

95th Meeting of Standing Committee – GRF Progress Review

(March 2026)

Thank you, Chair.

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear colleagues,

As you know, we presented the Outcome Document of the Global Refugee Forum Progress Review during an informal briefing on 16 March. I will therefore be brief today.

I will focus on three points. First, what the Progress Review represented. Second, the main takeaways, including what we heard from participants. And third, how the recommendations, together with the 75th anniversary of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, help set direction towards the Global Refugee Forum in 2027.

As many of you emphasized in your statements over the past three days, the Global Compact on Refugees continues to serve as a living framework for multilateral cooperation in support of refugees and the countries that host them. The Progress Review gave concrete expression to this.

It brought together close to 1,500 participants. This included 260 people with lived experience of displacement or statelessness. This is the strongest level of such participation we have seen to date in the Compact's context.

The event reflected a truly whole-of-society engagement, bringing together States, local authorities and actors, civil society, refugee-led organizations, international financial institutions, the UN family, regional organizations, academia, faith actors. And the private sector.

Allow me, in this regard, to acknowledge the strong engagement many of you demonstrated. Not only during the event itself, but also throughout the preparations. UNHCR is particularly grateful to the Co-Convenors (Colombia, France, Japan, Jordan and Uganda) and to Switzerland as Co-Host, for their leadership and support.

As we prepared for the Progress Review, we heard your calls to avoid a business-as-usual approach. We reflected this in the programme. And we also adjusted the modalities to encourage more substantive discussions across the three days.

Some modalities worked better than others. This was also reflected in the participant survey, which showed a high level of satisfaction overall, while pointing to areas for improvement, particularly on opportunities for two-way dialogue.

But the clearest feedback was how actively all stakeholders use such convenings.

To connect.

To develop and match pledges.

To address challenges.

To mobilize resources.

And to build partnerships.

Beyond the official programme, many of you also used the space to convene your own multi-stakeholder discussions, including on support platforms and strategic priorities, reinforcing the multiplying return on investment such gatherings can generate.

In terms of key takeaways, the Progress Review highlighted a dual reality. Progress is real. But it is increasingly fragile.

Partners acknowledged important advances since the first Global Refugee Forum. These include expanded inclusion in national systems, strengthened protection frameworks, and a significant growth in the number and diversity of partners engaged in refugee responses and in multistakeholder pledges.

Yet we heard about the persistent gaps in responsibility-sharing, the impact of declining predictable and flexible financing, the strain on asylum systems, the growing polarization and the slow progress in protracted situations.

At the same time, solidarity towards refugees remains strong, with partners expressing readiness to shape more effective approaches. The Progress Review also saw the announcement of more than 30 new pledges, including policy reforms, as well as financial and thematic commitments. This shows that global engagement remains strong, even in a challenging environment

A central message from the Progress Review is that the “how” matters as much as the “what”. The Compact’s non-binding multistakeholder model is valued because it enables practical and more efficient cooperation. It helps align partners, match support to needs, and link humanitarian action with development engagement and solutions. The Compact was reaffirmed as a key enabler of efforts to move away from parallel systems to sustainable and nationally-anchored responses, fully aligned with broader UN reform and the humanitarian reset.

It was also reiterated that credibility will hinge on implementation: the Progress Review reinforced that pledges are not a numbers exercise. The real test is whether commitments translate on the ground into protection in practice, inclusion, dignity, and pathways to solutions. We heard strong demand for sharper pledge matching, stronger national data and

digital inclusion, and more innovative and predictable financing, without which host-country policy pledges and inclusive national systems cannot be sustained at scale.

On participation of people with lived experience, the Progress Review marked another important step in our efforts toward greater engagement of refugees and toward localization. Refugee speakers contributed to every part of the programme: plenary, side events, strategic dialogues, and pledge announcement. Several State delegations included refugee advisers, a practice we hope to see become a trend. Feedback from participants confirmed progress in access and representation, while underscoring the need to strengthen influence in policy-making; a clear agenda for the next phase.

This brings me to the eight priority recommendations coming out of the Progress Review, which provide a focused roadmap toward the next GRF. They call for:

- (1) safeguarding access to asylum and protection;
- (2) accelerating self-reliance and solutions;
- (3) optimizing the GRF pledging framework;
- (4) deepening multistakeholder engagement and partnership brokerage;
- (5) using the GCR as a global anchor for greater efficiency and coherence, including in the context of UN80 and humanitarian reset discussions;
- (6) advancing meaningful refugee participation;
- (7) investing in data and digital inclusion; and
- (8) securing predictable, multi-year financing aligned with national leadership and plans

Each of these recommendations includes more detailed actions, which I invite you to consult in the Outcome Document.

Looking ahead, they will guide the overall implementation of the Compact, as well as preparations for the next Forum in 2027. UNHCR will take forward those actions that depend on our convening role, in close consultation with all concerned, in particular with respect to the Compact's implementation mechanisms.

As we do so, we will continue to work collectively to advance the Compact, even as resources are increasingly constrained. Sustained and predictable support from our State and multi-stakeholder partners will remain essential, not only in principle, but also in practice. To this end, allow me to take this opportunity to pay particular tribute to our

generous financial supporters in 2025 and 2026, notably Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Slovenia.

This year, the 75th anniversary of the 1951 Convention will provide an opportunity to take action on some of those recommendations. It is not only a moment of commemoration, but a timely opportunity for renewal. Over the past 75 years, the Convention has saved countless lives and provided a vital protection framework for millions of refugees. At a time when asylum systems are under increasing pressure and movement patterns are growing ever more complex, this anniversary invites us to renew our collective commitment to the Convention's continued relevance and application.

The High Commissioner has reminded us that the Convention is a promise that must be realized in practice, and that both the GCR and GRF offer practical mechanisms for translating legal principles into effective cooperation and responsibility-sharing.

Throughout 2026, UNHCR will facilitate a series of national, regional, and global dialogues to explore how the international protection system can adapt to current displacement realities. We will also launch a global communications and advocacy campaign on World Refugee Day grounded in the spirit of the Convention and the High Commissioner's vision, together with refugees and high-level champions.

This journey will culminate in the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection, which will be co-hosted by Switzerland in Geneva in December. The recommendations from this event will help shape the Future of Protection and Solutions Agenda, and guide the next wave of pledges and preparations for the Global Refugee Forum 2027.

More detailed information will be shared with you all and made available on UNHCR's website by the end of April.

Let me close with one reflection. The Progress Review confirmed the Compact remains fit for purpose, but it also made clear that credibility depends on delivery. The recommendations give us a clear direction of travel and the 75th anniversary gives us a strategic moment to renew commitment to protection and to mobilize the partnerships and support needed to deliver solutions at scale.

Thank you.