



Progress since the first Global Refugee Forum

Virtual Quarterly Briefing

28 September 2020, 16:00-18:00 hours (CET)

Summary of Discussions

Introduction

The informal briefing was the third opportunity to provide an update to key stakeholders on the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), nine months after the first Global Refugee Forum (GRF) was held in Geneva.

The event was chaired and moderated by the Deputy Director of UNHCR's Division of Resilience and Solutions, Mr. Mamadou Dian Balde, with opening remarks provided by UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Ms. Gillian Triggs. Reflecting the continued high level of interest in the GCR and in the implementation of the pledges made at the GRF, the virtual briefing gathered more than 240 participants and included statements and questions by Member States, UN agencies, civil society, cities, parliamentarians, faith-based actors, academia, and the Olympics Committee.

Opening remarks

Ms. Gillian Triggs, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection

- Nine months ago, the Global Refugee Forum generated renewed commitments in the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees, but the real test of the success of the Forum was always going to be concrete implementation of the more than 1,400 pledges made by governments, NGOs, local communities, businesses, academics, and religious groups, among others.
- Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, implementation is progressing well: UNHCR received reports from governments, NGOs, the private sector and civil society on over 300 of the pledges: 70 per cent are in progress, 22 per cent are in the planning stage, and 37 pledges are fulfilled.
- COVID-19, while slowing implementation in some areas, has not led to a serious loss of momentum. In some cases, it has accelerated the implementation of pledges, stimulated matching with new partners, and prompted agreement on action plans.
- More than 100 focal points throughout UNHCR at the local, regional, and global levels have played an active role in nurturing pledges to grow them from abstract and imprecise ones to concrete projects with practical effects.
- The number of pledges by stakeholders is not the sole criterion for impact. Rather, the quality and level of political commitment are more important. The work done through the support platforms for MIRPS, IGAD, and SSAR are also having an impact.
- In addition, the matching of policy pledges with a partner to support their implementation has proven to be an excellent means of practical implementation,

creating a dynamic environment over time as new partners join and projects evolve. Matching also ensures some agility to meet new crises, as demonstrated by COVID-19 – the current global priority.

- COVID-19 has demonstrated the continued relevance and imperative of the Global Compact on Refugees for global solidarity and responsibility sharing.
- We want to highlight successful partnerships to give them a better global and regional profile. This will help to broaden the base of support by attracting new partners.
- The details of pledges and progress towards their implementation are available on the Digital Platform for the GCR. States and other stakeholders remain strongly engaged and work together with UNHCR in supporting implementation. Regular briefings and reports such as the [Outcome document](#) and a paper on [the Role of the GCR in UNHCR's response to COVID-19](#) are also available on www.unhcr.org as well as on the [Digital Platform for the GCR](#).

Update on the follow-up to the Global Refugee Forum

Ms. Perveen Ali, Head of the Global Refugee Forum Coordination Team

- UNHCR is pleased to note that many entities reported on progress and the UN Agency for Refugees is currently working with them to concretize and match their pledges.
- UNHCR has a roadmap to institutionalize the follow-up on the GRF both internally and externally with all partners. The first part of the roadmap was the analysis of the pledges, the second part was working on ways to concretize and match them, and the third part is tracking progress. Finally, the fourth part is thinking through what is to be achieved by the next GRF.
- UNHCR is working with donors to identify where opportunities might best fit their contributions. For instance, 80 pledges that have been made by host countries have been identified as possible matches with 80 pledges that could support their implementation.
- UNHCR is also working at regional level to develop mechanisms for follow-up, such as Support Platforms and stock-taking events.
- UNHCR is working closely with the co-conveners, co-host, and co-sponsors of the GRF, and a joint letter was recently sent from the co-convenors and co-hosts to all ambassadors in Geneva, encouraging continuous support and engagement.
- UNHCR is undertaking a lessons-learned exercise to identify recommendations that will inform preparations for High-Level Official Meeting in 2021 and the next Global Refugee Forum in 2023.
- A GCR indicators report will be developed in 2021 that will help UNHCR identify gaps and opportunities ahead of the 2021 High Level Officials meeting.

Mr. Ziad Ayad, Senior Policy Officer, Global Refugee Forum Coordination Team

- Tracking progress allows UNHCR to enhance the potential for implementation and helps maintain momentum and support in informing the planning for the future.
- Every 6 months, UNHCR will be soliciting progress updates, which will help with the matching process. A quarterly newsletter will be produced to highlight progress.
- GCR initiatives are also an integral part of the GRF tracking.
- Updates were received on nearly one-quarter of the pledges made at the GRF, as mentioned by the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection. UNHCR encourages pledgers to reach out with continued updates through the Digital Platform for the GCR.

Briefing on GCR Initiatives

Support Platforms for IGAD, MIRPS, and SSAR

Ms. Caroline Lensing-Hebben, Senior Comprehensive Refugee Responses Officer, Global Refugee Forum Coordination Team

- The GRF marked the launch of three Support Platforms. They are concrete example of solidarity and have gained good momentum in recent months.
- The core group of the SSAR platform includes eight States as well as the EU, the World Bank, and UNDP. The upcoming core group meeting will be an opportunity for reinvigorated support by the international community and will be critical in shaping out joint actions for the months to come.
- Ten States confirmed their membership in the MIRPS Support Platform to date. Spain's exemplary leadership of the MIRPS Support Platform helped to raise in global policy fora the complex displacement crisis of Central America, initiating traditional and new partnerships. During the high-level MIRPS meeting held during the United Nations General Assembly meeting, Canada confirmed that it will assume the role of the next chair of the Support Platform as of June next year.
- The IGAD Support Platform is currently chaired by Sudan who convened a meeting in Geneva in July to discuss next steps. Widening and enhancing the participation of other partners in the Nairobi process is a priority. The first regional support platform meeting will be organized soon and will provide an opportunity to move on this agenda.

Asylum Capacity Support Group

Ms. Sharhzad Tadjbakhsh, Deputy Director, Division of International Protection

- The Asylum Capacity Support Group (ASCG) is a mechanism for matching asylum capacity changes that have been made by States and requests for support in this regard, with corresponding offers or pledges of technical, material, financial support.

- The [ACGS modalities and its associated guide](#) has been shared online on the Digital Platform for the GCR. The guidelines clarify the process and outline that States will first need to do a capacity assessment and make commitment to improve one or more aspects of their system prior to making a request for support.
- This is a decentralized process as work will mostly be done at national and regional levels. The ACGS secretariat has been set-up to ensure consistency and coherence and avoid duplication. This will also enable a cross-regional matching of support and requests for support being made. An online platform will be set up to provide more information on the detailed process.

Pledges from the High-Level Segment on Statelessness

Ms. Sharhzad Tadjbakhsh, Deputy Director, Division of International Protection

- The High-Level Segment on Statelessness at ExCom last year helped generate many pledges on statelessness. Subsequently, we sought to include these pledges in the GRF process. We received 396 pledges in total, of which 37 pledges came through the GRF.
- 15 pledges have been fully implemented since the High-Level Segment, relating to accessions, amnesty laws, changes in legislation to enable birth registration, and national action plans. For example, Cote d'Ivoire notably introduced the first statelessness determination procedure in Africa.
- We have finalized a good practice guide on setting up statelessness determination procedures and are preparing a guide on the reduction of statelessness.
- We have received targeted funding pledged by the United States of America to support some of the pledges made at the High-Level Segment. We are now prioritizing rolling out this funding to some of our operations.
- In the spirit of matching, we would like to see other interested States come forward to enable the implementation of existing pledges through new commitments offering practical support. We are also encouraging peer-to-peer support between States.
- Even if all of these pledges are implemented, we will still be behind the target of ending statelessness by 2024. We must keep up the momentum and go further than these pledges to achieve this goal.

Multi-stakeholder engagement (cities, faith communities, parliamentarians)

Ms. Safak Pavey, Senior Advisor, Multi-Stakeholder Engagement Team

- Through our city network partners (the Mayors' Migration Council, United Cities, and local government partnerships), five city pledges were made at the GRF.
- We are encouraged by progress made on implementation despite the pressures of COVID-19. For example, a Global Task Force on Migration was launched on 30 September as a mechanism to develop further pledges from cities in the build-up to the GRF in 2023. To promote inclusive cities in the context of the pandemic, a UNHCR-

led initiative, Cities with Refugees, hosted a series of regional webinars.

- We are organizing parliamentary roundtables with the Inter-Parliamentary Union to encourage North-South dialogue and effective parliamentary engagement. The first will focus on the IGAD Support Platform. We also aim to create peer-to-peer support networks and produce guidance notes for parliamentarians, including on responses to COVID-19.
- We received a significant number of commitments from faith-based organizations, which now need greater strengthening. To foster collaboration with religious institutions and communities, UNHCR and Religions for Peace hosted the first high-level consultations with religious leaders. This resulted in a commitment to form a multi-religious council of leaders to support UNHCR in the build-up to next GRF.

Global Academic Interdisciplinary Network

Ms. Rachel Criswell, Senior Policy Officer, Multi-Stakeholder Engagement Team

- The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) is supporting UNHCR to build the evidence base for the GCR through a three-year project funded by the UK. As part of this project, the IIED premiered a youth-led film at the United Nations General Assembly, highlighting five different refugee families' experiences of the pandemic in Nairobi.
- A conference on protracted displacement will take place in the MENA region in October, funded by Germany. Refugee students and a coalition of academics will share best practices and lessons learned on integrating refugees in tertiary education.
- San Remo University is now offering an annual GCR course, which will be held entirely online due to COVID-19.
- New contributions beyond those made at the GRF have been announced in response to COVID-19, such as the ASILE Forum discussions and the primer on COVID-19 and forced displacement published by the Joint Data Center.
- The GAIN Secretariat has also been established (through a partnership between UNCHR and the University of Essex) to increase capacity for knowledge-sharing and to connect key partners.

3-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways

Mr. David Manicom, Special Advisor, Resettlement and Complementary Pathways, Division of International Protection

- The 3-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways was mandated under the GCR and launched in July 2019.
- The strategy aims to find more safe new homes for refugees in third countries by growing resettlement, advancing complementary pathways, and promoting welcoming and inclusive societies.
- The GRF resulted in 78 pledges in relevant areas. These pledges have formed the basis

of an action plan, detailing concrete activities by several dozen partners.

- The 2019 resettlement goal of 60,000 was surpassed, with arrivals in resettlement countries totaling 63,000.
- 2020 goals will not be met due to COVID-19. Arrivals have resumed slowly, and we are set to reach around 12,000 this year. The forecast is more optimistic for progress in 2021/22.
- A number of activities to advance the strategy are in motion, including a Task Force on Third-Country Education Pathways, a States-led network on Family Reunification, and a new global Task Force on Labour Mobility that will be co-chaired by Canada.
- UNHCR and IOM launched CRISP (The Sustainable Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Initiative) to support States or stakeholders to expand programmes or advance pathways. CRISP's [website](#) serves as a resource platform for capacity-building and partnerships. A recently commissioned research project will map opportunities and provide an evidence base on the outcomes of resettlement.

Clean Energy Challenge

Mr. Jaime Bourbon de Parme, Special Advisor, Division of External Relations

- The [Clean Energy Challenge](#) (CEC) embraces the “whole of society” approach which is central to the Global Compact on Refugees.
- The CEC is three things:
 - **a campaign** to bring global attention to the need for cleaner and safer energy in the displacement space;
 - **an ambition**, a clear target we have to reach, which is to bring cleaner and safer energy to all refugee settlements and host communities in this decade of action;
 - **a marketplace**, a concrete place where we try to unearth what the demand is in the field and match that with a global supply. We are in essence creating a new market where there is none yet, but we will get there.
- Energy will boost inclusion because we are not only focusing on refugees but also on host communities, and it is a long-term focus on development, bridging the humanitarian-development gap and really focusing on self-reliance of refugees. Energy really is a system changer. It has a massive impact on the environment, healthcare, and jobs, and in COVID times, access to energy gives you access to connectivity, which could give you access to online finance, online education, and online jobs. So, in these times, I am very glad that this was launched at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF).
- At the GRF, we started with 30 members and now this has grown in the last months to over 80 entities signed up and actively supporting the CEC.
- The CEC focuses on 4 outcome areas of the Challenge:
 - **Emergencies**: as soon as refugees and IDPs arrive in camps, they need energy. Most of the environmental and social impact happen in the emergency phase. People need immediately to cook food to survive for the next day, electricity just

- to find their way to get settled at night in places where they do not know anybody and charge their phones if they have one to tell their beloveds that they are safe. Energy has not been adopted as a primary need, but it is been moving in that direction since it is essential in any emergency situation.
- **Cooking:** for environment, security, and health (respiratory and COVID-related) reasons.
 - **Electrification of households:** essential for productivity, connectivity, and education.
 - **Facilities:** stable energy sources for health centers, water supplies, education centers, street lighting, etc.
- We work on three works streams to make that happen:
 - **Data:** We are working on a baseline to identify global opportunities to understand what is out there and what best energy solution could fulfil that need. To be able to do that, we need to identify common indicators for coordinated reporting; so, we centralize standard-setting and decentralize data collection. My call to action to all of you is to support energy feasibility studies and to ask entities that have expertise to move also in their space, and also, for donors to finance this.
 - **Project pipelines:** We have created a marketplace to match demand and increase visibility for partners to pitch projects and match them with supplies. We already had concrete projects from Colombia, Tanzania, Uganda, and Sudan, and many more are being presented. This pipeline is filling up (there is no market out there, so we are uncovering potential). So, my call to action to all of you is to develop and share projects with us and in particularly those that can be scaled up.
 - **Funding/financing/fundraising:** We are looking at finance mechanisms besides donor money, in particular de-risking mechanisms, such as Global Guarantees for longer-term energy infrastructure projects. The challenge would be on how to extend this to the household level. Our clear call to action for you is for support to enable large- scale, long-term energy investments; these will be often public-private engagements.
 - UNHCR, in partnership with Deloitte and the Global Plan of Action (a platform of humanitarian agencies) are finalizing a 10-year roadmap of targets and milestones to lead to our ambitious goal. We can share this with you soon.
 - There are many ways how to contribute concretely. Contact us for a discussion. Let's discuss how you can get engaged!

Digital Platform for the GCR

Yosola Olorunshola, Associate External Relations Officer, GRF Coordination Team

- Here is a quick overview of progress since the last briefing:
 - Analytics: 16,000 page views per month on average (June-August). The more visited sub-page is the one on pledges and contributions, which shows how much interest there is on pledge implementation.
 - In June, we already published more than 350 good practices. If you have submitted a good practice, I encourage you to look for yours but also to use

- the other available filters that we have recently improved to look for related good practices in your area of focus, region, topic ,or by theme.
 - You may have received the progress update we published earlier this month on the progress towards advancing the GCR through pledges, Support Platforms, and the GCR initiatives. If you have not received this, I encourage you, if not already done, to sign up for our newsletter by confirming your interest in an email to hqgrf@unhcr.org.
- For a demonstration of how to navigate the pledges dashboard to track progress on pledge implementation so far, please see the [recording](#) (at 1m03s) or read a step-by-step guide to the dashboard [here](#).

Discussion

The discussion that ensued was both concrete and diverse with interventions from different actors, including Denmark, Ecuador, Germany, Italy, Kenya, Norway, Rwanda, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, European Union, Danish Refugee Council, Global Academic Interdisciplinary Network, HIAS, ICVA, International Rescue Committee, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against Children, UNDP, UNICEF, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). This was a tribute to the GCR bringing together both the whole of government and the whole of society.

A number of governments and other actors reported concrete progress in the implementation of their pledges and engagement in the GCR initiatives.

Key issues raised during the discussion include:

- It is very encouraging that there is progress towards the implementation of pledges, good practices, and initiatives, despite the current situation with the pandemic.
- There is strong commitment to continue supporting implementation at the country, regional, and global levels.
- In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the GCR/GRF provides a blueprint for an effective and comprehensive response, and the international community should make efforts to implement and potentially adapt their pledges to the current situation. Advances made, new pledges, partnerships, and initiatives are of even greater importance today.
- The inclusion of refugee and returnee children in national systems is essential to ensure that all children have access to the services they need to be safe.
- Local and regional governments have been strongly advocating to have their roles recognized in national and local migration refugee governance. The GCR acknowledges this role and provides clarity on how local actors can be involved in the process implementation.
- It is key that the international community make progress towards matching – supporting the commitments made by host countries – as an effective way to translate solidarity into action.

- The international community has the responsibility to share the burden with those countries that are giving a safe space and future for displaced populations and their host communities, strengthening systems and structures along with helping refugees and vulnerable host communities directly to be more resilient through access to education and livelihoods.
- There is a continued commitment to address the root causes of forced displacement and supporting stabilization efforts.
- There is strong engagement in the three regional support platforms that were launched at the GRF. These important processes are now picking up speed with key events taking place across all three platforms.
- There is a continued commitment to resettlement, in recognition that resettlement remains a live saving mechanism for many refugees.
- Joint learning and the continuous sharing of experiences are key in the process of implementing pledges.
- It would be good to consider new modes and spaces for continued multi-stakeholder engagement, leading by example, sharing thinking, and acting as advocates and mobilizers.
- NGOs are eager to be better informed about and associated with the work of the support platforms and the ACSG.
- Tracking progress is important, and pledging entities are encouraged to submit updates through the pledges dashboard as well as support policy pledges made by host countries.
- It is key to give life to the nexus between humanitarian assistance and development aid to ensure that no one is left behind.
- In the lead-up to the High-Level Officials' meeting in December 2021, it will be key to develop a comprehensive analysis of the successes and challenges, in terms of how the pledges are being implemented and their impact, as well as the GCR more broadly, particularly in the context of the pandemic.
- The work on the Clean Energy Challenge is welcomed, and further engagement is encouraged.
- It would be useful for the three Support Platforms to engage with one another and exchange lessons learned to date.
- The joint pledge on the rights of women and girls is still open for others to join.
- pledges. Perhaps a roadmap might be useful. Interesting to see how the GCR has been helpful during the pandemic but also what impact it has had on delivery. Perhaps can be addressed during the HCD.

- The final GRF quarterly briefing this year will focus on progress in the areas of focus. It will also be an opportunity also to set out broadly the roadmap for 2021.