

Global Programmes

Remarks by the Director of the Division of Resilience and Solutions,

Mr. Sajjad Malik

**Standing Committee of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's
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Mister Chairperson, Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

As my colleagues elaborated, despite growing challenges and complexities, UNHCR remains agile, responsive, and steadfast in delivering its protection and solutions mandate. We continue to support the leadership of governments, communities, and partners in advancing the objectives of the **Global Compact on Refugees** and the pledges made at the **Global Refugee Forum**. Responses that ease pressures on host countries, enhance refugee self-reliance, expand access to third-country solutions, and support conditions for safe and dignified return.

UNHCR's **Global Programmes** are central to these efforts. They strive to bridge humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding approaches, alongside private sector investments, grounded in strong data and evidence to reinforce national priorities.

Across critical sectors, the Global Programmes help strengthen national systems and ease the pressures on host communities, which continue to show extraordinary generosity in welcoming and hosting displaced and stateless populations. Host countries need sustained support to maintain their solidarity, foster self-reliance, and development of both displaced populations and their host communities.

At the same time, we are mindful that the hard-won progress of recent years must be safeguarded. Without sustained commitment and collective action, we risk sliding back, with far greater human capital and financial costs.

Allow me to highlight five take aways from Global Programmes—and where our collective action remains more important than ever.

First, durable solutions are interdependent.

Given the protracted nature of displacement, UNHCR's Programmes demonstrate that investing in inclusion, education and self-reliance today lays the foundation for durable solutions tomorrow—whether through voluntary return, local integration where feasible, resettlement or complementary pathways. In 2024, Member States reaffirmed this comprehensive approach by adopting the Executive Committee Conclusion on Durable Solutions and Complementary Pathways.

Yet, we know that in many situations, the possibility of voluntary and sustainable return remains limited. Where conditions allow, we are seeing some progress. Since 2019, over 3.45 million refugees have returned to their countries of origin¹—including more than 640,000 to Syria since January 2024.

We know return is only **sustainable when linked to peacebuilding and recovery**.

Through the Peacebuilding Pledge—co-led by Colombia, Egypt, Norway, and UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and in partnership with the African Union and others—we are supporting the integration of displaced populations into post-conflict recovery frameworks.

We are also working with IOM, UNDP, OCHA, and DCO to advance **solutions for internally displaced people**, in line with the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement and its follow-up mechanisms.

It is also encouraging to note that **complementary pathways are expanding**. For example, Italy's Train-to-Hire Programme, which connects refugees trained in Egypt, Jordan, and Uganda with jobs in Italy, is now growing into Latin America.

Second, socio-economic inclusion of refugees in national systems, strengthens access to quality services for all.

Please allow me to highlight a few examples:

¹ Afghanistan, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Côte d'Ivoire, Iraq, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Ukraine.

In health, as part of the Measuring Impact work, a UNHCR–World Bank study underscores: **including refugees in national health systems from the outset** improves cost efficiency and enhances public health outcomes for both refugees and host communities.

We are seeing this in Eastern Chad, where Sudanese refugees are integrated into national health services from the start. Early collaboration with development partners—such as the World Bank, Global Fund, and GAVI—strengthened national health systems. The government has pledged to take over management of 50% of these facilities by 2027, with continued development financing.

In education, significant progress was made in 2024 on the multi-stakeholder pledge to secure predictable, multi-year financing for refugee inclusion in national education systems. The UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) provided initial funding for the World Bank’s Inclusion Support Programme for Refugee Education (INSPIRE)—a technical assistance facility to help governments leverage IDA financing for education inclusion. INSPIRE was launched in Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia, and South Sudan, with 11 additional countries² to follow in 2025.

At the Wilton Park dialogue last November, six host governments—Burundi, Chad, Colombia, Ethiopia, Jordan, Türkiye, and Zambia—reaffirmed their commitment to refugee education inclusion. Development partners and Education Cannot Wait and the LEGO Foundation pledged further support.

UNHCR is also **expanding economic opportunities** for refugees and displaced populations **through agricultural transformation** in Cameroon, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria and Zambia. In partnership with governments, the private sector, and development organizations, where feasible, we are shifting from small-scale livelihood projects to initiatives that support boosting productivity, food security, and job creation.

Third, national leadership—supported by humanitarian and development financing, policy dialogue, and technical expertise—is critical to delivering sustainable responses.

² Benin, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Poland, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Turkey, Zambia

In 2024, UNHCR deepened collaboration with governments, bilateral development actors, international financial institutions and UN partners to advance sustainable responses to operationalize the Global Refugee Forum commitments.

As we heard from the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations yesterday and at the informal briefing, these efforts focus on strengthening national systems and services, ensuring the inclusion of displaced populations from the outset, and promoting self-reliance through government-led comprehensive responses.

The **World Bank Group** remains a strong partner in all these efforts. The UNHCR-World Bank Joint Team further adds to this growing partnership, strengthening our approach to sustainable responses

The **International Monetary Fund** is also contributing to this approach. Together with UNHCR, the IMF is integrating forced displacement into its policies and programmes in countries such as Costa Rica, Poland, Moldova, Jordan, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, and Niger.

UNHCR also continues its important partnerships **with Bilateral development actors** on translating GRF pledges into practice. **Germany's BMZ**, supported expanded investments in social protection, and economic inclusion and education in refugee-hosting countries. **France's AFD** prioritized multi-sectorial interventions, inclusive of education and livelihoods, particularly in fragile contexts. **Japan's JICA** supported local governments in Uganda to integrate refugees into district development plans, reinforcing local leadership and service delivery. **The Netherlands**, through PROSPECTS, advanced resilience, inclusion and self-reliance while keeping protection at the centre of its mission. **Switzerland's** support through the Geneva Technical Hub provided much needed technical support. **The European Union** has supported us to strike a good balance between development investments in asylum countries as well as return.

Fourth, the private sector is playing an increasing role in delivering solutions that foster self-reliance, create jobs, and drive innovation.

Through the **IFC–UNHCR Joint Initiative**, we are making steady progress to unlock private sector investments in agriculture, renewable energy, and financial services across 30 operations worldwide.

But this potential can only be fully realized when refugees and displaced people have access to rights, including freedom of movement, civil documentation and the right to work.

We see promising examples in contexts with a conducive regulatory and policy framework. In Mexico, more than 50,000 refugees have been hired through private-sector partnerships. In Uganda, Kenya, Peru, and Poland, private financial institutions—supported by development finance—are helping refugees access loans and savings. These are encouraging developments.

Finally, strong data and analysis are essential to designing effective policies, programmes, and investments.

The World Bank-UNHCR Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement (JDC) launched its second strategy in 2024 and now supports 42 activities across 34 countries, providing vital socioeconomic data to inform development programming and national policies. A key focus is helping national statistical offices systematically include forcibly displaced populations—refugees, stateless persons, and IDPs—in national data systems in countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Togo.

Chairperson, Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

As we prepare for the High-Level Officials Meeting later this year, advancing sustainable responses—led by many of you—remains central to delivering on the Global Refugee Forum commitments.

Our integrated, sectoral approach—bringing together efforts across health, education, social protection, livelihoods, energy, shelter, sustainable human settlements and more—shows what's possible when we work in partnership across humanitarian, development, peace, and private sector actors based on strong data and evidence.

But as I said at the start, sustaining this collective effort is what will make solutions possible—for refugees, displaced and stateless people, and the communities who host them.

Thank you.