

Summary of the Third Quarterly Informal Briefing on the Global Compact on Refugees

4 September 2024, 15:00-17:00 hours CEST

The Third Quarterly Informal Briefing on the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) was held on 4 September 2024 to present updates on multi-stakeholder pledges around the theme of “Inclusion and Self-Reliance”. UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection (AHC-P) Ms. Ruvendrini Menikdiwela opened the meeting by presenting the panellists and agenda. Opening remarks were then delivered by H.E. Mr Jérôme Bonnafont, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations Office at Geneva, Ms. Elvira Haxhiu, Membre de l'Académie pour la participation des personnes réfugiées en France et représentante de la délégation des 70 réfugiés experts au Forum Mondial des Réfugiés 2023, Ms. Menikdiwela, AHC-P, and Mr. Nicolas Brass, Senior Policy Adviser and Head of the Global Compact on Refugees Coordination Team, UNHCR. Presentations by multi-stakeholder pledges were then delivered, followed by interventions from states and other stakeholders from the floor and closing remarks by Ms. Menikdiwela.

Opening of the meeting by Ms. Ruvendrini Menikdiwela, UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection

In her welcome remarks, Ms. Menikdiwela opened the session by presenting the panellists and agenda.

Opening remarks by H.E. Mr. Jérôme Bonnafont, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations Office at Geneva

H.E. Bonnafont opened by talking about the tragic shipwreck that occurred in the English Channel the day before the briefing, in which at least twelve migrants perished, calling for effective humanitarian action motivated by hope. He then described historic moments marking the Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games, during which refugee athletes won medals for the first time, symbolising hope for millions of forcibly displaced people worldwide and sending a message that inclusion is an opportunity both for refugees and those who welcome them. He acknowledged the challenges and costs of inclusion policies, but emphasized their effectiveness and humanity. He affirmed France’s commitment to supporting these policies, as demonstrated by its financial contributions and initiatives like the “Avec Elles” pledge of support to refugee women and girls. H.E. Bonnafont then elaborated on France’s efforts toward inclusive policies and its commitments made at the Global Refugee Forum 2023 (GRF). He concluded by inviting Ms. Haxhiu to deliver opening remarks on behalf of France and to share her experience and dedication to helping refugees.

Opening remarks by Ms. Elvira Haxhiu, Membre de l'Académie pour la participation des personnes réfugiées en France et de la délégation des 70 réfugiés experts au Forum Mondial des Réfugiés 2023

Ms. Elvira Haxhiu spoke of her journey as a refugee and her commitment to supporting refugees in France. She highlighted her role in establishing the Kodiko Association in the French city of Tours, which aids refugees in professional integration, and her experience helping to establish a system to support 800 displaced Ukrainians at the outset of the war in Ukraine. Her background as both a refugee and an advocate has shown her the importance of refugees’ access to opportunities, to learn the language of the country of asylum and to housing, education, work and healthcare. She praised initiatives like the French Academy for the Participation of Refugees, Volont’R, and the “Avec Elles” programme, for their positive impact. She emphasized the need for collaborative efforts to support refugees and urged that similar opportunities be extended to all asylum seekers. Reflecting on her decade in France, she reaffirmed her belief in the right to integration, dignity, and respect for all.

Opening remarks by Ms. Ruvendrini Menikdiwela, UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection

Ms. Menikdiwela thanked H.E Bonnafont and Ms. Haxhiu for their constructive contributions and commended France's commitments at the GRF 2023 and the "Avec Elles" initiative. She highlighted progress in protecting and including forcibly displaced women and girls and appreciated the efforts of various stakeholders. Referring to the tragic losses at sea the day before, Ms. Menikdiwela underscored the need for urgent solutions and collaboration. She also praised Ms. Haxhiu's inspiring story and highlighted the key role of refugee participation in shaping impactful programmes. She congratulated France on the success of the Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games, noting refugee athletes' inspiring performances as a testament to resilience and the power of inclusion.

Ms. Menikdiwela emphasized that inclusion is crucial for refugees' self-reliance, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to host societies, which benefits both refugees and the host countries receiving them in the long term. She mentioned some exemplary contexts where the principles of the GCR have been turned into action:

- Colombia's collaboration to provide health services to over 1 million Venezuelans
- Jordan expanding public healthcare access to all refugees
- Iran enrolling over 800,000 Afghan and Iraqi refugee children in education
- The U.S. including refugee students in higher education through the Welcome Corps initiative
- Georgia is easing naturalization processes for refugees
- Zambia's Local Integration Programme providing legal residency and opportunities for former refugees

These initiatives demonstrate that investing in inclusion helps refugees thrive and enriches host societies, Ms. Menikdiwela said, calling for continued support and collaboration in this direction, in particular to enable such policies in low- and middle-income refugee-hosting countries. She urged renewed commitment to inclusion initiatives, particularly at the upcoming High-level Officials Meeting in 2025 and the Global Refugee Forum in 2027. She also emphasized the importance of the forthcoming High-Level Segment on Statelessness, which will address the plight of stateless people and seek solutions. In conclusion, Ms. Menikdiwela said that inclusion is about building bridges and fostering a global environment where everyone can thrive, regardless of background.

Opening remarks by Mr. Nicolas Brass, Senior Policy Adviser and Head of the Global Compact on Refugees Coordination Team, UNHCR

Mr. Brass, the newly appointed Head of the GCR Coordination Team, expressed honour and excitement about working closely on implementing the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). With 17 years at UNHCR, Mr. Brass highlighted his experience in various roles and regions, including Europe and Asia-Pacific. He thanked the GCR Coordination Team and the AHC-P for their support and trust.

Mr. Brass emphasized the importance of focusing on pledge implementation and matching to improve the lives of displaced people and their hosts. He noted that 4 out of 10 pledges received before 2023 had been fulfilled, and 257 new pledges were received in 2024. He also encouraged stakeholders to share good practices on the GCR Digital Platform and highlighted the upcoming stocktaking process, which will review progress towards the Compact's objectives and identify areas needing further support. He stressed the need for reporting on pledge implementation and

announced the upcoming biannual global outreach for pledge updates in October. UNHCR will facilitate the stocktaking process and provide more updates in the December informal briefing.

Mr. Brass concluded by thanking H.E. Bonnafont and Ms. Elvira Haxhiu for their inspiring remarks on inclusion. He drew a parallel between the values of the Olympic Games and those of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Forum.

Multi-stakeholder pledge presentations moderated by Ms. Ruvendrini Menikdiwela, UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection

Representatives of the multi-stakeholder pledges on Human Settlements, the UN Common Pledge 2.0, Economic Inclusion and Social Protection, Education, and Health shared updates on pledge implementation. During these presentations, several multi-stakeholder pledge leads reported progress on their pledge:

- **Ethiopia** reported progress on the **Human Settlements** pledge, which received 47 pledges, including policy pledges from 10 refugee-hosting countries¹ and nine financial pledges contributing to the vision of turning camps into climate-resilient, sustainable human settlements for refugees and their hosting communities. Ethiopia showcased the Melkadida Refugee Compact 2024-2027 and the Kebribeyah Inclusion Roadmap 2023-2027, as well as efforts in Kenya and Mauritania (Mbera) to transition camps into settlements.
- **The UN Resident Coordinator in Kenya** highlighted the involvement of 50 UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and 19 UN agencies in the **UN Common Pledge 2.0 on Refugee Inclusion**, which aims to advance the 2030 Agenda and integrate refugees into national systems and budgets as well as into UN plans. He shared the specific approach taken by the UNCT in Kenya, in support of the Government's Shirika Plan.
- **The Netherlands** reported progress on the **Economic Inclusion and Social Protection pledge** in multiple countries. Overall, 88 states and other stakeholders have contributed through policy reform, new programmes for refugees, and evidence generation. Financial pledges have reached over USD 1 billion. The Netherlands pointed to upcoming multilateral processes and events which can be utilized to advance refugee inclusion, such as the Summit of the Future.
- **The UK's Refugee Advisor, Ms. Hala Khankan**, on behalf of the **Education multi-stakeholder pledge**, provided an update on the coordination mechanisms of the pledge with the leadership group including the World Bank and UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). She highlighted how she has personally been involved in the process pre-, during- and post-GRF. Moving forward, the pledge is focusing efforts on Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia, and South Sudan as part of the INSPIRE programme.
- **The World Health Organization** provided an update on multi-stakeholder pledges on **Achieving Inclusion in National Health Systems** and **Fostering Mental Health and Psychosocial Well-Being**, which are expected to be implemented in at least 15 refugee-hosting countries by 2027, enabled by financial, material and technical support. Pledges were made by 88 entities and, if implemented, are estimated to benefit more than 13 million people. To advance **Health Systems inclusion**, four high-level meetings have been held in 2024² and side events are planned for the 79th UN General Assembly – hosted by Egypt and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – and the World Health Summit 2024 in Berlin. To advance mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), recent milestones include the World Health Assembly Resolution adopted in May 2024 to strengthen MHPSS in emergencies. Further, the WHO is undertaking "Refugee and Migrant Health System Reviews", which

¹ Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, Uganda, South Sudan, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Benin, the Niger and Mozambique

² 77th World Health Assembly side event; Geneva Health Forum Thematic Session; NCD High Level Meeting with emphasis on inclusion and refugee participation; Academia Group under the Group of Friends on Health

have already been implemented in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Jordan, Thailand, and Uganda, and are planned for Chile and South Africa.

Discussions and interventions, moderated by H.E. Mr. Jérôme Bonnafont, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations Office at Geneva

During the discussions and interventions session, various States and stakeholders highlighted key issues and pledge progress.

- The ILO emphasized the importance of labour market inclusion, decent work, and the flexibility to include disabled individuals as part of GRF pledges. ILO also noted the recently published guide “Refugees and Migrants Have Rights in Colombia”, developed in collaboration with the Pontificia Javeriana University and UNHCR in support of the Colombian Ministry of Labour.
- Japan discussed its commitment to a whole-of-society approach, with upcoming roundtables and meetings to promote the HDP nexus multi-stakeholder pledge.
- Uganda called for more financial support for refugee inclusion, stressing the need for international cooperation, including through pledge matching, and addressing language barriers for refugees.
- The Sovereign Order of Malta announced an upcoming workshop on migrant smuggling and trafficking in partnership with the Permanent Missions of Italy, the Vatican, and others.
- A representative of the Advisory Board to the UNHCR Task Team on Engagement and Partnership with Organizations led by Forcibly Displaced and Stateless Persons advocated for displaced people to be seen as agents of change.
- The European Union reported on the implementation of its pledges and referred to an incoming technical meeting it will hold internally on pledge matching.
- World Vision International highlighted significant commitments from 318 child rights pledges, the establishment of mechanisms for child participation, and regional collaborations to support pledge implementation.

Responses and closing remarks by Ms. Ruvendrini Menikdiwela, UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection

Ms. Menikdiwela responded to the questions and statements raised and thanked the presenters and various stakeholders supporting these multi-stakeholder pledges for their hard work and progress. She also acknowledged the challenges in implementing these pledges, and how they should be supported, including through matching.

She announced that UNHCR will organize a virtual side event as part of the Summit of the Future, which is being held in New York in late September. This event, which is co-sponsored by Colombia and Canada, aims to advance the implementation of key multi-stakeholder pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) that support the Pact for the Future and its specific actions, and to bring the Summit and Pact to the GCR universe of stakeholders. Further details about the virtual event will be shared soon and all stakeholders are encouraged to participate. Ms. Menikdiwela also mentioned that Mr. Brass will provide more information about the GCR stocktaking process in the next informal briefing. Thanking everyone for their engagement, Ms. Menikdiwela concluded the third Quarterly Informal Briefing on the GCR.