

**76<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's  
Programme**

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**3mins**

- Chair, High Commissioner, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates
- The International Olympic Committee (IOC) acknowledges the vital role of UNHCR and humanitarian staff providing protection and assistance to people forced to flee around the globe.
- We also recognize that today's increasingly complex environment, paired with declining resources is having a profound impact across the humanitarian sector and among the communities most in need; all while the scale of displacement and global crisis continues to grow to unprecedented levels.
- This sombre reality underlines the urgent need to strengthen cross-sector collaboration and prioritize fostering local capacity. Humanitarian actors, development partners, governments, cities, the private sector, and civil society, including the world of sport, must work hand in hand to respond to the growing need.
- The International Olympic Committee is a longstanding partner of UNHCR and we are proud of our work together to harness sport for the protection and inclusion of individuals and communities affected by displacement.
- We believe the goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service and harmonious development of humankind, promoting a peaceful society that is concerned with the preservation of human dignity.



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- It may seem remiss to speak about the right to practice sport at a time when so many displaced communities' basic needs go unmet and human rights are denied, when populations are starving and when civilians and aid workers are targeted.
- While sport alone cannot address these challenges, it can play a valuable and complementary role fostering positive outcomes and promoting peace. This is a role that the IOC, through the Olympic Refugee Foundation, is committed to strengthening. Today, ORF supported community-based projects and programmes are active in 19 countries; using sport to promote mental health and well-being, social inclusion and climate resilience as well as challenge misinformation, discrimination and hate.
- We continue to support the inclusion of refugee athletes in our Olympic community through the Refugee Athlete Support programme, and look forward to seeing them compete and inspire at the Youth Olympic Games in Dakar next year, and the Olympic Games LA28.
- Through our work in partnership with UNHCR we also strive to unite the Olympic Movement and the wider sport ecosystem in support of people forced to flee.
- Since its announcement at the Global Refugee Forum in 2023, more than 150 entities – including member states, international and national sport federations, National Olympic Committees, refugee and community-led organizations, academics, the private sector and nongovernmental organizations have signaled their commitment to supporting displaced communities through sport by signing the *Multistakeholder Pledge on Sport for Protection and Inclusion* developed by the Sport for Refugees Coalition. In its first year of implementation the coalition collectively reached more than 445,000 people affected by displacement in 82 countries.



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- At the Sport for Sustainable Development Summit on the eve of the Olympic Games Paris 2024, Heads of States from more than 60 countries, alongside the sport sector, international organisations and development banks endorsed the Paris Agreement , which calls for the provision of sports programmes that promote social inclusion and combat discrimination, in particular for people affected by displacement.
- We are also pleased to share that for the first time, the Sport for Refugees Coalition, with funding from the ORF, has been able to directly fund refugee and community led projects; with four projects and 9 organisations recently receiving the first awards.
- We are committed to sharing our learning, supporting other organizations, policy makers and practitioners to adapt and scale these approaches to meet the unique needs of their local communities. As we move toward the Global Refugee Forum Progress Review this December, we encourage policymakers and practitioners to consider how sport can support and help you achieve your objectives.
- We know that when we work together, we can achieve more.
- So today, we are here not only to reflect on the positive potential of sport, but also to remind everyone of our shared obligation. As the IOC, and the wider Olympic Movement we stand ready to work together to ensure that displaced communities can survive, and ultimately thrive, through sport.
- Thank you