

UNHCR Global Refugee Forum – High-Level Officials Meeting 2021

National Statement: Australia

Australia is pleased to come together at this High-Level Officials Meeting with states, stakeholders and – most importantly – with refugees themselves, to reaffirm our shared commitment to the Global Compact on Refugees.

Australia is committed to supporting a functioning global asylum system, and improving settlement and integration outcomes for refugees, in partnership with UNHCR.

As a leader in the provision of settlement services for newly arrived refugees, Australia is pleased to make a new pledge to support implementation of the Global Compact, in the spirit of global responsibility sharing, and in solidarity with generous host countries.

We commit to support other Member States, at their request, to establish or refine refugee resettlement programmes through the sharing of our experience and expertise, with a view to ensuring refugees can successfully integrate in their new society.

This includes sharing our experience as we continue to grow opportunities for community groups and businesses to directly support settlement and integration efforts.

Australia has a proud history of helping those most in need. We remain committed to being a generous refugee resettlement country, and to offering resettlement to the most vulnerable, including women and children.

Australia supports strategies to expand complementary pathways for refugee admission. Australia's Skilled Refugee Pilot Labour Agreement, commenced in July 2021, provides an alternative pathway for refugees to resettle in Australia. This program is a practical example of how businesses and business leaders can harness refugees' talents to address skills shortages.

Australia's Community Support Program enables communities and businesses, families and individuals, to sponsor humanitarian visa applicants with employment prospects, and provide support to new humanitarian arrivals in their settlement journey.

Australia has made a significant commitment to supporting countries of first asylum, particularly in the Indo-Pacific.

Our multi-year and largely unearmarked funding to protracted displacement crises ensures our partners have the flexibility to direct funding according to need and operational priorities. Including in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, where we have provided more than \$270 million in humanitarian assistance since 2017 to support Rohingya and host communities.

Protection of the most vulnerable persons is critical as we continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In line with our Global Refugee Forum pledges, Australia remains committed to:

- enhancing the participation and agency of women and girls in refugee and host communities;
- preventing sexual and gender-based violence;
- working to ensure education for refugees is accessible, inclusive and high quality; and
- breaking down barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating in and benefiting from humanitarian action.

Finally, Australia acknowledges that the meaningful participation of refugees and refugee-led organisations in decision-making, including organisations led by women and people with disabilities, is an essential element of a whole-of-society response to refugee crises, and to successful implementation of the Global Compact.

High Commissioner, we take this opportunity to thank UNHCR for its unwavering commitment to serving the most vulnerable in ever more complex circumstances.

Thank you.

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