



**Follow-Up to the Global Refugee Forum**  
**Second Informal Briefing**  
11 June 2020, 15:00-17:00 hours (GTM+2)

**Summary**

**Moderator:** *Ellen Hansen, Head of the Governance Service*

**Opening Remarks**

*Gillian Triggs, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection*

UNHCR welcomes the more than 300 Member States and other stakeholders in attendance, which demonstrates both continued commitment and momentum on the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Global Refugee Forum (GRF). It is vital that the practical spirit of solidarity that shaped the GRF and gave it substance is not only sustained but enhanced.

- The GRF generated an historic set of commitments that can transform the lives of tens of millions of refugees and their host communities through building self-reliance, promoting social economic inclusion, and paving the way to solutions. These commitments are summarized in the [outcome document](#) for the GRF 2019 and must now be translated into action.
- The continued engagement of States and other stakeholders in the follow-up to the GRF demonstrates the transformative potential of global solidarity in action, and the recent updates on the status of pledge implementation are greatly appreciated. Some pledges are already being operationalized, while others inevitably will take longer as they require legislative changes, new instruments, or resources to be mobilized for their implementation.
- The three support platforms for MIRPS, IGAD, and SSAR in many ways will be the litmus test for the future success of the GCR and GRF. These platforms, with your continued engagement, can help to leverage both support and action.
- The continued sharing of good practices on the Digital Platform on the GCR and shows leadership and what can be achieved in a way that is consistent with the fundamental rules of refugee protection.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of the GCR to the collective response. It has required pragmatism and practicality in the implementation of commitments made at the GRF but has also presented an opportunity to building on the principles and arrangements in the GCR to strengthen the response.

- Some commitments made at the GRF can be adjusted or accelerated to support the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly those related to health, WASH, social protection, and addressing sexual and gender-based violence. Age, gender, and diversity mainstreaming of all pledges is vital to addressing the specific needs of refugees more broadly, but also in the pandemic.

- Although global resettlement is temporarily mostly halted, behind-the-scenes work to prepare and process resettlement cases continues, and some resettlements have taken place where there have been urgent humanitarian reasons.
- Many States have recognized the importance of inclusion in their national responses, recognizing that the health pandemic affects us all, and that refugees need to access key health and other services to ensure that both they and the communities where they live are protected.
- This year's High Commissioner's Dialogue on protection challenges will focus on the lessons learned from the response to the COVID-19 pandemic for refugee protection and resilience. The Dialogue will provide an opportunity to discuss the importance of the GCR and your various pledges to the response. The Dialogue will be partly virtual, consisting of four virtual sessions between October and December and will culminate a hybrid virtual/in-person session in Geneva on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December. Further information on the arrangements for the Dialogue will be shared shortly.

## Outcome Document for the Global Refugee Forum 2019

*Ziad Ayad, Senior Policy Officer*

The Outcome Document, which is currently online, is the official summary of the GRF, and focuses on the lead-up, the event itself, and where we go from here.

The GRF was considered a success both in terms of results, with 1,400 pledges and 350 good practices, and participation, with more than 3,000 participants.

- Diversity in participation demonstrated that the event achieved a broadening of the base. Nearly half of the pledges made were from States and more than half from other stakeholders, including the private sector, development actors, NGOs, refugees, and new partners, amongst many others. Expanding support will continue to be an ongoing process of further developing, implementing, and scaling partnerships in advance of the next GRF.
- The configuration of the types of events throughout were designed to allow for the widest and most creative level of participation and engagement. There were more than 100 points of contact (spotlight sessions, speakers' corner presentations, marketplace of good practices, media opportunities, and exhibits) throughout the GRF. Several initiatives envisioned in the GCR were launched or featured.
- The bulk of the 1,400 pledges were for protection capacity and solutions. There were also significant financial pledges, many of which now need to be further concretized. The many policy pledges were notable, in particular by host countries. There is a good opportunity for matching donor and host country pledges, which the GRF Coordination Team is ready to facilitate.
- By region, more than half of the pledges were for Africa and Europe. These included a significant number of domestic pledges as well as policy pledges on enhanced refugee inclusion and an improved refugee protection environment. While some regions, such as MENA and Asia, were less represented, it is notable that a number of non-traditional partners came forward with high-impact pledges in these regions, including Mauritania, Egypt, the League of Arab States, the Philippines, and Indonesia among others. We invite you to visit the [Pledges Dashboard](#) to see more.
- Global pledges, with an unspecified or global focus, made up 22 per cent of all pledges. Some of these are financial and others material and technical, and they represent great scope for engagement.

In terms of next steps, as outlined in the Outcome Document, we have a unique opportunity to maintain the momentum from the GRF by translating pledges into action.

- The GRF was truly a ‘whole of society’ exercise, and all stakeholders have a role to play in encouraging implementation, leading by example — be they States or other actors.
- In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, we all need to continue positive engagement and maintain the momentum, post GRF, while demonstrating adaptability and pragmatism in how we follow up, prioritize, and implement pledges. The initial results of the tracking exercise demonstrate that, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, pragmatism and a forward-leaning approach prevail.

In moving to the next GRF and in developing the framework for the next round of pledges and good practices, there are a number of essential opportunities that will be considered:

- We have more time to pre-plan and pre-match — bringing partners together from various sectors to collaborate in advance on developing a pledge.
- Importantly, we call on pledging entities to use an age, gender, and diversity-sensitive approach and ensure meaningful refugee participation when implementing their pledges. These principles will be a key guide in addressing gaps in the lead-up to the next GRF.
- We see an additional opportunity to dedicate more time and focus on prevention, conflict resolution, and solutions.
- At the first GRF, while the base was broadened, this is still just a beginning. Continued broadening of the base, focusing on traditional and non-traditional partners, refugees, NGOs, the private sector, and others, needs to be pursued.

## Roadmap for follow up on pledges and contributions

*Perveen Ali, Head of the Global Refugee Forum Coordination Team*

Follow-up on the pledges and initiatives announced at the GRF is set out in four main phases:

- **Analysis** of the pledges has been finalized, and key trends were included in the Outcome document.
- **Implementation** of the pledges is ongoing, with pledging entities working to specify or “concretize” their pledges, identify how donor pledges can support commitments for more inclusive approaches, adapt or accelerate pledges to help strengthen the response to the pandemic and implement them in the field (see [The Role of the GCR in the International Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) and an annex of possible pledges that could be implemented to support the response). UNHCR is supporting this process through bilateral engagement with the pledging entities.
- **Tracking progress** towards pledge implementation has commenced through the use of a simply online tool available on the [pledges dashboard](#). Pledging entities are invited to submit updates on progress on a continual basis. More than 173 updates have been received so far, of which 30 per cent are in the planning stage, and 70 per cent are in progress. Eleven pledges have been reported as fulfilled.
- **Future planning** for the next GRF will be based on the outcomes of the analysis, identification of gaps in pledging, supports needed to implement commitments, and good practices that can be scaled. The needs identified for the development of future pledges will be consolidated and presented at the High-Level Officials meeting in 2021, which will be convened to take stock of progress.

States and other actors have continued to engage in follow-up to the GRF:

- **Co-hosts and Co-convenors:** continue to support follow-up on pledges and engaging new actors.
- **Co-sponsors:** The education co-sponsorship group became the Education Alliance. Both the Jobs and Livelihoods and the Solutions co-sponsorship groups continue to meet and review progress towards the implementation of the pledges. The Asylum Capacity support group emerged from the protection capacity co-sponsorship group. The Energy and Infrastructure co-sponsorship group formed the Clean Energy Challenge action group.
- **Regions:** UNHCR Regional Bureau for the Eastern Horn and Great Lakes organized a well-attended multi-stakeholder webinar on GRF follow-up in the region in April, which we hope to see replicated in other regions and countries over the coming months.
- **Parliaments:** Parliamentary engagement continues through work with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to develop tailored plans for the implementation of GRF pledges, aimed at sensitization of parliamentarians through capacity-building initiatives as well as providing technical guidance for accession to relevant UN conventions. UNHCR cooperated with IPU on [Gender and COVID-19 Guidance Note for Parliamentarians with considerations for refugee and forcibly displaced women](#).
- **Cities:** Global engagement with cities continues through the GFMD Mayors Mechanism, supported by UCLG, Mayors Migration Council, and IOM, collecting pledges for GCR/GCM implementation, which include action from Bristol, UK; Milan, Italy; Sao Paulo, Brazil; and Strasbourg, France. UNHCR has continued engagement with UCLG in support of efforts surrounding the pledge by the city of Durban.
- **UN organizations:** The active engagement of the UN family in the lead-up to the GRF, led by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals together with UN humanitarian and development partners, has now been directed towards implementation of the commitments made at the Forum. These include: emphasizing the needs of refugees and displaced in policies, appeals, and programmes; ensuring that refugees are at the centre of humanitarian and development projects; and a promise to work with host governments to advocate for refugees' access to national services and allocating technical, financial and programming support to host countries for this purpose.
- The UNICEF/UNHCR Blueprint for Joint Action is one of the concrete flagship initiatives that is driven by the principles of the GCR and UN reform, and was one of UNICEF's GRF pledges. UNICEF and UNHCR will ensure that children and their families have access to strengthened education, WASH and child protection and jointly work with governments towards the social and economic inclusion of refugees and returnees in national policies and advocate for their access to national services in an initial 9 focus countries during an 18-month inception phase, before expanding globally in 2022.
- **Sports:** The follow-up on GRF sports pledges has focused on working with pledging entities and Sport Coalition members, which now total 87 members, to concretize the 2019 pledges within dedicated action plans. While many physical activities and implementation plans have been significantly impacted by COVID-19, many pledging entities have worked to adapt their programmes, using innovative approaches, new methodologies and digital tools to ensure that they can continue to stay and deliver. The 12<sup>th</sup> weekly online meeting of UNHCR with NGOs on COVID-19 focused on children, youth and the role of sports in the current context, and provided an opportunity to brief the large number and diverse range of participants on progress towards implementation of the three pledges made by the IFC at the GRF on behalf of the wider sports and refugees movement.

- **Private sector:** The private sector is central to the aims of broadening the base of support, and we have seen numerous examples of how they have stepped up in response to the COVID crisis in the same way as they did at the Forum. A GRF briefing for private sector is planned for later in the year.
- **Refugees:** The Local Engagement Refugee Research Network is becoming a voice on GRF follow-up and refugee participation. They hosted a roundtable discussion in February 2020 on how to overcome barriers to participation in global policy processes. They also partnered with the Global Refugee-Led Network to produce a widely read blog, published by the Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, on the many examples of refugee-led organisations on the front lines of the COVID-19 response. The Global Refugee-led Network has demonstrated refugee leadership in response to COVID-19. It organised a European briefing with a wide range of stakeholders in mid-May and started a social media campaign #refugeesrise to encourage States and other stakeholders to deliver on their commitments made at the Global Refugee Forum.
- **NGOs:** The eleventh meeting of UNHCR with NGOs focused on the role of the GCR and follow-up to the GRF in the COVID context and provided an opportunity to exchange with NGOs. We listened to the example of a group of NGOs jointly financing the position of an NGO staff member to be seconded to the CRRF Secretariat in Uganda as a good practice that could be replicated elsewhere.
- **Faith-based organizations:** The High Commissioner is committed to reinvigorating the dialogue with faith groups and organised a virtual meeting with a small group on 21 April. An online meeting with NGOs on the role of faith-based organisations in the COVID response was organised later in the month (29 April). There is a four-point roadmap for UNHCR's engagement with faith-based organisations in response to COVID-19 which aligns with and will prove instrumental in supporting GRF follow-up, including localization, and interfaith campaign, advocacy and protection, and a revitalization of the 2012 High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection and Faith.

### Initiatives launched for the Global Refugee Forum

*Caroline, Lensing-Hebben, Senior Comprehensive Refugee Responses Officer*

**Asylum Capacity Support Group (ACSG):** The ACSG will provide a mechanism to match requests and offers to increase the capacity of national asylum systems. A guide was sent this week to Member States and other stakeholders, setting out the matching procedure for requests and offers, including prioritization criteria. We would be happy to hold further consultations with interested States and other stakeholders to discuss this guide and next steps. We will also be proposing some priority matches to kickstart this mechanism.

**Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways:** This strategy remains a vital instrument supported through a multi-stakeholder Global Action Plan. A pause in resettlement departures was announced 17 March. Nonetheless, work on securing resettlement and access to complementary pathways for refugees continues on all levels. For example, operations in the MENA region referred 1,200 persons for resettlement in April and aim to keep referring between 1,200 to 1,500 refugees per month. Several operations in East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region are piloting remote processing modalities.

**Global Academic Interdisciplinary Network (GAIN):** The GAIN is called for in the GCR to support research and teaching on the four GCR objectives. The network will have a secretariat hosted at University of Essex. Establishing a secretariat outside of UNHCR was a top recommendation by both academics and UNHCR staff, which the University of Essex pledged to support at the GRF. You are all very welcome to the virtual signing ceremony on the MoU for the secretariat, in July, where a discussion will take place on how GAIN hopes to support burden and responsibility sharing to 2023. An invitation for this event will be circulated shortly.

**Support Platforms:** The IGAD Support Platform for East & Horn of Africa, MIRPS for Central and North America, SSAR for the Afghan situation are still in the early stages of their operationalization, and like most initiatives, are impacted by and adapting to the COVID situation. However, COVID-19 also reinforced the need for increased international solidarity. The main coordination of the platforms will be at the regional level, but we will ensure information sharing in Geneva through periodic meetings at ambassadorial or technical level. The three platforms are pursuing their own trajectories, with each tailored to their specific contexts.

- The IGAD Support Platform is guided by four thematic pillars, based on the Nairobi, Djibouti, and Kampala Declarations, and the upcoming IGAD Ministerial on Health. The Platform will serve as a vehicle for matching of GRF pledges. In the spirit of broadening the support base, UNHCR is working closely with the Inter-Parliamentary Union to develop a plan aiming at sensitizing parliaments and parliamentarians on the thematic pillars and objectives of the platform.
- The MIRPS Support Platform seeks to focus the attention of the international community on the forced displacement situation in Central America and Mexico. The Government of Spain officially accepted to serve as the Chair of the MIRPS Support Platform on a rotational basis for the next 12 months as of June this year. At the first meeting of Platform members in March this year, focus areas were discussed, including the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, education, and private sector engagement. Spain has called Platform members for a virtual meeting on 17 June, the first one under Spanish leadership. The MIRPS States have incorporated persons of concern within their domestic COVID-19 responses, and it is hoped that the Platform can work over the coming months to ensure that recent global financing that has been raised provides an opportunity to further inclusion in national health systems and longer-term resilience and economic recovery.
- The SSAR Support Platform seeks to galvanize additional support for the achievement of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees. The technical modalities and terms of reference for the Support Platform were developed. The High Commissioner and the three Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan will launch on 6 July a portfolio of projects to mobilize additional resources and most importantly the engagement of new partners. Notably, an important decision taken by the UN Secretary General in March this year, recognizes the area-based humanitarian-development-peace investments in the 20 Priority Areas of Return and Reintegration (PARRs) in Afghanistan as concrete confidence-building efforts in support of the peace process. The Decision commits to ensuring coordinated and targeted UN action in these areas.

### Digital Platform for the Global Compact on Refugees

*Sinan Akkurt, Assistant External Relations Officer*

The Global Compact on Refugees called for the creation of a digital platform for the sharing of good practices to support its application. UNHCR thanks States, organizations, businesses, refugees and refugee-led organizations, and others for their submissions of good practices which are featured on the digital platform.

The digital platform is a one-stop shop for the Global Compact on Refugees:

- showcasing good practice projects and initiatives by States and stakeholders.
- highlighting the pledges and contributions made at the first Global Refugee Forum and tracking the progress of their implementation
- sharing stories of the GCR's impact on refugees and forcibly displaced and stateless people, as well as their host countries and communities

- giving visibility to those finding long-term solutions.

The four-phase follow-up process for the GRF is supported by the digital platform:

- The platform enables analysis, as users to search, filter, and extract relevant pledges through the pledges and contribution dashboard, country dashboards, and the downloadable pledges database.
- Good practices and the GCR in action, including country pages and GCR initiatives, support the implementation of pledges made at the GRF.
- The platform allows States and other stakeholders to track and provide updates on the pledge implementation status and visualizes the updates received on the revised dashboard (forthcoming).
- The platform will also support actors to develop new pledges, identify areas in need of support, and share resources and information on the Compact and future GRF.

New features are under development for the digital platform, include:

- Revisions to the pledges and contributions dashboard, considering the feedback received from States as well as other stakeholders, to include the display of the progress made in pledge implementation.
- The ability to download the full database of pledges on the platform under Pledges & Contributions.
- a dedicated COVID-19 page, highlighting the role of the GCR in the response to the pandemic and relevant good practices. UNHCR encourages all States and stakeholders to continue submitting good practices, especially responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, that demonstrate the impact and spirit of the GCR.
- An enhanced good practices search functionality is being enhanced to make it easier to browse and find relevant projects and initiatives.
- The ability to host webinars, as is planned for the Global Academic Interdisciplinary Network (GAIN).

UNHCR looks forward to working closely with States, NGOs, businesses, refugees, and others to shape the further development of the digital platform, including how users can easily contribute to and exchange through the site. States and all stakeholders are not only an audience but the key contributors to the platform.

## Discussion

The following points were raised during the discussion and interventions from the floor:

- The GCR is an important and relevant tool of burden and responsibility sharing in the response to the pandemic, and the need to adapt and accelerate pledges to support both the immediate and longer-term response and socio-economic recovery, in particular those pledges that focus on health, WASH, social protection, livelihoods, and education.
- Momentum needs to be maintained through implementing pledges, reporting on progress, highlighting successes, ensuring additionality in commitments, and finding ways to support and match pledges made by refugee hosting countries.

- Continued work on solutions is essential, including keeping up momentum towards expanding opportunities for resettlement and complementary pathways.
- The Asylum Capacity Support Group has great potential, and a number of States and other actors wish to engage further on the TORs and modalities for the group.
- An age, gender, and diversity approach needs to be central to pledge implementation, particularly considering heightened vulnerabilities and sexual and gender-based violence during the pandemic.
- Continued support for the humanitarian, development, peace nexus can be ensured through coordinated programming and financing, including in the face of the pandemic.