

## Notes UNHCR Monthly online Consultations with NGOs

<b>Date</b>	30 June 2021
<b>Session Title</b>	<b>The preparations for the High-Level Officials Meetings and 2019 Global Refugee Forum follow-up</b>
<b>Speakers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Daniela Reale</b>, Co-chair, The Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts</li> <li>• <b>Jarrod Clyne</b>, Senior Human Rights Advisor, International Disability Alliance</li> <li>• <b>Perveen Ali</b>, Head, GCR Coordination Team, UNHCR</li> <li>• <b>Ziad Ayad</b>, Senior Policy Officer, GCR Coordination Team, UNHCR.</li> </ul>
<b>Moderator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jérôme Elie, Head - Forced Migration, ICVA</li> </ul>
<b>Participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 70+, mostly NGOs and UNHCR staff</li> </ul>
<b>Executive summary</b>	
<p>The consultation focused on the preparations for the December 2021 High-Level Officials Meeting (HLOM), including NGOs reporting on their experience with pledges implementation and stocktaking, the next steps in the lead-up to the HLOM, matching pledges and potential entry points for NGOs to engage with the HLOM process. In particular, NGOs presented their analysis on pledges made under child protection and disability while providing related recommendations to enhance implementation of those pledges. Self-reliance and legal aid were also a key focus during the meeting. The discussion was built on the results of a survey submitted by participants ahead of the consultations, the results of which are shared separately with participants.</p>	
<b>Major points arising from speakers</b>	
<p><b><u>The Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts (The Initiative):</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 42% of forcibly displaced people are children and refugee children are facing multiple crises, especially an education crisis: before the COVID-19 pandemic, access to education was very difficult for refugees. They now face even more challenges with high drop out rates and declining potential for returns to schools.</li> <li>• The Initiative has <a href="#">pledged at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum</a> (GRF) to be a convener for learning, exchange and collaboration opportunities where States, civil society and other stakeholders from different regions can exchange experience and learn from one another on child and gender-sensitive Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) implementation.</li> <li>• The Initiative also pledged to facilitate and advise on engagement of children and young people themselves as key actors of change.</li> <li>• In implementing the pledge, The Initiative has produced guidance (see below), e.g. explaining what the GCR says on children and guidance on what pledges on child protection should look like. The Initiative also organized a roundtable in January 2021 where pledges made on child protection at the GRF were analyzed.</li> <li>• At the GRF, the area that gathered most child-focused pledges is education, with 77<sup>1</sup> pledges mostly in protection and solution but fewer pledges made on statelessness, social protection and responsibility-sharing.</li> <li>• The pledges made under child protection in education is a good start and funding will be needed for implementation. There is a need for more commitments and a focus on the gaps in pledges on child protection.</li> <li>• As for priorities for the HLOM, there is a need to ensure the implementation of the current pledges on child protection, furthering <i>ad hoc</i> pledges on child protection that have a child focus, and ensuring meaningful participation of children in debates and at the HLOM. At the HLOM, the Initiative encourages a specific session where children will be directly involved.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>International Disability Alliance (IDA)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By the end of 2020, it is estimated that roughly 12 million people with disabilities have been forcibly displaced by persecution, violence, human rights violations, conflicts, and others for reasons such as earthquakes, cyclones, droughts, floods.</li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup> As of June 2021

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- GRF pledges did not have a strong focus on the inclusion of persons with disabilities: only 42<sup>2</sup> pledges (3% of the total pledges made) had such a focus, although some pledges were very specific and from States.
- IDA appreciated the level of commitment from national organizations, civil society organisations with persons with disabilities and interfaith groups which did make pledges on topics such as inclusive education and the creation of accessible and safe spaces in refugee camps.
- In collaboration with UNHCR, IDA pledged to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies, including the rights of refugees with disabilities, become a core of our strategies. It also includes providing technical guidance and resources to IDA members – over 1100 members of organizations of persons with disabilities. IDA is seeking to reinforce its members' capacity to do advocacy at national, regional and international levels in order to mainstream the rights of refugees with disabilities across all existing policy tools and practices.
- In December 2020, IDA also signed [a Memorandum of Understanding](#) with UNHCR to facilitate and frame collaborative efforts to monitor the implementation of the 42 pledges focused on disability inclusion and to enhance the number of quality future pledges related to equal protection, inclusion, and participation of refugees with disabilities.
- The success of the pledge is intended for disabilities inclusion and relies on the participation and active role of persons with these disabilities and their representative organizations.
- One area of activity of IDA in implementing the pledge is a series of upcoming capacity-building webinars, firstly to sensitize on the issues faced by persons with disabilities in situations of forced displacement, statelessness; and lay the ground to strengthen collaboration to fulfil those rights through joint efforts. IDA plans seven regional webinars to cover the Asia Pacific; MENA; The East and Horn of Africa & the Great Lakes; West Africa; Southern Africa; Europe; The Americas. Those regional webinars will be followed by a global webinar with the UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection and IDA members.

#### UNHCR

- The HLOM is envisioned within the GCR as an opportunity to conduct a mid-term review two years after each GRF, in between the forums held every four years. The HLOM will not be at the same level of participation as for the GRF but targetted at the senior officials level including heads of departments – while the GRF is at ministerial level and above.
- Planning for the HLOM is a three parts process: **Stocktaking and consultations, Preparatory Roundtables and the HLOM**. A series of thematic and regional stocktaking and consultations have been ongoing in 2021 and will continue through November of this year. It represents opportunities around specific regions, topics, and stakeholder groups to look at the pledges made at the GRF, to see what progress has been made and where the gaps are. There is an opportunity to focus on UNHCR-NGOs efforts as we move towards the second GRF in 2023.
- In November, we will be convening **five preparatory roundtables** to look at the progress made and recommendations for the future. These will reflect the various thematic and stakeholder stocktaking discussions at the global level. It will be an opportunity to review, highlight some of those key findings and to make further recommendations.
- The first roundtable will be dedicated to the launch of the GCR indicator report which will be an opportunity to frame the discussions, then will be followed by roundtables on Financing; Partnerships; Self-reliance and Solutions. UNHCR is at the stage of developing the content, looking at what can be addressed and at recommendations for speakers.
- **UNHCR welcomes NGOs suggestions, ideas on content, speakers, and moderators for the five roundtables. Suggestions for speakers or themes at the plenary are also welcome.** Please reach UNHCR at: [hqgrf@unhcr.org](mailto:hqgrf@unhcr.org)
- On 13 December, there will be an advance day of meetings dedicated to the key stakeholder groups and the GCR initiatives, e.g. an event is planned on the Support Platforms, one planned on meaningful refugee participation and one with the private sector.
- On 14 and 15 December, the HLOM will be organized around the results of the the stocktaking events and roundtables, and bring about recommendations from the meeting itself. This will feed into an outcome document

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summarizing key recommendations and informing the development of pledging guidance and directions for the next GRF.

- An informal briefing on the preliminary outcomes of stocktaking is planned on 8 July. This will be an opportunity to inform on findings from the stocktaking opportunities and look at some of the key recommendations coming out from each of the regional Bureaus. The briefing will be an opportunity also to provide information for stakeholders on how to advance on pledges made and prepare for the HLOM in December.
- In October, there will be a request for progress updates on pledges. On 27 October, there will be another informal briefing on the program and modalities for the HLOM. UNHCR hopes to have more clarity on the epidemiological situation in Geneva and will be able to advise more on the extent of in-person participation that will be available and opportunities for remote participation in the meeting. The **entry points for NGOs** to engage in this process is first to take stock of progress made on pledges that NGOs have made and to make recommendations on how to address gaps. UNHCR would like to ensure that they find their way into the outcome document for the HLOM.
- **Entry points for NGOs:** Any opportunity for NGOs to take stock of progress would be encouraged in the lead-up to the HLOM in accordance to the relevant themes.
- Secondly, it is important to **ensure that refugee led-organizations are engaged**. UNHCR is working with a number of RLOs to seek their advice, inputs, and suggestions about how to co-shape the process and ensure that refugees are able to participate in a meaningful way. We are also working with States and other stakeholders that made pledges on refugee participation to see how they can support the process.
- UNHCR would suggest to stakeholders that have made pledges in the form of **technical, material, advocacy, or policy support** to explore how these pledges could be aligned with host country policy pledges towards greater protection and inclusion– what we refer to as ‘matching’.
- We would encourage NGOs to consider how their pledges could facilitate the implementation of pledges made by host countries.
- **NGOs’ roles** are multiple: NGOs could support the matching exercise by way of aligning their programs and pledges with host country policy pledges including from an operational programmatic perspective.
- **At the HLOM itself, written interventions would be very much welcomed** to ensure that all views are properly reflected in the key recommendations that will be incorporated into the outcome document.
- Finally, UNHCR would encourage NGOs to consider making a **joint NGO statement** at the plenary at the HLOM including with **key recommendations**.
- Online updates on pledge progress implementation are encouraging. The last individual updates submitted by various entities represent 607 pledges out of the 1400<sup>3</sup> and the number of updates is attributed partly to the fact that the reporting process was always intended to not be overly labor-intensive. It was intended to give a sense of the level of progress for informational and visibility purposes.
- 16% of pledges are fulfilled, 75% are in progress and 9% are in the planning phase. We are still in the initial phase but we hope that as we approach the HLOM, there will be a significant increase in pledges moving from the planning to the in progress and perhaps in progress to fulfilled.
- We have seen almost 80 new pledges, submitted this year as a demonstration of continued engagement.
- Stakeholder groups that are most represented and leading the implementation of pledges are States and NGOs.
- The regions that have fulfilled the most pledges are Europe and the Americas.
- The main areas of focus with pledges progress are Education, Protection Capacity and Jobs & Livelihoods.
- One of the key demonstrations of the GCR is burden- and responsibility-sharing and ensuring that host country policy pledges are supported. One way of doing so is by **pledge matching**. Matching pledges is the idea of pairing State, donor, development, private sector pledges with host country policy pledges and it could be in the form of financial, technical and/or material support and assisting in the facilitation of the advancement of the implementation of host country policy pledges across all six areas of focus. There is a significant number of host country policy pledges with about 280 pledges in total and the successful implementation of these pledges is very much reliant on the international community coming forward and supporting by matching.

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- One of the main objectives UNHCR is highlighting since the GRF is the concretisation of broad pledges. UNHCR also facilitates interaction with stakeholders to the extent possible and one of the lessons learned is no one-size-fits-all. Facilitation could be done at either the local, regional, or global level.
- As reported during the various stocktaking exercises, there have been **challenges and constraints** in pledge implementation. These include restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic (mentioned regularly by many pledging entities), budget limitations, and the need for more opportunities for engagement including by way of matching.

#### Major points arising from discussions

- **Self-Reliance.** The Refugee Self Reliance Initiative (RSRI) is a collaborative effort composed of NGOs, multilateral funders, governments, private sector actors, research and civil society institutions focused on promoting opportunities for refugees to become self-reliant. 15 partners [pledged](#) an initial two-year commitment toward the goal of self-reliance. RSRI highlighted the significant progress toward the joint pledge to promote self-reliance for refugees in the first year of the global rollout of the [Self-Reliance Index](#) reaching thousands of refugees.
- RSRI is interested to contribute towards the self-reliance discussion and will create opportunities for civil society actors to participate in stocktaking discussions to develop recommendations that will feed into the HLOM as a starting point. RSRI plans to release a comprehensive review of the progress towards the self-reliance pledge. RSRI also plans to have a global survey with civil society regarding refugee self-reliance to seek inputs on barriers and opportunities followed by a report and an event to feed into the self-reliance roundtable in November.
- RSRI **welcomes a wider variety of civil society organizations including refugee led-organizations** to make sure that recommendations are brought forward ahead of the HLOM.
- **Protection and legal stocktaking events** ahead of the HLOM. PILnet [pledged](#) in 2019 to mobilize the global legal community to protect and find solutions for refugees and others forcibly displaced.
- PILnet will **work with other actors** to bring visibility to the essential role of legal assistance in mobilizing refugee rights and its nexus with peacebuilding and development activities, increase resources for legal assistance and addressing legal gaps.
- On **Age, Gender, and Diversity (AGD)**, UNHCR is in the process of analyzing the data that might give helpful learnings. In the last round of pledge progress implementation, almost 2/3 of those reported that their pledges had an AGD component.
- As part of the consolidation of stocktaking, one of the main guidance points UNHCR provided internally was to ensure that stocktaking across the board is fully AGD-compliant. AGD will also be integrated into the five roundtables in November.
- Several NGOs endorsed the idea of a **collective NGO statement** and encouraged that in selecting interventions from civil society, thought should be given to cross-cutting/intersectional issues such as disabilities and statelessness.
- A **Refugee-Led-Organisations statement** is also welcome. The Global Refugee-Led Network with RLOs support will organize Regional Refugee Forums to prepare toward the HLOM and the RLO statement could be one way to bring recommendations from these forums by refugees in terms of funding, needs and several other aspects.
- Discussions are ongoing between ICVA and UNHCR Partnership and Coordination Service to organize an NGO stocktaking event in the fall and discuss the joint NGO statement. More information will come in in due course. **On pledges matching**, UNHCR's starting point is to look at policy pledges made by host countries for more protection and inclusion and using that as a basis to explore where opportunities could be aligned with other pledges in terms of support. For example, identifying which host countries have made pledges related to protection and then identifying protection-related pledges of support and bring them together, first at country level with the view to build on the good political will and move forward accordingly.
- **Looking forward in terms of what is expected for how the HLOM will shape future strategies for the second GRF** and also **the vision on responsibility-sharing** and what has been done so far. The GCR Indicator Report will provide the broader evidence base of our progress, lessons learned and gaps, recommendations from different stakeholder groups coming out of stocktaking events and the HLOM.

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- UNHCR emphasized the need to ensure that the preparations for the next forum be very context specific and responsive to the current challenges such as the short and long-term impacts of COVID-19; and to reflect on the obstacles and solutions that have been found in the response.

### Follow-up/Action points

#### To UNHCR & NGOs:

- Increase attention and encourage new pledges on child protection, disabilities inclusion and legal aid.
  - On child protection, recommendations are focused on further *ad hoc* pledges; further inclusion of child protection focused elements in existing pledges; ensuring meaningful participation of children in debates, including at the HLOM; enhancing initiatives on opportunities for learning; exchange and collaboration in the lead-up and during the HLOM.
  - On disabilities inclusion, expectations for 2023 GRF and the process is to have an increasing number of States with specific pledges oriented towards capacity-building to reach refugees with disabilities; to meaningfully include refugees with disabilities in the design of programmed response and partner with stakeholders.
  - On legal aid, bring visibility to the essential role that legal assistance provides to the mobilization of all refugee rights and its nexus to peace-building and development activities. PILnet calls for a scope for this issue to be raised with relevant stakeholders ahead of the HLOM, including to highlight the existing resourcing gaps.

#### To NGOs:

- Provide suggestions, ideas on content, speakers, and moderators for the five roundtables as well as for the plenary discussions to UNHCR GCR Coordination Team.
- For pledges matching:
  - Align programmes and pledges with host country policy pledge.
  - As implementing partners or intermediaries for donors or international organizations, support host country policy pledges.
  - Advocate for identifying and encourage joint pledges for the next GRF.

### Background documents/reports/guidance/websites

- Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts, [Implementing the Global Compact on Refugees for children: Examples of child-focused work](#), October 2020
- Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts, [Enhancing the protection of children and promoting child-focused pledges and good practices to advance the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees](#), October 2019
- International Disability Alliance webpage on [Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons with Disabilities](#)
- International Disability Alliance, [Bridge CRPD-SDGs Module 3 on Article 11 of the CRPD](#), June 2019
- INTERSOS, [Provision of Legal Aid in Humanitarian Settings](#), February 2019
- PILnet, [Global Refugee Forum Legal Community Pledge](#), 2020 Progress Report, PILnet, June 2021
- [Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative joint pledge](#) at 2019 Global Refugee Forum, December 2019
- UNHCR webpage on [HLOM preparatory meetings and events](#) including information on the Informal briefing on the preliminary outcomes of stocktaking events, 8 July 2021
- UNHCR, [Updated list of stocktaking events in 2021](#)