



Global Refugee Forum
Wednesday 18 December 2019

Statement of Belgium

(check against delivery)

Belgium congratulates UNHCR with the organization of the first Global Refugee Forum, one year after the approval of the Global Compact on Refugees. Belgium fully supports the aim to bring about more sustainable solutions for refugees and host communities, and to share the burden.

In a world where rights go unprotected, individuals and groups with specific needs are often the ones who lose the most. Sexual and gender-based violence in emergencies is an important protection concern for refugees and IDPs and Belgium will mainstream this protection objective through all our different funding channels.

At a time of record humanitarian and protection needs, Belgium, in line with its Grand Bargain commitments, has worked on ensuring flexible and predictable funding. Belgium allocated more than 50% of its humanitarian budget through flexible funding in 2018 and intends to reach 60% by 2020.

Since 2016, at least 45% of Belgian humanitarian aid has directly and indirectly reached refugee populations and their host communities. Belgium commits to keeping this financial support equal to or above the current level.

Belgium has also been active in resettlement. Since 2013 Belgium has resettled 3.284 refugees from 9 different nationalities.

We will continue this program since it contributes to the expansion of third country solutions for refugees. For 2020 Belgium pledges to resettle around 1.000 refugees, thereby focusing on groups prioritized by UNHCR, including refugees evacuated from Libya through the Emergency Transit Mechanism.

The need to prevent, prepare for and respond to crises, has pushed Belgium to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus. One example of such a project will be presented in the Speakers' corner at this Forum: since June 2016, the Belgian development agency – Enabel – has been implementing a program in Uganda aimed at strengthening the skills of youth, women and girls from the refugees and host communities that are needed to find or to create a job in the settlement economy or in view of entering the economy upon return to the home country. Thanks to this project, more than 2,500 young people, of which over 60% are refugees and over 50% are girls and women, have acquired relevant skills to sustain their livelihoods and were able to find or create jobs. We will further develop such nexus projects in the future.

We are eager to hear more about other good practices.

Thank you.