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2023 Global Refugee Forum

Concept Note

Introduction

This updated concept note sets out the proposed arrangements for the 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF), in line with the [Roadmap to the GRF](#) and the [Background Note](#) for the 17 May 2023 Formal Preparatory Meeting. The GRF 2023 will be convened in Geneva, Switzerland from 13 to 15 December 2023 with an advance day for side events on 12 December 2023.

The [Global Compact on Refugees](#) (GCR) aims to: (i) ease the pressures on host countries; (ii) enhance refugee self-reliance; (iii) expand access to third-country solutions; and (iv) support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.¹ It further sets out a series of arrangements to facilitate engagement and support for these objectives. Key among these arrangements is the Global Refugee Forum (GRF).²

The GRF is envisaged to facilitate the announcement of concrete pledges and contributions, and consider opportunities, challenges, and ways in which burden- and responsibility-sharing in support of the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) can be enhanced. It is envisaged to take place in Geneva, Switzerland at the ministerial level and to include the participation of all United Nations Member States, together with relevant stakeholders. It is co-hosted and co-convened by one or more State(s) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, with an invitation to the United Nations Secretary-General to participate.

The first GRF in 2019 garnered over 1,400 [pledges](#) and [initiatives](#) and 350 submissions of [good practices](#) linked to the GCR from more than 15 stakeholder groups.³ In 2021, UNHCR released the first [GCR Indicator Report](#) and convened a [High-Level Officials Meeting](#) to take stock of progress towards the GCR objectives at the mid-point between Forums. Twenty [key recommendations](#) and follow-up actions were identified at the High-Level Officials Meeting to guide the development of pledges and contributions for the next GRF in 2023 (see annex to this Note).

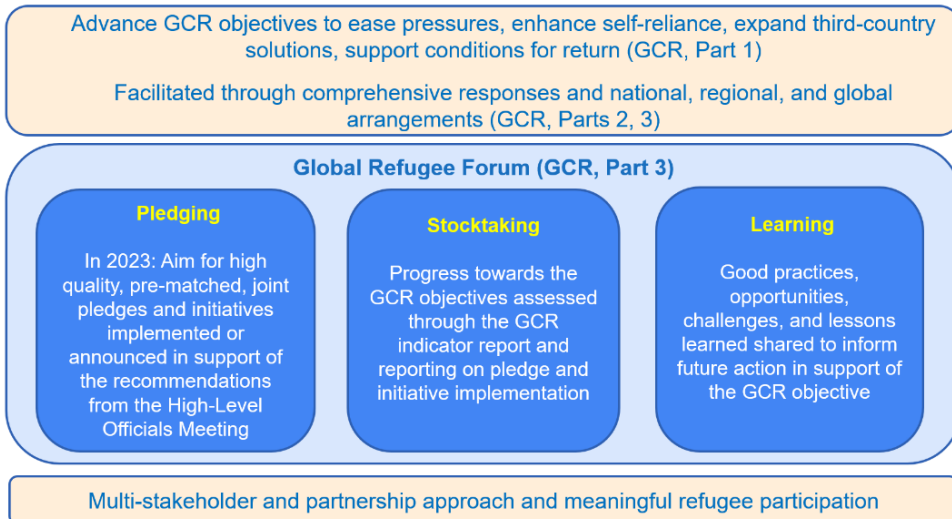
The 2023 GRF will be co-hosted by Switzerland and co-convened by Colombia, France, Japan, Jordan, the Niger, and Uganda, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It aims to provide an opportunity to build on and highlight the progress made by Governments and other stakeholders towards the **implementation of pledges and initiatives announced since 2019**. It will also provide space for participants to **take stock** of progress, **announce new pledges**, and **share learning** to inform and inspire further burden- and responsibility-sharing and facilitate comprehensive responses.

¹ See GCR, para 7

² See GCR, paras 17-19.

³ The stakeholder groups are comprised of governments, refugees and host community representatives, local authorities, cities and other local actors, international organizations within and outside the United Nations system, regional organizations, humanitarian and development actors, international and regional financial institutions, parliaments, civil society organizations, faith-based actors, the private sector, media, academics, and sport and cultural organizations (see GCR, sect. 3.2, para. 3).

Purpose of the Global Refugee Forum



Stocktaking

How can stakeholders provide data to support stocktaking?

The GCR calls on States to include refugees and host communities, as well as returnees and stateless persons as relevant, within national data and statistical systems (GCR, paras. 46). This **statistical inclusion** (e.g., in Census, living conditions surveys) is a prerequisite for measuring several GCR indicators and therefore the progress towards GCR objectives. It is also a key tool for effecting the pledge of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no-one behind.

UNHCR is expected to support States (e.g., national statistical office) in operationalizing statistical inclusion.

Donors (States, multilateral organizations, private donors) are also encouraged to participate in international data collection relevant to GCR indicators (e.g., OECD data collection on development assistance to refugee situations).

How will pledge implementation be tracked?

Similar to the first GRF, a light online self-reporting mechanism will continue to track pledges made by pledging entities, with the reporting mechanism continuously open, and updates requested on a biannual basis. The results of these updates would appear on the pledges dashboard of the [GCR Digital Platform](#), indicating whether a pledge is in the planning phase, in progress or fulfilled. Analysis of progress towards pledge implementation will also be shared through regular briefings convened by UNHCR on the GCR and the GRF as well as stocktaking for the 2025 High-Level Officials Meeting.

Pledging

The high-level outcomes will be secured through **individual or joint pledges** of financial, material, technical, and other support. Pledging entities are encouraged to:

- **Contribute to mega-pledges** that are transformative, high impact, organized around a common theme, multi-year, and high quality, and have a resource base
- **Fulfil implementation of 2019 pledges** currently reported as “in progress” or “in planning”
- **Develop new high-quality pledges** that are additional, quantifiable and needs-based, and ideally pre-matched between host countries and other actors



The GRF 2023 will aim to secure the following key outcomes that will guide future engagement in comprehensive responses:

GCR Objective 1 Ease pressure on host countries	GCR Objective 2 Enhance refugee self-reliance	GCR Objective 3 Expand access to third-country solutions	GCR Objective 4 Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity
Additional, multi-year, innovative and quality financing for humanitarian, development and peace cooperation	New financial, technical and material support for host country policies, services and systems that advance inclusion, pending a durable solution	Increased opportunities for resettlement and family reunification	Strengthened financial and political support for voluntary sustainable return and reintegration , including access to services
New support for climate action , adaptation and resilient human settlements	New job opportunities and access to financial products and services to advance economic inclusion	Access to additional safe complementary pathways , including labour mobility, education and others	Strengthened measures to address root causes, prevent conflict and build peace in countries of origin
<p>Enabling measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling protection and solutions environments for displaced and stateless persons and returnees, including access to asylum, documentation, justice, fundamental rights, national systems for i.a. health, social protection and education; law and policy reform; measures to prevent and reduce statelessness; and resilient human settlements. • Commitments by donors to sustain and strengthen engagement in humanitarian, development and peace efforts in displacement and stateless contexts which are linked to human security and stability, are key to achieving the sustainable development goals and can contribute to the global public good. • Expanded and strengthened partnerships with new and current donor States, international and regional financial institutions, the private sector, cities and local authorities, international and regional organizations, parliaments, refugees, civil society organizations (including local actors and refugee, stateless, youth, women-led and sport and cultural organizations), faith-based actors, media and academic experts. • Meaningful participation of displaced and stateless persons in the development and implementation of pledges towards the GCR objectives, taking into account age, gender and other forms of diversity • Data availability and quality to support effective action and investment in displacement and stateless contexts. 			

Priorities in the lead-up to the 2023 GRF include progressing on the implementation of pledges announced since 2019, as well as on the development of new pledges in line with the [key outcomes](#) expected for the GRF 2023 and the GCR objectives and principles. UNHCR facilitated, together with States and multi-stakeholders, including refugees, the identification of the expected key outcomes based on main priorities identified for pledging at the country, regional, and global levels within the framework of the 2021 High-Level Officials Meeting (HLOM) [recommendations](#). UNHCR will continue to provide regular global briefings to update all stakeholders on these priorities and provide support and guidance in the pledge development.

What constitutes a pledge?

Pledges towards the GCR objectives may include:

- **Financial,⁴ material, and technical assistance;**
- [Resettlement places and complementary pathways](#) for admission to third countries; and
- **Other actions** that States have elected to take at the national level in support of the Compact’s objectives, such as making inclusive policy commitments,⁵ joining or developing initiatives, or monitoring and research.

Each pledging entity will submit individual pledges through the [GRF pledges dashboard](#). These pledges may be either standalone or in support of one of the [multi-stakeholder pledges](#).

⁴ See for example the Global Compact on Refugees paragraph 32 on Funding and effective and efficient use of resources, including “efforts to expand the support base beyond traditional donors”.

⁵ See examples of [policy commitments announced by major host countries](#) and the [common United Nations pledge](#).

Building on lessons learned from the first GRF, a high-quality pledge is:

- ✓ **Additional**, providing new policy commitments, support, allocations of resources, or engagement to enhance burden and responsibility sharing. [Note that pledges implemented since 2019 demonstrating positive impact could be shared as either pledge updates on the [pledges and contributions dashboard](#) or as [good practices](#) on the GCR digital platform, and can be shared during the GRF.]
- ✓ **Quantifiable** and measurable, where possible, providing an implementation timeline, and if relevant, costs, beneficiary data, and details of support provided or needed for implementation of the pledge, to facilitate and demonstrate positive impact.
- ✓ **Needs-driven**, aligning the pledge with the [key recommendations](#) and the GCR principles and objectives and, where possible, matched (financial, material, and technical, or policy support for the implementation of policy commitments made by host countries).

A [pledge matching portal](#) to facilitate **matching of policy pledges made by host countries since 2019 with financial and material support** is available on the [GCR Digital Platform](#). UNHCR is available to facilitate discussions with Governments and other relevant stakeholders to secure matching in advance of the 2023 GRF.

When developing a pledge, where possible, stakeholders would:

- ✓ **Use the multi-stakeholder and partnership approach** set out in the GCR to enhance burden- and responsibility-sharing. Multi-stakeholder pledges involve multiple stakeholders, including refugees, that would leverage their complementary strengths to support the implementation of current or new [host country policy pledges](#) and common priorities at the country, regional, or global level, in line with the HLOM [key recommendations](#). A list of current multi-stakeholder pledges can be found [here](#). Each stakeholder contributing to a multi-stakeholder pledge will make an individual pledge submission through the GRF pledges [dashboard](#), indicating how they will specifically contribute to the pledge.
- ✓ **Consult with refugees and affected communities, and consider age, gender, and other diversity⁶ in the design, planning, and implementation of the pledge** to ensure effective responses that are appropriate, accessible, and inclusive.

How will new pledges be recorded?

An updated multi-language pledge submission form is available through the [pledges and contributions dashboard](#) to ensure that pledges are aligned with the key elements of a high-quality pledge outlined above. Where pledges do not fully align with these elements, UNHCR will follow up with pledging entities to consider adjustments and determine the next steps. New pledges may be submitted at any time leading-up to, during, and after the 2023 GRF. Pledging entities are encouraged to share information about the pledges they are considering or working towards during the global briefings on the GRF in 2023 to facilitate matching in advance of the GRF and build momentum.

⁶ Please consult the [AGD Tip sheet](#) for further guidance.

Learning

Sharing good practices

Good practices contribute to the objectives of the GCR and have the potential to be adapted, replicated, and broadened in scale. All stakeholders are invited to [share good practices](#) that translate the GCR into action at the local, national, regional and global levels. Through the sharing of good practices, stakeholders can learn from one another about what works well, what can be replicated in other situations, and what can be scaled up with further support. Sharing good practices can inspire others to develop innovative and impactful pledges and contributions that can be announced at the GRF.

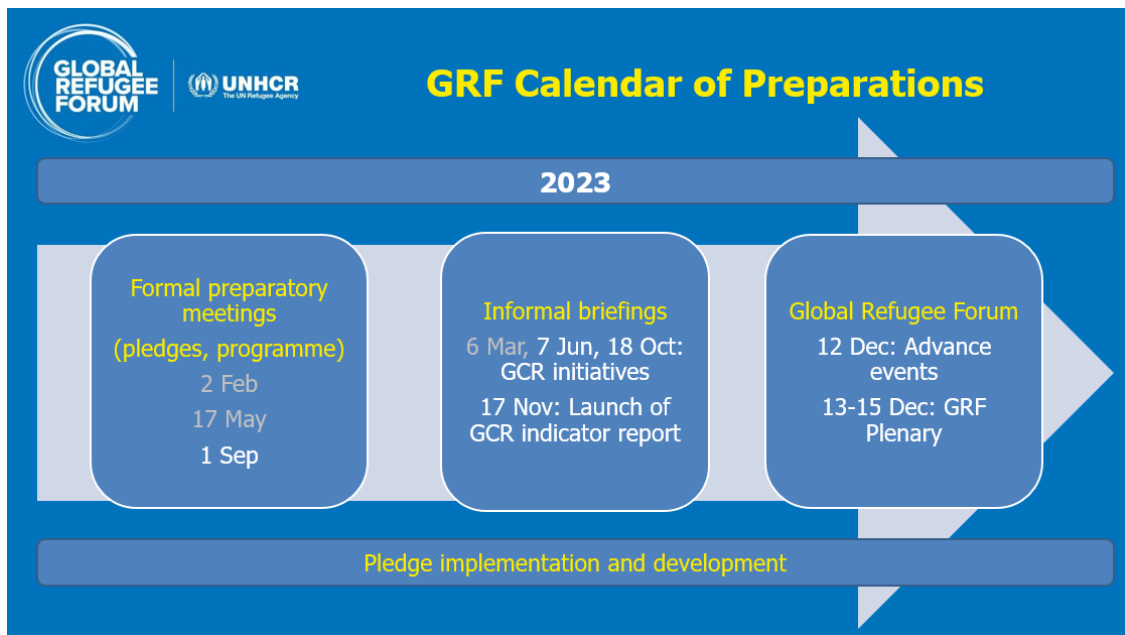
***Example:** The **Graduation Approach** is a good practice created by BRAC, which has proven to alleviate extreme poverty. For a period of 18 to 36 months, participants in this programme receive step-by-step financial and professional support. At the 2019 GRF, the Poverty Alleviation Coalition pledged to end extreme poverty for 160,000 households in 26 countries by using the Graduation Approach. To date, some 62,000 households in more than 19 countries have benefitted from this pledge. Further support is needed to scale up the use of the Graduation Approach in order to meet the stated goal by the GRF in 2023.*

To learn more about the criteria and how to share a good practice on the GCR Digital Platform, please visit the [GCR good practices webpage](#). Good practices may be shared at any time by completing the online form or completing and sending the template for submission, along with any attachments, to hqgcr@unhcr.org. In particular, good practices developed with or led by refugee-led organizations are encouraged.

After review by UNHCR, submissions meeting the criteria will be published in the good practice collection of the [GCR Digital Platform](#). Good practices may also be shared during briefings on the GCR and GRF preparations, through UNHCR communications channels, and at the GRF.

Stakeholders are encouraged to share their good practice submissions **as early as possible** in advance of the Global Refugee Forum to ensure they can inspire pledge and initiative development and are published in a timely manner. Any submissions received after 30 November 2023 may not be published until after the Forum.

Roadmap to the Global Refugee Forum



Who will be invited to participate in the GRF?

The United Nations Secretary-General, United Nations Member States and other stakeholder groups involved in the GCR as part of the multi-stakeholder and partnership approach will be invited to attend the 2023 GRF.⁷

All stakeholders and GCR initiatives are encouraged to involve refugees and refugee-led organizations in the design and development of pledges and initiatives, submit joint pledges with refugee-led organizations, and to include refugees as a part of their delegations.⁸ An independent delegation of refugee thematic experts and leaders will also be invited to the Global Refugee Forum in alignment with the call for expressions of interest launched in November 2022 and principles of transparency and diversity of participation.

How will the GRF be organized?

In 2023, UNHCR is convening a series of three formal preparatory meetings and informal quarterly briefings to consult and update on the GRF preparations and GCR implementation.

A [draft programme](#) and key considerations have been developed in consultation with Governments and other stakeholders, including the Advisory Board of Organizations Led by Forcibly Displaced and Stateless Persons and the NGO Reference Group. In addition to the plenary sessions, UNHCR is ensuring further space for multi-stakeholder interventions and dialogue, showcasing high quality pledges, including matched pledges, and good practices through side events, linked events, spotlight sessions, exhibits, and other modalities which speak to the key outcomes.

⁷ See GCR, sect. 3.2, para. 3, for a list of stakeholder groups.

⁸ UNHCR, [8 ways displaced and stateless persons can actively engage in the next Global Refugee Forum](#), GCR Digital Platform

ANNEX: Summary of Key Recommendations from the 2021 High-Level Officials Meeting

Twenty key recommendations for the future were identified as a part of the stocktaking in the lead-up to and during the High-Level Officials Meeting (HLOM). Following is a summary of the recommendations and areas for action. It reflects inputs by States and other stakeholders during the regional, stakeholder, and thematic stocktaking events and processes, virtual preparatory roundtables, side and linked events, spotlight sessions, panels, the HLOM plenary discussion, and the GCR Indicator Report. For more detailed information in relation to these recommendations and action points, please [see the Outcome Document for the HLOM](#).

Cross-cutting recommendations

Recommendation 1: Implement current GRF pledges and develop new ones to address identified gaps and needs.

- Concretise broad pledges that remain in progress.
- Adapt and innovate pledges where necessary to address changing needs.
- Match and align financial, material, and technical pledges with host country policy pledges.
- Report on progress made towards [pledge implementation](#) .
- Ensure that new pledges are needs-driven, quantifiable, additional, sustainable, inclusive, AGD-sensitive, and aligned with the GCR indicators.

Recommendation 2: Enhance access to international protection.

- Provide asylum and access to territory, which are key to responsibility sharing.
- Develop refugee and asylum laws, policies and systems that are in line with international standards.
- Provide expertise and resources to develop or strengthen national asylum systems.
- Ensure proper documentation for refugees, asylum-seekers, and returnees through dialogue and collaboration between countries of origin and countries of asylum.
- Strengthen and extend national child protection systems to include refugees.

Recommendation 3: Reduce statelessness.

- Develop and strengthen systems for the identification and protection of stateless persons.
- Provide financial support for statelessness-related programming.
- Increase efforts to reach the objective of the *#IBelong* Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024.
- Broaden the base of support to accelerate progress in addressing statelessness.
- Mainstream and integrate priorities to protect stateless people and prevent statelessness in the GCR process.
- Develop flexible new approaches and the use of technology by national Governments and municipalities to ensure access to birth registration.

Recommendation 4: Make better use of combined humanitarian, development, and peace capacities to achieve the GCR objectives.

- Enhance cooperation and coordination between political, humanitarian, development, and peace actors.
- Strengthen coordination of humanitarian assistance, development, and peacebuilding efforts and between local communities and Governments.
- Improve reporting and analysis across engaged development actors.
- Ensure more predictable collaboration between humanitarian, development, and peace actors to bring integrated approaches to solutions.

Recommendation 5: Build attention to climate change into how we do business.

- Reframe our narrative to recognise and address climate change as a risk multiplier.
- Innovate to develop responses that enhance the resilience of refugees and their hosts to climate change.
- Provide funding for environmental protection, habitat restoration, land rehabilitation, and agroforestry.
- Invest in sustainable energy in refugee-hosting areas to promote access to electricity and connectivity.
- Engage displaced persons in community-led disaster prevention and preparedness and in identifying, designing, and supporting solutions.

Recommendation 6: Facilitate more systematic, inclusive, and meaningful refugee participation.

- Include refugees in GCR follow-up at all levels (local, regional, and global).
- Provide direct, flexible funding for refugee-led organisations (RLOs).
- Address barriers to refugee engagement, including through equal partnership approaches.
- Apply approaches to the reception and treatment of refugees that foster amicable and mutually beneficial relationships with host communities.
- Involve refugees in efforts to increase educational pathways and employment opportunities, freedom of movement, and access to documentation.
- Consider the specific needs, priorities, and capacities of different members of refugee populations through an age, gender, diversity approach to make interventions more effective.

Recommendation 7: Enhance the data available to support effective action and investment in refugee situations.

- Systematise national and international data collection on refugees.
- Strengthen and systematize tracking of refugee financing by all stakeholders.
- Continue and extend efforts to build the evidence base on financing for refugee situations, self-reliance of refugees and host communities, and solutions.
- Enhance synergies between modern and traditional data instruments to establish robust tracking mechanisms.
- Strengthen capacities and efforts towards data collection and analysis disaggregated by age, gender, and diversity.
- Facilitate collaboration between refugees and host communities, national statistical offices, civil society organisations, and UN partners in data collection efforts.

- Facilitate access of local authorities to social and economic data on the refugees they host.
- Facilitate participation of refugees in all relevant processes of data collection, analysis, and dissemination.
- Engage the private sector in generating evidence on economic inclusion of refugees.

Recommendation 8: Strengthen private sector engagement in support of GCR objectives.

- Engage across the spectrum of philanthropy, corporate social responsibility, and shared value creation.
- Address policy, legal, and regulatory hurdles that constrain market-based private sector engagement in refugee-hosting areas.
- Further develop and replicate innovative financing schemes such as social impact bonds, bank guarantees, and entrepreneurial mechanisms.
- Strengthen the key enablers for piloting and scaling of promising initiatives with the private sector.
- Scale up cash-based interventions to catalyse private sector participation.
- Develop programmes and initiatives that include refugees and host communities as integral parts of their core businesses and value chains.
- Enhance cooperation between the private sector and humanitarian actors to advance refugee rights, self-reliance, inclusion, capacities, and third-country solutions.
- Develop socio-economic integration mechanisms that respond to local needs and create trust between the private sector and humanitarian actors.

GCR objective 1: Ease pressures on host countries

Recommendation 9: Intensify efforts towards more equitable burden and responsibility sharing.

- Broaden the base of support beyond the main refugee-hosting countries, donors, and institutions.
- Invest diplomatic and political capital to operationalise responsibility sharing across all refugee situations.
- Strengthen investment, cooperation, and political engagement through the Support Platforms.

Recommendation 10: Increase development financing in support of refugee situations.

- Expand cooperation with bilateral development actors and multilateral development banks.
- Ensure diversified and flexible financial instruments for short-term humanitarian and longer-term development efforts.
- Include refugees in national datasets, plans, and budgets.
- Identify and cost the extensions and improvements to national service delivery systems.
- Ensure that refugee-hosting localities are able to access financial support intended for them.
- Upscale financial and technical support for local authorities to include refugees, migrants, and internally displaced persons in the provision of their services.

Recommendation 11: Provide more flexible, predictable, and multi-year funding for refugee responses.

- Scale up flexible, predictable, and multi-year development funding.

- Increase sustained and flexible financial support for organisations led by youth, women, refugees, and local actors.

GCR objective 2: Enhance refugee self-reliance

Recommendation 12: Increase social inclusion for refugees.

- Support refugee and host community youth to develop capacities and skills and maintain physical and emotional well-being.
- Scale up innovative approaches and strengthened partnerships to enhance socio-economic inclusion.
- Invest in capacitating local authorities and local civil society to support refugee integration, inclusion, and local solutions.
- Scale up initiatives that tackle racism and xenophobia.
- Realise the potential of sport to promote inclusion and protection.
- Engage and support universities to promote refugee self-reliance.
- Draw on local-level knowledge and expertise in refugee-hosting areas to inform national development plans.
- Ensure an age, gender, diversity (AGD) approach to refugee inclusion.

Recommendation 13: Increase economic inclusion and access to livelihoods.

- Provide refugees the legal right to employment.
- Increase job and livelihood opportunities (including access to land) to facilitate socio-economic inclusion.
- Provide targeted investments for inclusive national policies and approaches to jobs and livelihoods.
- Ensure that age, gender, diversity, and disability are focus areas for improvement.
- Enhance collaboration with local institutions that provide tailored and contextualised livelihoods programming.
- Take steps towards facilitating better access to services for economic inclusion
- Ensure that persons of concern are systematically included in all forms of social protection on par with nationals.
- Address barriers to accessing livelihoods and economic inclusion beyond labour law and economic activity.
- Build the evidence base to inform advocacy and support for economic inclusion.

Recommendation 14: Expand access to quality primary, secondary, and higher education.

- Invest in all stages of the education cycle.
- Explore and implement innovative approaches to learning, such as digitalisation and connected classrooms.
- Encourage meaningful participation and inclusion of refugees in education in the design, implementation, and review of education interventions.
- Conduct 'education equity audits' to inform Governments' pandemic recovery planning and address inequities faced by refugee students and educators.

Recommendation 15: Provide refugees with healthcare through strengthened national systems.

- Include refugees in national health systems and policies.
- Systematically integrate mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in humanitarian and development planning.
- Encourage a more refugee-inclusive response to health emergencies, including refugee access to testing, treatment, and vaccinations for COVID-19.
- Take steps to enable refugees to join the regular health workforce.
- Expand adaptations made to health services, such as switching to tele-medicine and remote case management.

GCR objective 3: Expand access to third-country solutions

Recommendation 16: Increase the volume of resettlement opportunities for refugees.

- Provide multi-year commitments and expansion of existing programmes for resettlement and family reunification.
- Broaden the base of countries providing resettlement opportunities.
- Ensure that complementary pathways remain additional to resettlement and family reunification.
- Expand multi-sectoral partnerships to facilitate, promote and advocate for third-country solutions.
- Encourage greater community sponsorship.

Recommendation 17: Build additional complementary pathways to third-country solutions.

- Expand education pathways in third countries.
- Provide pathways for displaced and host-community scholars to work in academia.
- Develop labour pathways through policy changes and private sector engagement.
- Contribute financial or in-kind support for actors who are developing admission pathways.
- Review and adjust legislation and policies that continue to pose barriers to refugees.
- Develop initiatives to reduce or cover the costs often incurred by refugees.
- Provide pro bono legal representation for refugees who face legal obstacles.
- Give greater priority to family reunification.
- Simplify the application process and provide additional assistance to support refugees to use it.
- Remove barriers to labour and education pathways.

GCR objective 4: Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity

Recommendation 18: Mobilise more resources in support of voluntary return.

- Provide increased financing for Governments and other stakeholders to support and enable voluntary return.

- Use the 2023 GRF pledging process to demonstrate and mobilise increased commitments of resources in support of voluntary return.

Recommendation 19: Strengthen the planning and implementation of voluntary return.

- Ensure return planning is based on protection standards and principles.
- Plan and secure resources for reintegration measures early on.
- Ensure that returning refugees can safely access justice systems and legal support.
- Underpin voluntary return and reintegration with investments in national capacities and systems.
- Direct development investments into strengthening local economies and service provision systems.
- Apply programmes and approaches that enhance social cohesion, including area-based investments.

Recommendation 20: Improve cooperation to address root causes and build peace in countries of origin.

- Mobilise increased development and peace capacities to address root causes in countries of origin.
 - Increase early investment in peacebuilding and conflict prevention.
 - Strengthen the cooperation between political, humanitarian, development, peace, and financing actors.
 - Ensure ongoing dialogue with communities to inform policy, planning, and programming.
 - Strengthen and support the peacebuilding aspect of responses to refugee and returnee situations.
-