

Sustainable responses

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

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**Mister Chairperson, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,**

Over the past year, we have worked closely with Member States, development partners, UN agencies, NGOs, the private sector, and organizations led by displaced and stateless people to shape a shared vision and advance sustainable responses to forced displacement.

This progress unfolds against a backdrop of persistent and sobering realities. Displacement remains at a record high—with one in every 67 people worldwide forcibly displaced. Forty-one percent are children. And seventy-three percent continue to be hosted by low- and middle-income countries, whose generosity, despite their own challenges and often in the face of protracted crises, stands as a global public good.

This context calls for renewed commitment to the Global Compact on Refugees, the pledges made at the Global Refugee Forums, the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on internal displacement, and efforts to end statelessness. Across these frameworks, one message is clear: only whole-of-society approaches—where humanitarian action is complemented from the outset by development, peace, and private sector engagement—while supporting host communities and can enable displaced to build resilience, move beyond cycles of dependency, and access truly durable solutions.

As highlighted in the conference room paper and as advised by Member States, this now requires translating into context-specific strategies and support.

Let me focus on three areas that were highlighted in our consultations, where collective progress is both needed and possible:

**First: Advancing partnerships and Regional Cooperation for solutions**

Returns—though not in large numbers everywhere—are happening at the highest scale we have seen in decades. As we heard from my colleague Director of International

Protection, Ms. Elizabeth Tan, last year, more than 1.6 million refugees returned, with the largest movements to Afghanistan, Syria, South Sudan, and Ukraine. In Syria alone, over half a million have returned since the start of this year, with even more projected by the end of 2025.

But these journeys home are rarely simple: many face fragile peace, rudimentary infrastructure, limited basic services and economic opportunities. The risk of renewed displacement remains real unless we match people's courage with sustained, coordinated support with HDP Nexus approach, addressing also the root causes.

Progress relies on nationally led, data-driven strategies that reflect the needs of returnees and host communities with the active engagement of development, peace, and private sector partners. The Central African Republic offers a clear example of what is possible when these elements come together. Displacement data informed the National Poverty Assessment and the country's National Development Plan, unlocking development financing for social protection and return areas. In Baoro, the government-led development hub is bringing together new housing, essential services, and local infrastructure. At the same time, a private sector roundtable is planned in July to mobilize investment including for job creation— agri-business and other areas—building on area-based approach.

Similar approaches are underway in South Sudan, Burundi, and Ukraine.

Yet, we are not where we need to be. Financing, jobs, and inclusive growth are still lagging, especially in fragile settings. Predictable development financing and private capital must move decisively toward return and reintegration.

Support arrangements under the Global Compact on Refugees—such as MIRPS, the Cartagena process, and the Solutions Platforms for Afghanistan and CAR—advance joint planning, resource mobilization, and cooperation across countries of origin, asylum, and return.

Looking ahead, and drawing on the lessons of these mechanisms, a dedicated support platform for Syria could help align planning, policy, and resources among host countries, donors, and development actors, making solutions more predictable and coordinated.

As reflected in the conference room paper on Solutions, resettlement and complementary pathways have expanded this year. They remain vital tools for responsibility sharing and for providing protection to those most in need.

**Second: building self-reliance and inclusion —from the start—to support solutions for refugees and strengthen host communities.**

Chairperson, Ambassador Bermúdez’s opening statement, reflecting on his recent missions to Bangladesh and Thailand, brought these realities vividly to life. As he so powerfully put it, refugees are resilient and hopeful—they want to work, to take care of themselves, and they simply need the opportunity to do so. When that opportunity is provided, everyone stands to gain. As the Ambassador observed, “This becomes a win-win situation for refugees and for the host communities.”

The evidence is clear: when refugees are included in health care, education, and the workforce, it strengthens national systems that also benefits host communities. Inclusion also supports returns, helping people stay resilient and ready to rebuild when they can go home.

We see this in Mauritania, where integrating refugees into the national health system reduced the cost per consultation from \$48 to \$9—making health care more affordable and expanding access for both refugees and host communities.

Legal and policy reforms are also expanding economic and financial inclusion. In Uganda, a partnership with Grameen Crédit Agricole Microfinance and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency has enabled refugee women to access credit, invest in businesses, and strengthen resilience. In Ecuador, reforms allow refugees to open bank accounts and build their financial independence. In Poland, early inclusion of Ukrainian refugees in national systems meant that, within two years, most were able to meet their own needs.

Area-based approaches are replacing protracted camp models. Kenya’s Shirika Plan and Ethiopia’s Maketet Roadmap link refugee settlements to national development. But these shifts require sustained engagement and investment—from both traditional donors, development actors and the private sector.

**Third: Predictable, multi-year development financing and leveraging the private sector is critical to success.**

This shift is already visible in how key development actors are engaging. The World Bank’s IDA Window for Host Communities and Refugees has delivered \$5.16 billion to 21 countries, 85 percent in grants. Under the IDA21 replenishment, a further \$2.4 billion has been allocated through a new dedicated window. The Global Concessional Financing Facility has provided \$1 billion in grants, unlocking \$8 billion in concessional loans for refugee-hosting middle-income countries. Other development actors—including

regional development banks and bilateral donors—are also stepping up in their long-term frameworks, aligning support with national plans and operating over three- to five-year timelines.

This financing is already tangible progress. In Chad, it has supported refugee inclusion in civil registries and poverty assessments. In Ethiopia, it is expanding access to digital IDs and integrating refugees into education and social protection systems. In Uganda, it has strengthened district-level emergency response. In Jordan and Colombia, it is supporting health, education, employment, and infrastructure, including expanding work opportunities.

We need more in this direction: financing that is predictable, forward-looking, and delivered in support of refugee-hosting countries and for solutions, including returns. It must also bring real additionality, in the spirit of burden- and responsibility-sharing.

As development financing continues to evolve, transparency and accountability are essential. Timely reporting by DAC members and multilateral development banks to the OECD allows us to track progress, address gaps, and ensure resources are targeted for the greatest impact—so that every dollar supports the people and communities who need it most.

From the data provided thus far, we can confirm that development financing is now a core part of the international response to forced displacement. In 2021, nearly 34 percent of total ODA to displacement situations came from development actors—a significant shift. While full data for 2022 and 2023 is still forthcoming, early trends suggest that development investments continues to be substantial. At the same time, nearly two-thirds of displacement-related ODA in 2022 was allocated to humanitarian needs, underscoring the ongoing scale of immediate crises. In low- and middle-income countries, 93 percent of displacement-related ODA—across both humanitarian and development streams—was delivered as grants, helping ensure that support remains concessional and responsive to the context. At the same time, we have seen a sharp rise in in-donor refugee costs, which exceeded \$32 billion in both 2022 and 2023—a significant increase compared to previous years. This reflects the scale and immediacy of recent crises, primarily the war in Ukraine.

The private sector, too, is stepping up in new ways. Where governments create enabling environments—ensuring legal status, documentation, and access to financial systems—private businesses are investing in job creation, financial inclusion, and market access. The IFC–UNHCR Joint Initiative is now supporting more than 30 country teams, helping to analyze, de-risk, and catalyze private investment in refugee and host settings.

**Mister Chairperson, Excellencies,**

We are seeing encouraging progress across all the areas I mentioned. We're beginning to see some common elements: national policies matched with predictable and sustained engagement across humanitarian, development, and private sector partners. Not every context will follow the same path, but these efforts demonstrate what is possible when the Global Refugee Forum pledges are advanced.

Now we need to build on this momentum. our next step is to move from promising examples to a more structured approach—a method that can guide how we support and scale nationally led strategies. We have joined forces with the World Bank to support in developing strategies and plans for sustainable responses.

The upcoming high-level official meeting will offer a shared opportunity to identify where these conditions exist, and to work together—work together to invest in their success.