

Global Refugee Forum, HLOM  
14/15 December 2021

Sport for Refugees Coalition  
Intervention

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, esteemed colleagues.

In 2019, at the first Global Refugee Forum more than 80 entities from diverse directions like professional and grassroots sports clubs, civil society organisations, governments, national and international sporting federations came together pledging to use sport to improve the lives of refugees. The Sport for Refugees Coalition is convened by the Olympic Refugee Foundation, UNHCR, and the SCORT Foundation.

However, the pandemic initially caused sport activities globally to be halted, affecting particularly refugee and other displaced populations. As the health crisis continues through 2021 and beyond, there is an increased desire and appreciation for all that sport and physical activity stands for.

Innovative approaches to securing access to Sport – whether delivered online or in-person – provided a vital distraction to the daily stresses all around us. It further highlighted the role sport plays in promoting mental health and psycho-social well-being, especially in times of crisis.

Despite the challenges that the pandemic has created – the Coalition members are committed to finding innovative ways to deliver on its pledges:

- 1) To promote and ensure access for all refugees, without distinction of any kind, to safe and inclusive sporting facilities.
- 2) To increase availability and access to organised sports and sport-based initiatives for refugee and hosting communities, actively considering age, gender, ability, and other diversity needs.
- 3) To promote and facilitate equal access to and participation of refugees in sporting events and competitions at all levels.

Moving forward, the coalition will seek to harness opportunities to establish cross sectoral partnerships beyond the traditional sports organization. Partnerships that can unlock new resources, promote greater collaboration, help overcome obstacles, and enable more refugees to get access to and benefit from sport. This could be reflected in forms of joint pledges or new pledges at the next GRF in 2023.

We are committed to working with the global humanitarian community to play our part in making the pledges of the **Global Compact on Refugees** a reality. So that everyone has access to sport – improving social cohesion, inclusion, self-reliance, and psycho-social well-being ...

... and ultimately improve their quality of life.