

Annual Results Report

2025

Malawi

Acknowledgements

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Note:

The baseline values presented in this document reflect previous year's progress when available. If such data is not available, strategy baseline values are used instead.

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Section 1: Context and Overview

1.1 Changes to the Operational Context

In 2025, Malawi's operational context was constrained by fiscal pressures, macroeconomic instability, and a global humanitarian funding freeze, resulting in a reduced UNHCR presence and programme scope. High inflation, foreign exchange shortages, and rising food prices exacerbated vulnerabilities among refugees and host communities, while limited government resources curtailed service expansion. Consequently, living conditions for displaced populations deteriorated compared to 2024.

Displacement remained driven by protracted conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo and ongoing protection concerns in Burundi and Rwanda. The refugee and asylum-seeker population increased to approximately 60,500 from 56,681 in December 2024, driven by steady arrivals and natural growth. The predominantly young population, largely composed of women and children, continued to generate high demand for education, protection, GBV services, documentation, and basic services.

Severe congestion at Dzaleka Refugee Camp, hosting over five times its intended capacity, continued to strain infrastructure and heighten protection risks, including trafficking. Reduced assistance and limited livelihood opportunities further drove onward movements, particularly among youth. While Malawi maintained an open asylum policy, funding constraints limited service delivery, prioritizing life-saving interventions and tighter targeting. Efforts to advance refugee inclusion increasingly emphasized alignment with national systems, though sustained progress remains contingent on mobilizing development financing amid declining humanitarian resources.

1.2. Progress Against the Desired Impact

1. Impact Area: Attaining Favorable Protection Environments

By 2026, forcibly displaced people in Malawi enjoy a conducive protection environment through improved access to durable solutions and alternative pathways.

Population Type	Indicator	
	Baseline	Actual (2025)
1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
1.2 Proportion of people who are able to move freely within the country of habitual residence		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.88%	0.00%

The reporting period saw tangible progress toward the expected impact, with notable advancements in legal protection, participation, justice, education, and child safeguarding. This demonstrated through strengthened legal reform processes, sustained participation of affected populations, and notable improvements in child protection and access to justice, although progress toward gender equality remains uneven.

A key milestone was the advancement of the Refugee Act review, culminating in the validation of the draft report in December 2025. This marks substantial movement toward aligning national legislation with international standards and addressing long-standing reservations that restrict freedom of movement, access to employment, and broader socio-economic rights. While formal adoption is still pending, the validation phase reflects meaningful forward momentum in creating a more enabling legal and policy environment.

Participation of forcibly displaced and stateless people remained strong. Community engagement across programme phases stood at 93%, while access to safe feedback and response mechanisms was recorded at 84.09%, reinforcing accountability and protective safeguards.

Access to justice indicators showed incremental but important gains. The number of individuals arrested or detained for immigration-related reasons was recorded at 52, while 190 individuals received legal assistance, contributing to strengthened due process guarantees. However, access to an effective appeal mechanism following first-instance rejection remains at 0%, indicating a persistent procedural gap requiring continued advocacy and system strengthening.

Malawi also continues to demonstrate strong commitment to meaningful refugee inclusion by progressively embedding refugee education within national education systems, while incremental steps are being taken to ensure integrated protection service provision.

3. Impact Area: Empowering Communities and Achieving Gender Equality

By 2026, forcibly displaced people enjoy legal and social protection to realize their rights.

Population Type	Indicator	
	Baseline	Actual (2025)
3.1 Proportion of people who have the right to decent work		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Data not available	0.00%
3.2a Proportion of children and young people enrolled in primary education		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	83.60%	35.71%
3.2b Proportion of children and young people enrolled in secondary education		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	36.62%	31.91%
3.3 Proportion of people feeling safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	40.23%	75.83%

According to a recent assessment, it is estimated that 96% of refugees and asylum-seekers live below the national poverty line. This high incidence of poverty reflects profound economic vulnerability driven by limited livelihood opportunities, restrictive encampment policies, and rising costs of basic goods and services. Many refugees are unable to access formal employment outside settlement areas legally, and humanitarian assistance has not kept pace with needs, deepening reliance on informal survival strategies. These conditions have significant implications for food security, household resilience, and long-term self-sufficiency.

Although Dzaleka Refugee Camp is significantly stretched over its original design capacity, the presence of basic services in the settlement provides a protective environment and foundational living conditions for refugees and asylum-seekers.

Refugees and asylum-seekers reside in physically safe and secure spaces with access to basic facilities including shelter, potable water sources, sanitation systems, and communal spaces.

On health front, all refugees and asylum-seekers have access to free comprehensive primary health care services. This access is supported through deliberate inclusion of refugees in Malawi's government-led health system, coordinated closely with the Ministry of Health and Population and the Dowa District Council. Health services at Dzaleka Health Centre are progressively aligned with the national health inclusion roadmap, with ongoing efforts to integrate health information systems, harmonize service delivery, and deploy government health staff to the facility. In 2025, Dzaleka Health Centre recorded over 90,000 outpatient consultations, with a clinician-to-daily consultation ratio of approximately 1:375, underscoring the substantial workload and pressure on service quality, continuity of care, and overall health system performance.

Durable solutions progressed positively. A total of 135 refugees voluntarily repatriated, reflecting improved access to reliable information and strengthened confidence in conditions within their countries of origin, particularly for refugees from Burundi, Rwanda, and Somalia. Resettlement pathways also remained accessible, with 499 individuals submitted for consideration and 634 refugees departing for resettlement, despite constrained global quotas. Departures prioritized refugees in protracted situations and those facing heightened protection risks.

Stakeholders played crucial roles in advancing these outcomes. WFP led general food assistance and ration planning; FAO supported climate-smart agriculture and the provision of inputs; and Good Neighbours strengthened livelihood and agricultural initiatives. District authorities facilitated coordination and access to farming land, while refugee-led organizations contributed to community mobilization, monitoring, and information dissemination.

Looking ahead, sustained coordination and continued investment in climate-resilient agriculture and diversified livelihood opportunities will be essential to strengthening household resilience and reducing long-term reliance on food assistance.

Other Core Impact Indicators

Country	Population Type	Baseline	Actual(2025)
2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities			
Malawi	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services			
Malawi	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin			
Malawi	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	135	81
4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement			
Malawi	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	1,770	634
4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways			
Malawi	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	73	6
4.3b Number of refugees for whom residency status is granted or confirmed			
Malawi	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	56,681	0

1.3 Challenges to Achieving Impacts

Despite measurable progress toward attaining a favorable protection environment and strengthening legal and social protection systems, several structural and operational barriers continued to constrain impact in 2025.

The most significant barrier remains the restrictive legal and policy framework. Although the Refugee Act review advanced to the validation stage in December 2025, refugees continue to face limitations on freedom of movement, access to formal employment, property ownership, and full inclusion in national systems. These restrictions directly affect economic inclusion indicators, including high unemployment (83%) and low positive income change (18.23%), limiting the realization of rights beyond basic service access.

Economic fragility in Malawi, characterized by currency volatility, inflation, and constrained fiscal space, further exacerbated vulnerabilities. Funding gaps persisted, with only approximately 30% of financial requirements covered, restricting the expansion of livelihoods programming, gender-based violence (GBV) interventions, shelter construction, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure. Reduced food assistance and limited relief item distributions increased protection risks and reliance on negative coping mechanisms.

Operational challenges also affected protection outcomes. Limited staffing, high turnover within government institutions, and capacity gaps in the justice and asylum systems slowed procedural improvements. The absence of an effective appeal mechanism following first-instance asylum rejection remains a critical protection gap. Gender norms and socio-cultural barriers continued to limit women's participation in leadership structures (24.91%), constraining progress toward gender equality.

Data limitations and incomplete integration of refugee data into national systems, including social protection and civil registration, also hindered evidence-based planning and full inclusion in development programming.

However, prospects for overcoming these barriers remain realistic. The validated Refugee Act review provides a tangible pathway toward legislative reform, with the potential to expand rights related to movement, employment, and socio-economic inclusion. Continued whole-of-government engagement—

particularly with authorities responsible for education, health, agriculture, and disaster management—creates entry points for gradual integration into national frameworks.

Partnerships with the World Bank, the Joint Data Center, the National Statistical Office (NSO), and private sector actors offer opportunities to scale sustainable responses, including climate-resilient livelihoods and shock-responsive social protection. Strengthened collaboration with refugee-led organizations enhances community ownership and accountability.

Diversifying funding sources, leveraging development financing, and aligning refugee inclusion with national development priorities and Global Refugee Forum commitments will be critical to shifting from stabilization to sustainable impact.

While structural challenges persist, 2025 demonstrated that incremental legal reform, institutional strengthening, and strategic partnerships provide a credible pathway toward achieving the 2026 impact targets.

1.4 Collaboration and Partnerships

Progress toward expected impacts in 2025 was strengthened through enhanced partnerships with national institutions, district authorities, UN agencies, development actors, implementing and operational partners, and refugee-led organizations. These collaborations reinforced commitments under the Global Compact on Refugees and relevant sustainable development goals (SDGs), supporting more coherent and sustainable responses.

Work with the National Statistical Office (NSO) and the World Bank, including through the Joint Data Center, advanced refugee inclusion in nationally representative surveys such as the Integrated Household Survey and the Demographic and Health Survey. This collaboration supports evidence-based policy design, improved poverty targeting, and the integration of refugees into national data and development systems.

At the decentralized level, engagement with the Dowa District Council improved coordination across the protection, health, education, and agriculture sectors, promoting localized, government-led responses. Partnership with the Ministry of Homeland Security remained central to asylum management and led to the validation of the Refugee Act review in December 2025, marking significant progress toward legal reform. Collaboration with the Ministry of Health supported the ongoing integration of refugee health services, while work with the Ministry of Education and Moravian Humanitarian and Development Services (MoHDevS) advanced school integration and teacher payroll inclusion.

Implementing partners, including Plan International (protection, GBV, and livelihoods) and Welthungerhilfe (WASH), contributed to strengthened service delivery and institutional safeguards, supporting access to water, sanitation, and protection systems.

Operational partnerships further expanded sustainable responses. Ubuntu supported climate-resilient shelter development and inclusive education. Jesuit Refugee Service enhanced education quality through library services and learning support. Good Neighbours advanced livelihoods and agricultural initiatives, while FAO promoted climate-smart agriculture and provided inputs to strengthen resilience and food security.

Private sector engagement with Humanity Insured supported agricultural insurance solutions, strengthening climate risk management. Direct support to refugee-led organizations through grant agreements advanced localization and community ownership. Collectively, these partnerships shifted the operation toward integrated, government-aligned, and sustainability-oriented responses, strengthening pathways to durable solutions and inclusion.

Section 2: Results

2.1. Outcomes and Achievements

1. Outcome Area: Access to Territory, Reg. and Documentation

Forcibly displaced and Stateless people have access to registration and civil status documentation processes that conform to international standards.

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
1.1 Proportion of refugees and asylum seekers registered on an individual basis			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
1.2 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	35.35%	30.00%	100.00%
1.3 Proportion of people with legally recognized identity documents or credentials			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	40.26%	100.00%	31.13%

Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator	
	Actual (2025)	
01.1.1 Number of people registered on an individual basis		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	892	
01.2.1 Number of people supported to obtain civil status, identity or legal status documentation		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	243	

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Individual registration remained at 100%, with 2,218 individuals registered, ensuring that both newly arrived and existing populations were documented. Biometric enrolment for persons aged five years and above reached 86.52%, strengthening identity management, reducing fraud risks, and supporting access to essential services.

Access to legal identity documents improved modestly, with 18,831 documents issued during the year, bringing overall coverage to 31%. Although the proportion of refugees holding valid identity documents remains limited, intensified outreach and close collaboration with Government authorities helped expand access. Legal documentation continues to be a key enabler of access to health care, education, social services and protection, underscoring the need for ongoing investment in documentation systems.

Civil registration for children under five years advanced significantly, with an increased proportion of children 100% having their births registered with civil authorities. This progress strengthens child protection systems and reduces the risk of statelessness and exclusion.

UNHCR contributed to these outcomes through provision of technical support and ensuring that the registration tools comply with data management aligning to protection practices and standards.

Strengthened biometric coverage and documentation issuance reflect sustained institutional support and alignment with international standards.

National authorities, including the Ministry of Homeland Security, the Department for Refugees and the National Registration Bureau, played central roles in advancing registration and documentation.

Collaboration with development partners enhanced data inclusion and integration within national systems, contributing to long-term sustainability.

3. Outcome Area: Protection Policy and Law

Forcibly displaced people have access to quality status determination procedures.

National legislative framework for the protection of forcibly displaced people follows international standards

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
3.1 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol			
None	Not yet aligned	Progressing toward alignment	Progressing toward alignment
3.2 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness			
None	Not yet aligned	Not yet aligned	Not yet aligned

Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator
	Actual (2025)
03.1.1 UNHCR has engaged in legislative and judicial processes to strengthen laws and policies for the protection of refugees, IDPs, returnees and stateless people and/or the reduction and prevention of statelessness	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Access to asylum procedures remained guaranteed in 2025, with all individuals seeking international protection able to register and enter the asylum system. A key milestone during the reporting period was the validation of the draft Refugee Act review in December 2025. This achievement reflects meaningful progress toward aligning national legislation with international standards and provides a clear pathway for strengthening procedural safeguards, clarifying rights, and formalizing appeal mechanisms.

UNHCR supported these advancements through targeted technical assistance and capacity development for the national status determination system. During the reporting period, 25 government officials received specialized training, further reinforcing institutional capacity. Registration and refugee status determination (RSD) standard operating procedures remained established partially updated in 2025 contributing to greater consistency and quality in case processing. Data management systems were also strengthened, supported by full individual registration and improved biometric enrolment (86.52%), enhancing accuracy, integrity, and accountability within the RSD process.

National leadership remained central to these efforts. The Ministry of Homeland Security and the Department for Refugees continued to guide asylum management, while the Law Commission led the Refugee Act review process. The Malawi Human Rights Commission and other stakeholders provided

important technical contributions. Collaboration with development partners, including the National Statistical Office and the World Bank, helped reinforce the evidence base for reform and strengthen linkages with national systems.

Overall, 2025 marked meaningful progress toward a more coherent, accountable, and standards aligned status determination framework. Continued investment in legislative reform, institutional strengthening, and procedural enhancements will be essential to fully meeting international protection standards and ensuring fair, efficient, and rights based asylum processes.

4. Outcome Area: Gender-based Violence

Forcibly displaced and stateless people experience reduced cases of GBV and improved child protection.

Core Outcome Indicators

Indicator			
Population Type	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
4.1 Proportion of people who know where to access available GBV services			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	73.44%	95.00%	94.59%
4.2 Proportion of people who do not accept violence against women			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	75.87%	90.00%	89.61%
4.3 Proportion of survivors who are satisfied with GBV case management services			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	67.65%	80.00%	78.72%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
04.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from specialized GBV programmes	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	71

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

During the reporting period, Knowledge of available gender-based violence (GBV) services rose to 95%, demonstrating significant improvements in community awareness and access to survivor centered support. Approximately 37,000 individuals benefitted from specialized GBV programmes, while 45,500 people were reached through targeted information campaigns that contributed to prevention and positive shifts in community norms. Satisfaction with GBV case management reached 79%, reflecting steady improvements in service quality, although continued investment is required to strengthen responsiveness. Normative change also advanced, with 90% of respondents reporting nonacceptance of violence against women, and 97.09% of women and girls receiving hygiene kits, indicating strong outreach and effective distribution systems.

Child protection systems also demonstrated meaningful gains. A total of 71.32% of children at heightened risk were supported through Best Interest Procedures, reflecting institutionalized safeguards and strengthened case identification. Child protection services reached 12,251 children and caregivers while 40.92% of children participated in community based child protection activities. However, challenges remain, particularly in the placement of unaccompanied and separated children, where only 43% had access to alternative care arrangements, underscoring the need for expanded family-based and community level options.

UNHCR contributed significantly to these advances by strengthening coordination mechanisms, ensuring fully functional interagency efforts in developing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) standard operating procedures, and integrating GBV risk mitigation actions across all UNHCR led or co-led sectors. Capacity building for partners, combined with enhanced data systems, improved the identification, management, and follow-up of GBV and child protection cases. UNHCR also supported consistent implementation of survivor-centered approaches and reinforced child protection safeguards through technical guidance and monitoring.

Partnerships played a critical role in achieving these results most notably following the restricting of the office and with limited human resource capacity. The Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, and the Dowa District Council led national and district level coordination, maintaining referral pathways and contributing to case management. Implementing partners delivered frontline GBV and child protection services, while refugee-led organizations strengthened community participation, prevention initiatives, and early reporting. Collaboration with health partners ensured access to medical services and psychosocial support, reinforcing the multisectoral nature of the response.

Overall, 2025 saw strengthened GBV prevention, improved service access, and more robust child protection systems. While progress is evident, continued investments are needed to enhance survivor satisfaction, expand alternative care arrangements, and deepen community level norm change to ensure lasting protection outcomes.

6. Outcome Area: Safety and Access to Justice

Persons with specific needs have access to services

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
06.1.1 Number of people who received legal assistance	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	37

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Progress was marked by strengthened legal assistance, reduced immigration related detention, and expanded support for refugees and asylum seekers with heightened vulnerabilities. Coordination with law enforcement authorities improved, contributing to a reduction in immigration related arrests and detentions to 46 individuals, reflecting stronger procedural safeguards and adherence to protection principles. Access to justice also expanded. Legal assistance was provided to 37 individuals and ensuring that persons with specific needs including survivors of violence, persons with disabilities, and individuals facing civil or criminal proceedings were better supported in navigating legal processes. These efforts contributed to more consistent application of rights based approaches across protection interventions.

Broader protection coverage remained robust, with 100% of the forcibly displaced population (approximately 60,500 individuals) receiving protection services during the reporting period Including targeted support for persons with specific needs. These improvements demonstrate strengthened identification, referral, and case management systems, enabling more effective provision of legal, medical, and psychosocial assistance to those requiring specialized support.

Overall, the results reflect tangible gains in reducing detention risks, improving access to justice, and enhancing services for persons with specific needs. Progress was reinforced by closer collaboration between protection actors, law enforcement institutions, and service providers laying a stronger foundation for safe, dignified, and rights based protection outcomes in the years ahead.

7. Outcome Area: Community Engagement and Women's Empowerment

Forcibly displaced people can participate in decision making.

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
7.1 Extent participation of displaced and stateless people across programme phases is supported.			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Extensive	Moderate	Moderate
7.2 Proportion of people who have access to safe feedback and response mechanisms			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	84.09%	100.00%	100.00%
7.3 Proportion of women participating in leadership/management structures			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	24.91%	50.00%	44.83%

Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator
	Actual (2025)
07.1.1 Number of people consulted through Participatory Assessments	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0
07.2.1 Number of people who used UNHCR- supported feedback & response mechanisms to voice their needs/ concerns/feedback	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	4,000
07.3.1 Number of people who received protection services	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	60,500

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Progress toward ensuring meaningful participation of persons of concern advanced through strengthened community engagement structures, expanded feedback mechanisms at 100% access for all Forcibly displaced persons, and increased inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in governance processes. Access to safe feedback and response channels reached full coverage, enabling approximately 4,000 individuals to raise concerns, request services, or provide input, ensuring that participation meaningfully influenced operational decision-making. Women's leadership also remained strong, with 73 women serving in community governance roles and participation levels at 45%, reflecting continued progress toward more gender-inclusive decision-making despite persistent social and cultural barriers. UNHCR contributed significantly to these gains by institutionalizing participatory assessments, strengthening feedback and response systems, and integrating Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) principles across all sectors. Support to refugee led organizations through grant agreements further enhanced community ownership, while regular consultations, surveys, and intention assessments ensured that programming was directly informed by community priorities and feedback. These approaches reinforced a structured link between participation and responsive action across protection and assistance services.

Other stakeholders played a central and complementary role in sustaining and expanding participation. The

Ministry of Homeland Security and the Dowa District Council engaged in community dialogues and governance discussions, reinforcing government involvement in participatory structures. Implementing partners and refugee led organizations facilitated grassroots consultations, leadership development initiatives, and awareness sessions that expanded representation and strengthened community decision-making processes. Development actors contributed by supporting inclusion in national systems particularly in education and livelihoods helping extend participation beyond camp level structures and promoting longer-term integration.

8. Outcome Area: Well-Being and Basic Needs

Forcibly displaced and stateless people enjoy a peaceful and safe environment.

Forcibly displaced and stateless people enjoy food security.

Forcibly displaced people have access to sufficient basic and domestic items.

Protection monitoring for IDPs, Documentation procedures and systems function effectively

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
8.1 Proportion of people that receive cash transfers and/or non-food items			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	94.61%
8.2 Proportion of people with primary reliance on clean (cooking) fuels and technology			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	13.23%	15.00%	6.67%

Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator	
	Actual (2025)	
08.1.1 Number of people who received cash assistance		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	57,242	
08.2.1 Number of people who received non-food items		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	52,509	
08.3.1 Number of people supported with improved cooking options		
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	6,550	

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Food security for the forcibly displaced persons was characterized by strengthened coordination, more refined targeting of assistance, and the expansion of climate resilient livelihood initiatives for refugees and asylum seekers in Malawi. Despite these gains, food assistance distributions did not fully align with updated needs assessments; rations fluctuated between 50% and 75% throughout the year due to funding variability. Regular coordination meetings with WFP supported joint monitoring and adaptive planning efforts, helping humanitarian partners adjust distribution strategies in response to resource constraints. Complementary nutritional support mechanisms also strengthened household food security. A total of 2,994 children under the age of two received supplementary nutrition, ensuring that the most vulnerable continued

to benefit from targeted support. Access to core relief items for 52,509 individuals further contributed to stabilizing household consumption by enabling families to allocate limited resources toward food purchases. However, only 7% of the population had access to clean cooking solutions, underscoring the continued reliance on firewood and associated protection and environmental risks.

Stakeholders played critical and complementary roles in advancing food security and resilience. WFP led general food distributions and managed ration planning, while FAO supported the provision of agricultural inputs and climate smart farming techniques to enhance self-reliance. Good Neighbours contributed to livelihoods and agricultural activities, expanding opportunities for income generation. District authorities facilitated coordination and access to land for cultivation, while refugee led organizations played a central role in community mobilization, household level monitoring, and disseminating information on food and agricultural programmes.

9. Outcome Area: Sustainable Housing and Settlements

Forcibly displaced and stateless people live in a decongested camp and have access to shelter that meets UNHCR's minimum standards.

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
9.1 Proportion of people living in habitable and affordable housing			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	88.21%	30.00%	29.87%
9.2 Proportion of people that have energy to ensure lighting			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	56.00%	60.00%	59.74%

Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Indicator
	Actual (2025)
09.1.1 Number of people who received shelter and housing assistance	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2,832

10. Outcome Area: Healthy Lives

Forcibly displaced and stateless people enjoy medical services including nutrition and have optimal access to reproductive health and HIV services.

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
10.1 Proportion of children aged 9 months to five years who have received measles vaccination			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	64.01%	93.00%	29.39%
10.2. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	93.86%	100.00%	100.00%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
10.1.1 Number of individual consultations in UNHCR supported health care services	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	29,631
10.2.1 Number of consultations in UNHCR supported mental health and psychosocial support services	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	777

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Health and nutrition outcomes continued to strengthen in 2025, supported by improved service integration into Government, robust health promotion activities, and reliable access to essential supplies. Measles vaccination coverage among children aged 9 months to five years reached 29%, while 100% of births were attended by skilled health personnel, reflecting strong performance in maternal health service delivery. Nutrition and child health services remained central to supporting vulnerable groups, and the inclusion of refugees in national health information systems along with their participation in the Demographic and Health Survey (681 refugee households) enhanced the evidence base for monitoring key health and nutrition indicators. Health promotion initiatives, including HIV awareness activities, supported continued access to HIV testing and treatment through national supply chains.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene services reinforced overall health outcomes. Universal access to basic drinking water and safe sanitation facilities significantly reduced environmental health risks and contributed to disease prevention. Distribution of 7,000 hygiene kits to women and girls strengthened menstrual health management and lowered infection risks.

UNHCR contributed to these results by coordinating health partnerships, supporting the integration of refugees into national health systems, and strengthening oversight of medical supply chains to ensure consistent availability of essential medicines and equipment. Enhanced data management systems facilitated monitoring of maternal health and service utilization trends, while risk-based verification strengthened the quality and accountability of health interventions.

Stakeholders that were central to achieving these outcomes included the Ministry of Health led national service delivery and system integration, while district health authorities ensured operational continuity. UN agencies and health partners supported HIV programming, reproductive health services, and nutrition interventions. Development partners contributed to alignment with national health strategies and progress toward SDG 3.

11. Outcome Area: Education

Forcibly displaced and stateless people have access to education

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
11.1 Proportion of young people enrolled in tertiary and higher education			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	8.40%	10.00%	2.40%

11.2 Proportion of children and young people enrolled in the national education system			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	37.85%	37.00%	39.20%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
11.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from education programming	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	7,543

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Enrollment in ECE, primary and secondary education was at 39% of all school age children. Tertiary enrolment enrolled 234 individuals. Qualitative improvements were observed in the institutionalization of refugee inclusion within national planning processes. Engagement with the Ministry of Education and MODVES supported harmonization of refugee education services with national standards, contributing to sustainability. Access to learning spaces was reinforced through continued operational support, while education partners strengthened quality and retention initiatives.

UNHCR contributed through coordination of education sector partnerships, support to national integration efforts, and strengthening data systems to monitor enrolment and attendance trends. Inclusion of refugee households in nationally representative surveys enhanced the evidence base for education planning and alignment with SDG 4 commitments.

Stakeholders played central roles. The Ministry of Education led curriculum alignment and teacher deployment. Operational partners such as Ubuntu supported infrastructure and inclusive education initiatives, while Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) enhanced learning quality through library services and academic support. District authorities facilitated coordination at local level, and development actors supported integration within broader education sector reforms.

Despite economic volatility and funding constraints, 2025 demonstrates measurable progress in enrolment and national system integration. Sustaining and expanding post-primary and tertiary access will remain essential to advancing durable solutions and long-term self-reliance for refugee youth.

Enrollment in ECE, primary and secondary education was at 39% of all school age children. Tertiary enrolment enrolled 234 individuals. Qualitative improvements were observed in the institutionalization of refugee inclusion within national planning processes. Engagement with the Ministry of Education and MODVES supported harmonization of refugee education services with national standards, contributing to sustainability. Access to learning spaces was reinforced through continued operational support, while education partners strengthened quality and retention initiatives.

UNHCR contributed through coordination of education sector partnerships, support to national integration efforts, and strengthening data systems to monitor enrolment and attendance trends. Inclusion of refugee households in nationally representative surveys enhanced the evidence base for education planning and alignment with SDG 4 commitments.

Stakeholders played central roles. The Ministry of Education led curriculum alignment and teacher deployment. Operational partners such as Ubuntu supported infrastructure and inclusive education initiatives, while Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) enhanced learning quality through library services and academic support. District authorities facilitated coordination at local level, and development actors supported integration within broader education sector reforms.

Despite economic volatility and funding constraints, 2025 demonstrates measurable progress in enrolment and national system integration. Sustaining and expanding post-primary and tertiary access will remain essential to advancing durable solutions and long-term self-reliance for refugee youth.

12. Outcome Area: Clean Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Forcibly displaced people have access to sufficient water supply and minimum sanitation and hygiene standards are met.

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
12.1 Proportion of people using at least basic drinking water services			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	93.00%	100.00%
12.2 Proportion of people with access to a safe household toilet			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	84.50%	94.00%	100.00%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
12.1.1 Number of people supported with access to water and/or sanitation services	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	60,500

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Access to basic drinking water services was maintained at 100%, ensuring that all persons of concern had access to safe water sources. This represents continued compliance with minimum standards despite population growth and economic pressures. Access to safe household toilets reached 100%, reflecting improved sanitation coverage compared to earlier years and contributing to reduced public health risks. In addition, 7,000 women and girls received hygiene kits, reinforcing dignity, menstrual hygiene management and GBV risk mitigation.

Health indicators demonstrate the contribution of WASH services to overall well-being. 100% access to health services was sustained, while 100% of births were attended by skilled personnel, reflecting safe environmental conditions and effective integration of WASH within health programming. UNHCR contributed by maintaining oversight of WASH standards, ensuring supply chain adherence for essential items, and integrating hygiene promotion within protection and health programming. Data monitoring systems support regular tracking of service coverage and infrastructure functionality. Risk-based verifications enhanced accountability and performance monitoring. Stakeholders played a central role. Welthungerhilfe (WHH), as an implementing partner, supported WASH infrastructure and sanitation upgrades. The Ministry of Health and district authorities collaborated on public health surveillance and hygiene standards. Community leadership structures facilitated maintenance oversight and awareness initiatives. Coordination with development actors ensures alignment with national WASH standards and SDG 6 commitments.

Despite financial constraints and environmental pressures, 2025 results demonstrate sustained water access and improved sanitation coverage. Continued collaboration and infrastructure maintenance will be essential to maintain standards and address congestion-related challenges over time.

13. Outcome Area: Self Reliance, Economic Inclusion and Livelihoods

Forcibly displaced people have access to livelihood opportunities and are self-reliant.

Core Outcome Indicators

Indicator			
Population Type	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
13.1. Proportion of people with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	51.23%	90.00%	94.61%
13.2. Proportion of people who self-report positive changes in their income compared to previous year			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	18.23%	55.00%	42.98%

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
13.1.1 Number of people who benefitted from livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	3,325

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

A total of 2,345 persons of concern were assisted with farming opportunities, contributing to both household consumption and income generation. Agricultural interventions were increasingly aligned with climate-smart approaches, reinforcing resilience in the face of erratic rainfall and economic volatility. Access to formal financial services stood at 94%, reflecting partial inclusion within financial systems. Inclusion of refugee households in nationally representative surveys strengthened the evidence base for poverty analysis and economic planning, aligning livelihood strategies with national development frameworks. However, structural barriers remain significant.

UNHCR contributed by integrating livelihood programming with protection strategies, strengthening partnerships with development actors, and promoting climate-adaptive agricultural models. Data-driven targeting and alignment with national survey systems improved planning and advocacy for inclusion. Stakeholders played complementary roles. Good Neighbours supported livelihoods and agricultural initiatives, while FAO provided agricultural inputs and technical guidance on climate-smart farming. Humanity Insured advanced agricultural insurance solutions, enhancing risk management. District authorities facilitated coordination and land access, and collaboration with the National Statistical Office and World Bank strengthened alignment with national poverty and resilience frameworks.

Overall, 2025 demonstrates incremental progress in expanding livelihood opportunities and resilience-building. Sustained legal reform, expanded financial inclusion and strengthened market access will be critical to transitioning from assisted livelihoods toward genuine self-reliance.

14. Outcome Area: Voluntary Return and Sustainable Reintegration

The forcibly displaced persons have adequate information to return in a manner that upholds their security and dignity.

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
14.1.1 Number of people who received counselling and/or information on voluntary repatriation	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	435

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

A total of 135 refugees voluntarily repatriated during the reporting period. This upward trend indicates improved access to reliable information and strengthened confidence among returnees regarding conditions in countries of origin. Returns primarily involved refugees from Burundi, Rwanda and Somalia. UNHCR contributed by maintaining counselling services aligned with international standards on voluntariness, safety, and dignity. Registration systems ensure accurate documentation and verification prior to departure. Coordination with receiving country offices facilitated information exchange on security and reintegration conditions. Data systems supported tracking return trends and identification of individuals expressing interest in return.

Stakeholders played complementary roles. The Ministry of Homeland Security supported exit formalities and documentation processes. Authorities in countries of origin collaborated on reception arrangements. UN agencies and humanitarian actors in receiving countries contributed to reintegration support, enhancing sustainability. Refugee-led structures facilitated dissemination of return-related information within communities.

Overall, 2025 results demonstrate strengthened access to accurate return information and increased voluntary repatriation movements, reflecting confidence-building measures, and coordinated cross-border engagement. Sustaining informed decision-making and monitoring reintegration outcomes will remain critical to upholding security and dignity in return processes.

15. Outcome Area: Resettlement and Complementary Pathways

Forcibly displaced people have increased resettlement opportunities.

Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Indicator		
	Baseline	Target (2025)	Actual (2025)
15.1 Number of refugees submitted by UNHCR for resettlement			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2,430	3,000	499
15.3 Number of people admitted through complementary pathways from the host country			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	43	100	6

Core Output Indicators

Indicator	
Population Type	Actual (2025)
15.1.1 Country issues machine-readable travel documents	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

A total of 499 individuals were submitted for resettlement consideration during the reporting period. Despite global quota constraints and a drastic reduction in funding, a total of 634 individuals departed for resettlement, reflecting continued access to durable solutions. The Resettlement Programme primarily targeted refugees from protracted situations, including those with heightened protection risks and specific needs.

Complementary pathways were maintained, with six (6) individuals departing through education pathways. Although modest in scale, these pathways represent diversification of solutions and alignment with global efforts to expand legal admission routes.

UNHCR contributed through strengthened case identification, integrity safeguards, and quality submissions aligned with protection priorities. Stakeholders played critical roles. Resettlement States continued to provide quotas and process cases, despite global pressures. The Ministry of Homeland Security supported documentation and exit procedures. The International Organization for Migration facilitates departure arrangements. Collaboration with education and family reunification of actors supported complementary pathways.

Other Core Outcome Indicators

Population Type	Baseline	Target(2025)	Actual(2025)
2.1 Average processing time (in days) from registration to first instance asylum decision			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	365.00	300.00	0.00
2.2 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to legal representation			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%
2.3 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to an effective appeal mechanism after first instance rejection of their claim			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
5.1 Proportion of children at heightened risk who are supported by a Best Interests Procedure			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	71.32%	3.00%	0.89%
5.2 Proportion of children who participate in community-based child protection programmes			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	40.92%	50.00%	72.67%
5.3 Proportion of unaccompanied and separated children who are in an alternative care arrangement			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	26.58%	80.00%	42.91%
16.1 Proportion of people with secure tenure rights to housing and/or land			
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Data not available	0.00%	0.00%

Other Core Output Indicators

Population Type	Actual (2025)
02.1.1 UNHCR has provided capacity development support to strengthen the national status determination system(s), in accordance with international standards	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Yes
05.1.1 Number of children and caregivers who received child protection services	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	15,000
16.1.1. Government Social protection system is inclusive of forcibly displaced and stateless people	
Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Partially

2.2. Age, Gender and Diversity

a) AGD-inclusive programming. Registration remained fully individual and age- and gender-disaggregated, with 86.52% biometric enrolment, strengthening data integrity and accountability. Disability and specific needs continued to be systematically recorded, enabling 146 targeted interventions. Child protection safeguards remained strong, with 71.32% of children at heightened risk supported through Best Interest Procedures. Collaboration with the National Statistical Office ensured inclusion of refugees in national surveys, improving AGD-sensitive evidence for planning. SOGIESC-inclusive case management approaches were maintained, though stigma and underreporting continue to limit visibility.

(b) Participation and inclusion. Participation remained high, with a 93% participation score in 2025. Access to safe feedback and response mechanisms reached 100%, and an estimated 4,000 individuals used formal feedback channels. Refugee-led organizations continued to receive support, advancing representation and localization. Youth engagement and inclusion of people with disabilities in leadership roles require further strengthening.

(c) Commitment to women and girls. Women's participation in leadership structures increased to 45% in 2025, reflecting gradual but meaningful progress. Coverage of dignity kits remained high at 97.09%, and GBV risk mitigation was integrated across 100% of UNHCR-led/co-led sectors. Awareness of GBV services rose to 95%, while 90% of respondents rejected violence against women, indicating clear shifts in knowledge and attitudes.

Section 3: Resources

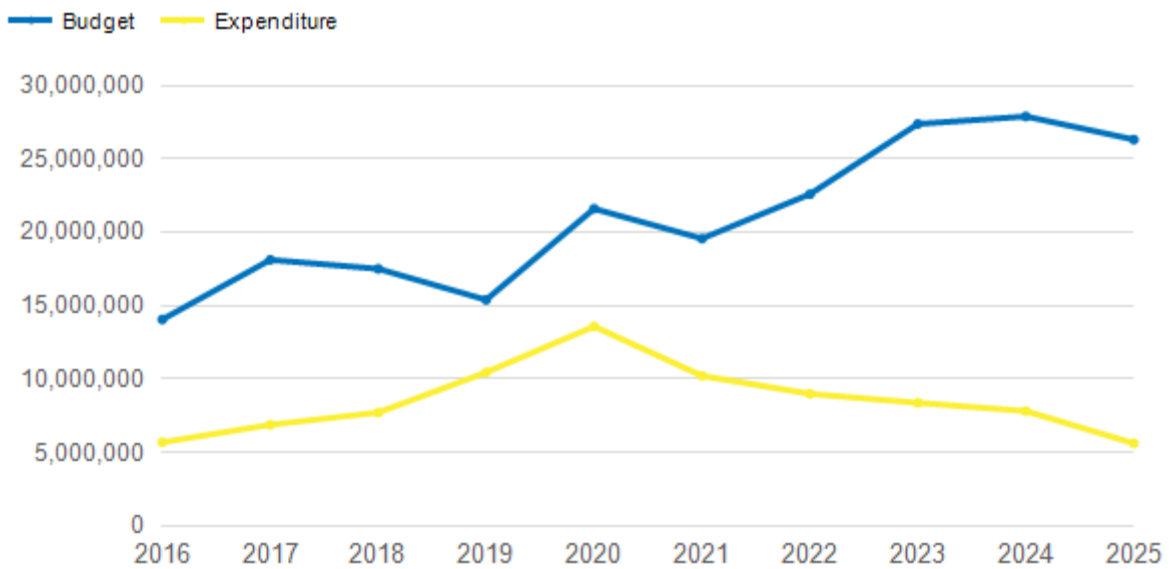
3.1 Financial Data

(Financial figures in USD)

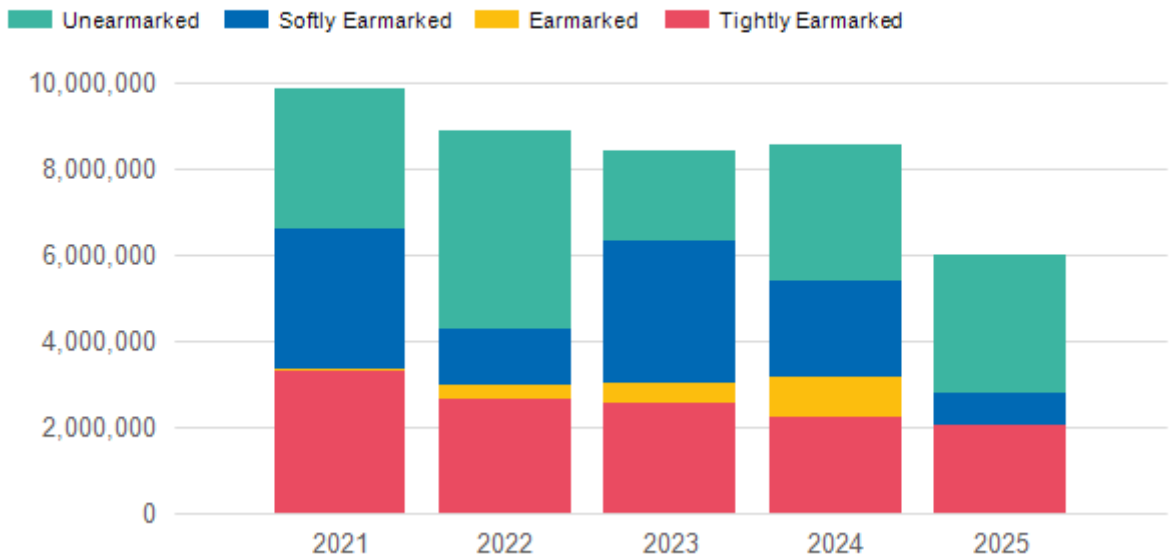
Impact Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
IA1: Protect	10,441,460	1,761,928	16.87%	1,761,928	100.00%
IA3: Empower	15,867,018	4,208,614	26.52%	3,854,196	91.58%
All Impact Areas		25,000			
Total	26,308,478	5,995,542	22.79%	5,616,125	93.67%

Outcome Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
OA1: Access/Doc	1,797,849	99,498	5.53%	99,498	100.00%
OA3: Policy/Law	686,676	383,640	55.87%	383,640	100.00%
OA4: GBV	1,634,109	342,474	20.96%	342,474	100.00%
OA6: Justice	565,978	195,981	34.63%	195,981	100.00%
OA7: Community	344,196	466,620	135.57%	112,202	24.05%
OA8: Wellbeing	4,449,797	245,102	5.51%	245,102	100.00%
OA9: Housing	5,865,978	481,357	8.21%	481,357	100.00%
OA10: Health	1,595,774	514,979	32.27%	514,979	100.00%
OA11: Education	2,365,978	430,967	18.22%	430,967	100.00%
OA12: WASH	1,040,978	386,966	37.17%	386,966	100.00%
OA13: Livelihood	2,365,978	307,490	13.00%	307,490	100.00%
OA14: Return	1,421,383	252,808	17.79%	252,808	100.00%
OA15: Resettle	285,978	760,613	265.97%	760,613	100.00%
EA18: Support	1,565,978	1,062,927	67.88%	1,062,927	100.00%
EA20: External	321,849	39,121	12.16%	39,121	100.00%
All Outcome Areas		25,000			
Total	26,308,478	5,995,542	22.79%	5,616,125	93.67%

Budget and Expenditure Trend



Contributions Trend by Type



3.2. Resources Overview

During the reporting period, the operation faced significant financial constraints due to a substantial gap between the identified operational needs of about \$26.3 million and the available budget of about \$ 5.3 million. This shortfall considerably limited implementation capacity and required strict prioritization. The predominance of earmarked contributions further reduced financial flexibility, restricting the ability to reallocate resources to critical but underfunded areas. Financial pressures were compounded by the suspension of support from a major donor for the 2025 cycle, prompting the operation to focus resources on lifesaving and essential interventions to ensure continuity of core protection and assistance activities.

In response, the operation intensified local resource mobilization efforts, securing additional support from a range of donors. While these contributions did not fully bridge the funding gap, they provided vital support that enabled the continuation of key programme components and reinforced operational stability during a period of financial uncertainty.

Expenditure distribution reflected a deliberate effort to safeguard programme delivery. 58% of available resources supported operational activities, 34% covered staffing costs essential for maintaining service continuity, and 8% were allocated to administration. Notably, 55% of programme expenditure was channeled through partnerships, with a substantial share directed to national and local actors, including two government institutions, one local NGO, and four refugee-led organizations. This approach both strengthened local capacities and ensured that interventions remained contextually grounded and responsive to community needs.

Overall, despite financial pressures, the operation maintained core protection interventions and critical gaps that were funded through the tightly earmarked funds.

Section 4: Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

4.1 Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

The Zambia MCO conducted a Strategic Moment of Reflection (SMR) with participation from the Multi-Functional Team (MFT) to review progress and inform planning. Drawing on evidence from participatory assessments, routine monitoring, partner reports, and sector-specific trend analysis. As 2026 is an interim bridging year, the operation will use this period to refine priorities and prepare for a full multi-stakeholder process that will shape the next multi-year strategy. The review identified several priorities to guide the 2027–2030 Multi-Year Strategy and strengthen delivery during 2026. A central recommendation is to advance refugee protection and legal inclusion through a sequenced, politically informed approach, focusing first on sectoral policies such as social protection, disability, and agriculture, where refugees are not explicitly excluded. At the regional level, increased engagement with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) will be important to reinforce asylum norms and counter rising securitization trends.

To promote self-reliance, the MCO will pursue incremental improvements in freedom of movement wherever politically feasible, while also strengthening area-based economic models that do not depend on major policy reform. Settlement development planning, value-chain integration, and private-sector partnerships will be central to positioning refugee-hosting areas as viable economic hubs aligned with national development priorities.

Strengthening Government-led delivery will require institutionalized coordination mechanisms, targeted capacity support to frontline officials, and systematic inclusion of refugees in national development plans and UN cooperation frameworks. Parallel to this, data and evidence systems must be consolidated by embedding refugee indicators in national surveys and administrative systems and generating priority analysis on economic contributions and fiscal impacts to inform the development of financing.

Financing and partnerships should shift toward leveraging larger development investments, working closely with the World Bank, AfDB, JICA, GIZ, UNDP, UNICEF (as applicable), and others to integrate refugees into nationwide programmes. UNHCR's role will increasingly become catalytic, using limited resources to unlock broader funding rather than sustaining parallel service delivery.

The strategy also calls for enhanced risk monitoring and scenario planning, including a structured mitigation matrix to anticipate political, fiscal, legal, and operational shifts. Finally, internal coordination must be strengthened through clearer roles, streamlined processes, and improved information sharing to ensure coherent, Government-facing engagement.

These recommendations aim to anchor the next Multi-Year Strategy in political and fiscal realities while advancing sustainable protection space, stronger national systems, and inclusive development for refugees and host communities.



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