

**Virtual informal consultation on the proposed programme for the 2021  
High-Level Officials' Meeting**  
28 April 2021, 15:30-18:00 hours (CET)

**Summary of Discussions**

**Introduction**

This virtual informal consultation between Member States and other key stakeholders was an opportunity to present and discuss the programme that UNHCR had proposed for the High Level Officials' Meeting, established by the Global Compact on Refugees and due to take place on 14 and 15 December 2021, as well as to provide an update on other aspects of the preparatory process. The event was chaired and moderated by Ms Karin de Gruijl, the Chief of Secretariat in UNHCR's Governance Service, with opening remarks by the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Ms Gillian Triggs, and a presentation on the proposed programme by the Head of the Global Compact on Refugees Coordination Team, Ms. Perveen Ali.

**Opening remarks**

*Ms Gillian Triggs, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection*

In opening the meeting, Ms Triggs recalled that 2021 marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conclusion of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which is the foundational document for the international refugee protection regime and which emphasizes the importance of access to territory and *non-refoulement*. She noted that, in 2018, the international community agreed upon a long-term framework—[the Global Compact on Refugees](#)—to engage States and others in the full implementation of these obligations in a spirit of burden and responsibility sharing. The [Global Refugee Forum in December 2019](#) was an impressive show of solidarity with refugees, IDPs, and stateless people, but the COVID-19 pandemic had given rise to a great number of challenges in implementing the commitments made.

Ms Triggs presented the [High-Level Officials' Meeting](#), which will take place on 14 and 15 December 2021 pursuant to the Global Compact on Refugees, as a key tool to ensure continued momentum for the implementation of pledges, the matching of pledges with the necessary support, and other initiatives established by the Global Compact on Refugees. The High-Level Officials' Meeting will be a "moment of truth" for the international community to come together to assess how well the Global Compact is being implemented and the extent to which its objectives are being realised. The meeting will serve as an opportunity for the international community as a whole to take stock of progress to date, to reflect, and to chart a course for the second Global Refugee Forum. UNHCR proposed three priorities for the meeting ([as set out in more detail in the documentation circulated in advance](#)):

- **Expand support for refugees and host countries** through the broadened engagement of States, the private sector, development actors, and others, strengthened and innovative approaches to partnerships and solidarity, and national and regional arrangements, including the support platforms.
- **Advance implementation of pledges** made at the Global Refugee Forum, including through specification and matching of policy pledges with pledges of financial or other support.
- **Identifying areas in need of further support**, including through the further implementation of current pledges, development of pledges for the next Global Refugee Forum, new partnerships, and strengthened engagement.

Of particular importance, the first report against the agreed [Global Compact on Refugees Indicator Framework](#) will help to frame discussions at the High-Level Officials' Meeting by providing a qualitative and quantitative evidence base for assessing progress and challenges as well as areas in need of further effort.

## [Proposed programme for the 2021 High-Level Officials' Meeting](#)

*Ms Perveen Ali, Head of the Global Compact on Refugees Coordination Team*

Ms Ali Presented [the proposed programme for the High-Level Officials' Meeting](#), which had been circulated in advance. She briefed on the roadmap, which had been discussed at a [virtual consultation on 27 January 2021](#), and which has been updated to comprise three phases.

**Phase One** consists of the regional, thematic, and stakeholder-specific stocktaking and consultations, which are at present ongoing. Ms Ali gave an overview of those that had taken place to date and noted that a continuously updated list of events soon will be available on the website.

**Phase Two** will consist of the official launch of the first Global Compact on Refugees Indicator Framework report in mid-November, followed by a series of four roundtables taking place at the global level in November/December 2021. The Indicator report will provide an evidence base, as well as qualitative analysis and examples of human impact, and will frame the subsequent discussions. The roundtables will bring the outcomes of the stocktaking conducted throughout 2021 to the global conversation, involving all States and other stakeholders. These roundtables will be organised under four themes aligned with the GCR objectives and indicators and the priorities for the High-Level Officials Meeting: (Priority 1) financing and partnerships, and (Priority 2) self-reliance and solutions.

**Phase Three** will comprise the High-Level Officials' Meeting itself, which will take place over two days (14 and 15 December 2021) with an advance day (13 December) reserved for additional meetings and events focusing on particular stakeholder groups and initiatives established by the Global Compact on Refugees.

The High-Level Officials' Meeting itself will likely take place in a hybrid online/in-person format, depending on the prevailing epidemiological situation. UNHCR envisages a general debate in plenary for the full two days so that States and other stakeholders can be focused on the outcomes of the preparatory process, and also in response to the challenges of hybridity. The plenary debate will be interspersed by three panels, each focusing on a different priority area and dedicated to bringing the outcomes of the stocktaking process and the preparatory roundtables to the meeting. Spotlight sessions on emerging issues will take place during the luncheon break on both days, and these will include a focus on the role of the Global Compact on Refugees in the medium to long-term response to the pandemic and climate action.

Ms Ali encouraged the full engagement of all States and other interested stakeholders through the implementation of pledges, the sharing of evidence of impact, and through participation in relevant stocktaking opportunities and preparatory roundtables. She encouraged States and other stakeholders to be represented at a senior officials level (e.g. heads of departments engaged in refugee affairs) at the meeting in December, and to participate actively by reporting on progress, identifying challenges and opportunities, and making recommendations for the future.

## [Discussion](#)

Following the presentations, there were 20 interventions from the virtual floor from 15 States and five other stakeholders.

Intervenors thanked UNHCR for the briefing, and for the preparatory process more generally, which was described as being crucial to a successful meeting in December. A number of intervenors also noted progress made in implementing the pledges they made at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019.

The importance of the Global Compact on Refugees in fostering international cooperation was noted, as was the role of the Global Refugee Forum in driving forward the Compact's implementation. The High-Level Officials' Meeting was described as a crucial opportunity to take stock of progress to date, and to lay the groundwork for a successful second Global Refugee Forum, including through the development of strategic direction and guidance. It was

emphasized that the High-Level Officials' Meeting should be forward-looking, and UNHCR was encouraged to identify remaining gaps, key themes, and priority areas for pledging at the second Global Refugee Forum as soon as possible. Interventions also encouraged further work on matching pledges, noting that success in the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees would depend on increasing international cooperation in a spirit of solidarity.

The three **priority areas** proposed by UNHCR were broadly welcomed, with some delegations requesting a greater focus on burden and responsibility sharing and solutions. It was noted, in particular, that burden and responsibility sharing goes beyond and funding and includes technical and capacity building support, resettlement places, and the opening of complementary pathways.

The **programme** that UNHCR proposed for the meeting also met with broad support. UNHCR's commitment to an early release of the **indicator report** was welcomed, with many emphasizing the central role of the report in assessing progress and noting that an early release will allow it to be considered in advance of the meeting and used in preparations. UNHCR was encouraged to ensure that the report is accessible and easy to read.

UNHCR was encouraged to ensure a focus in the programme on the challenges and opportunities presented by **COVID-19**, as well as the role of the Global Compact on Refugees in "building back better" after the pandemic. A more prominent role for the **Support Platforms** that had been established under the Global Compact on Refugees was also requested, including a reflection on lessons learned. Interventions stressed the importance of knowing how these and other **initiatives under the Global Compact on Refugees** are progressing, and whether adjustments need to be made.

States and other stakeholders also requested further detail on the planning and procedures for the **roundtables and spotlight sessions**, with a particular focus on the equitable representation of all stakeholders and the meaningful engagement of refugees.

Further detail was also requested on the **outcome document** for the High-Level Officials' Meeting, in particular on the role it is envisaged to play in the lead up to the second Global Refugee Forum and its envisaged content.

UNHCR took good note of the recommendations made and encouraged participants to continue to share their thinking and ideas for how to shape the programme to ensure that it is impactful and forward-looking.