative as members or champions.

2. Climate Action

Mr. Andrew Harper, Special Advisor on Climate Action to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR

Mr. Harper reported live from Melkadida Refugee Camp in Ethiopia’s southern Somali Region to make the urgent call to increase the resilience of refugees and their host communities in dealing with the effects of climate change. He emphasized the need to scale up accessible financing for climate action and encouraged donors, international finance institutions (IFIs), and multi-lateral development banks to include refugees in their financing decisions. He furthermore underscored the goal of the Climate Action and Finance multi-stakeholder [pledge](#) to include refugees in national adaptation plans and strengthening local authorities’ technical capacity in responding to climate change. He closed by calling on participants to ensure that GRF pledges are aligned with COP28

(2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference or Conference of the Parties) activities they are also involved in.

3. Statelessness Alliance

Ms. Kareen Jabre, Director, Division of Programmes, Inter-Parliamentary Union

Ms. Jabre provided an update on the Global Alliance to End Statelessness Taskforce and their proposed [Ending Statelessness](#) multi-stakeholder pledge, which aims to accelerate efforts in support of the #IBelong Campaign and through the implementation of pledges made since the GRF 2019 for the prevention and reduction of statelessness. She encouraged States to join the Alliance and regional intergovernmental organizations to join the Solution Seeker Programme of the Alliance, which provides additional assistance to those States that have set specific time-bound targets and implementation plans.

4. Shifting Power: Advancing Localization of Research and Elevating the Voices of Host and Forcibly Displaced Communities Globally

Ms. Roula El-Rifai, Senior Program Specialist, Democratic and Inclusive Governance, International Development Research Centre

Ms. El-Rifai introduced progress made under the Advancing Localisation in Displacement and Statelessness Responses [pledge](#), which was first initiated at the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges in 2022. The multi-stakeholder pledge aims to achieve measurable and concrete actions for more effective and rights-based responses to forced displacement challenges by investigating and amplifying locally produced knowledge and engaging in quality partnerships with knowledge institutions to support the implementation of the GCR. She encouraged more stakeholders to join this effort.

Interventions from the floor

- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) recalled that forced displacement can be exacerbated by food insecurity and expressed concern about the continued and long-term dependency of displaced persons on food assistance. The FAO made a call to invest in agriculture and livelihoods as a transformative opportunity for refugees and host communities and announced plans by the FAO, the World Food Programme, UNHCR and the Global Network Against Food Crises to develop a multi-stakeholder [pledge on agriculture, food systems, and food security](#).
- The Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative updated on the multi-stakeholder [pledge on economic inclusion and social protection](#), which aims to advance economic inclusion and social protection in at least 15 refugee-hosting States.
- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) announced the development of a pledge to expand support to national and local governments and expressed commitment to scale up efforts to prevent forced displacement by addressing its root causes, including climate change. UNDP welcomes the emerging [pledge on economic inclusion and social protection](#) for which it

will explore opportunities for support, for example through the UNDP-UNHCR Global Collaboration Framework for Inclusion and Solutions 2023-2025.

- The Kingdom of the Netherlands announced that it will join the multistakeholder pledge on [economic inclusion and social protection](#) as a co-leader to ensure the protection and human dignity of refugees and host communities through economic inclusion. The PROSPECTS Partnership will serve as a key tool to advance these efforts.
- The Bondeko Livelihood Centre, on behalf of the Reference Group for the [Joint Pledge on Advancing Localization in Displacement and Statelessness Responses](#), emphasized the importance of partnerships with local civil society actors in implementing the GCR and noted the need to meaningfully include local civil society actors in decision-making.
- The non-governmental organization (NGO) Girl Power, on behalf of the Joint Pledge on [Sport for Inclusion and Protection](#), reminded participants of the crucial role that sports can play for refugees and host communities in providing a safe space that can improve physical and mental health, offer social support, advance personal development, facilitate communication between communities and generations, and contribute to greater gender equality.
- The NGO PILnet on behalf of the Global Network for Public Interest Law shared progress made under the 2019 Global Legal Community pledge, which has increased from 81 to 114 private and public sector legal stakeholder signatories and from 127,000 to 135,000 pro bono hours per year pledged by private sector legal signatories. Members of the legal community will be [repledging at the 2023](#) GRF to respond to the legal needs of forcibly displaced persons.
- Uganda shared that the country has transitioned from machine-readable to e-passports and issued over 10,000 Convention Travel Documents to refugees, which also enable their access to services abroad. Some challenges were noted regarding technical and funding gaps and non-recognition of travel documents by some States. To address some of these, Uganda is pursuing additional complementary pathways and operationalizing an online portal for travel document applications.
- The Nigerian National Commission for Refugees called for increased support from the international community for the refugee influx from the Republic of Cameroon through investments in sectors like agriculture, health, and education, and to explore multilateral development bank financing instruments and private sector partnerships.
- The Syrian Arab Republic emphasized that further attention should be given at the 2023 GRF to the conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity, which remains the preferred durable solution.
- The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) noted that only 17 per cent of the 1,700 pledges made in at the GRF 2019 mentioned children, although nearly half of the global refugee population are children who have additional specific needs. UNICEF made the call to join it and partners in the [Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts](#).
- Canada, on behalf of the [Global Taskforce on Refugee Labour Mobility](#), informed that the Taskforce has called on stakeholders to commit to growing refugees' safe labour mobility by using existing migration pathways or creating new labour mobility opportunities. Concrete examples of contributions were provided, such as ensuring refugee travel documents are

reciprocally recognized by States or assisting employers in hiring refugees through labour mobility pathways as part of their talent acquisition strategies.

- Switzerland noted that the country is currently preparing pledges on protection, localization, climate action, and resource mobilization/burden and responsibility sharing. Switzerland will explore pledge matching to see how its cooperation programs can support. Planned engagement on climate action was mentioned, inter alia through the Geneva Technical Hub and the Climate Action Group of Friends.
- Germany recalled its priority areas of cooperation, including climate and access to clean energy, access to education, access to complementary pathways, refugee labour mobility, gender-based violence (GBV), and meaningful refugee participation. Germany expressed commitment to using its chairmanship in the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies to engage in a multi-stakeholder [pledge on gender and GBV](#) and invited host countries not yet involved to join the effort.
- UNHCR, on behalf of the [Human Settlements Group of Friends](#), recalled the need for an all-encompassing approach that includes environment and climate mainstreaming, housing, shelter, WASH, health, and education. States and other stakeholders were encouraged to join the Group of Friends to define joint commitments and ensure that refugees and host communities can live together in climate-resilient and sustainable environments.
- Japan reiterated the importance of seeing the 2023 GRF within the spectrum of other multilateral processes such as the recent G7 in Hiroshima, where G7 leaders affirmed their “commitment to support the inclusion of refugees [...] in line with the Global Compact on Refugees”.
- The Republic of Korea recalled the importance of ensuring that GCR initiatives contribute coherently to a few impactful outcomes. A full list of pledges under development was requested to facilitate adequate consideration for potential contributions.
- Ethiopia stressed the importance of investing in the resilience of host communities as first responders to displacement in climate-vulnerable settings, and announced that Ethiopia is working to finalise its pledges, which will be made public soon.

Closing remarks

Mr. Arafat Jamal, Coordinator for the Global Refugee Forum 2023

Mr. Jamal observed from the statements made a true embodiment of the spirit of the GCR, particularly on the issues of enhancing international solidarity, inclusion, and refugee self-reliance. He noted that participants fully embraced the multi-stakeholder concept in their statements and echoed the invitations made to join the multi-stakeholder pledges, reiterating the lessons learned from the first GRF to start early, and pre-match policy pledges with support for more effective collective outcomes. He assured that UNHCR will explore how synergies between the presented multi-stakeholder pledges can be reinforced and closed by calling for further attention to enabling conditions for voluntary repatriation to ensure balanced attention to all four GCR objectives.