



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency



## SUMMARY

# HIGH COMMISSIONER'S DIALOGUE ON PROTECTION CHALLENGES: PROTECTION AND RESILIENCE DURING PANDEMICS

VIRTUAL SESSION ON PREPARING FOR PROTECTION AND SOLUTIONS  
IN THE FUTURE

9 DECEMBER 2020, 14:00 - 16:00 (CET)

# Preparing for protection and solutions in the future

## SESSION DESCRIPTION

Chaired by the High Commissioner, the closing session of the 2020 Dialogue considered how the international community can better ensure protection and solutions in future global emergencies.

It built upon the Global Compact on Refugees and best practices that have since emerged, as well as the lessons learned, recommendations, and refugee voices from the four previous virtual sessions and the earlier 2020 annual NGO consultations.

The session was divided into two parts. **Part one** included opening remarks by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, followed by a virtual fast-paced “fishbowl” moderated by Ms. Dana Hughes and a group of States and other stakeholders. In this format, the moderator asked each member of the fishbowl one targeted question asking for a recommendation for the future. The recommendations emerging from the fishbowl addressed the topics emerging from the previous virtual sessions on protection, inclusion, and preparedness for climate action. After the fishbowl, a short video was shown, highlighting the youth winners of the [Model United Nations \(MUN\) Refugee Challenge](#) and their model recommendations for resolutions on issues relevant to the response to the pandemic.

**Part two** included a conversation moderated by Ms. Anushay Hossain, between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi; the European Commissioner for International Partnerships, Ms. Jutta Urpilainen; and the United Nations Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, reflecting on the key themes emerging from Dialogue and how we can prepare for protection and solutions in the future. The conversation was followed by closing remarks from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

## Chair



**Mr. Filippo Grandi**

*United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
(Opening remarks)*

Mr. Filippo Grandi became the 11th United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on 1 January 2016. He was elected by the UN General Assembly to serve a five-year term, until 31 December 2020. He was born in Milan in 1957 and has been engaged in refugee and humanitarian work for more than 30 years. From 2010 to 2014, he served as Commissioner-General of UNRWA, the UN Agency for Palestine refugees, having previously been its Deputy Commissioner-General since 2005. He also served as Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Afghanistan and has worked with NGOs and UNHCR in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and at Geneva headquarters. Mr. Grandi holds a degree in modern history from the State University in Milan, a BA in Philosophy from the Gregorian University in Rome, and an honorary doctorate from the University of Coventry.

## Part 1

### Moderator



**Ms. Dana Hughes**

*UNHCR Senior Regional  
Communications Officer | Nairobi, Kenya*

Prior to joining UNHCR, Ms. Dana Hughes was an award-winning journalist for the U.S. broadcast network ABC News for a decade, specializing in social justice and investigative journalism. She spent nearly five years in Kenya as ABC's Sub-Saharan Africa reporter and was also based in Washington D.C., where she covered U.S. foreign affairs and national security for the network.



## Speakers



**Ms. Maha Al Barjas**  
*General Secretary, Kuwait Red Crescent Society | Kuwait*

Ms. Maha Al Barjas, who holds a Bachelor of Political Science from Kuwait University, has been Secretary General of Kuwait Red Crescent since 2016. She started her career as a Political Researcher at the Diwan of HH the Crown Prince and Prime Minister and then moved to Controllership of the Secretariat of the Department of Public Administration and assumed the position of Director of the Coordination and Follow-up Department at the Crown Prince's Court in 2003. She is known for her volunteer work in many organizations since her childhood. Ms. Al Barjas, who is a strong believer in human rights, gender equality, and humanitarian causes, is a hands-on practitioner and rarely misses a relief mission. She was awarded the Arab Woman Award in 2013 for her humanitarian efforts.



**Mr. Michel Botzung**  
*Manager Fragile and Conflict Situations in Africa, International Finance Corporation (IFC)*

Mr. Michel Botzung joined the IFC 17 years ago and has since held several field positions in North Africa, the Middle East, India, and currently in Africa (Nairobi). Throughout his career at the IFC, Michel has focused on developing tailored (and often innovative) advisory proposals to help the IFC's clients deepen their relationships with the local economy, improve their governance, and increase their compliance with the IFC's Business Standards. In his current position, as FCS (Fragile and Conflict Situations) Manager for Africa, Mr. Botzung helps the IFC growing its business in these challenging markets. His team, mostly based in the field, provides market intelligence, allocates funding, and produces and shares operational knowledge with internal and external stakeholders. Mr. Botzung has been leading the IFC's engagement in the forced displacement space in Africa, notably in Kenya around the Kakuma area.

**Ms. Anh Thu Duong**  
*Senior Policy Advisor, Geneva Cities Hub | Geneva, Switzerland*



**H.E. Ambassador Ms. Maria Nazareth Farani Azvêdo**

*Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations Office at Geneva | Brazil*

A career diplomat since 1982, H.E. Ambassador Ms. Maria Nazareth Farani Azvêdo has experience promoting Brazil's interests in multiple UN institutions. She is responsible for Brazil's relations with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. She was the chairperson of the Executive Board of WHO and also the Governing Body of the International Labor Organization. She is the chairperson of the Executive Committee of UNHCR. Ambassador Farani Azvêdo has worked in the areas of trade promotion, regional and multilateral economic relations, political affairs, and social development, and in numerous instances she was the first woman to perform these roles for the Brazilian Government.



**Ms. Bahati Ernestine Hategekimana**  
*Youth Activities Coordinator, UNHCR Kenya | Kenya*

Ms. Bahati Ernestine Hategekimana is a 26-year-old Rwandan refugee living in Kenya. She recently graduated from Moi University (Eldoret-Kenya) with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. While doing her internship early this year, she had the honour to be among the frontline health workers when COVID-19 hit Kenya. She notes that this was a great learning experience for her as well as an opportunity to showcase refugee contributions to the local communities. She is currently serving as a UNV at UNHCR, Nairobi, as the Youth Activities Focal Point. She is passionate about youth matters, peacebuilding, and building the capacity of the youth to be contributing members of society. She is also an advocate for girl child/women empowerment and the vulnerable in society. Her dream is to grow her career in the humanitarian field, supporting and showing kindness to those in need. She also hopes to use her academic training to nurse the wounded with both seen and unseen scars.

**Mr. Malangoni Ibrahim**

*Director General of Civil Status and Refugees, Ministry of Interior, Public Security, Decentralisation and Customary and Religious Affairs, Republic of Niger | Niger*



**Ms. Veneranda Ingabire**  
*Coordinator Single Project Implementation Unit of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugees of the Republic of Rwanda | Rwanda*

Ms. Veneranda Ingabire has been serving as the Head of the MINEMA SPIU for the Government of Rwanda since 2016. She holds a Master of Science in Economics with 12 years of experience in project management. She ensures overall coordination of Ministry's projects and leads the process of project proposal initiation. She is in charge of refugee management and coordination activities in the Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA).



**Ms. Kareen Jabre**  
*Director, Division of Programs, Inter-Parliamentary Union*

Ms. Kareen Jabre is the Director of the Division of Programmes at the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). She is responsible for directing the organisation's various programmes of support and policy guidance to parliaments. These include standard-setting work for democratic parliaments, strengthening parliaments' institutional capacities in emerging democracies and post-conflict societies, and enhancing their ability to embody and advance gender equality, empower youth, promote sustainable development and health, and tackle climate change.

Previously, and for 13 years, she managed the Gender Partnership Programme of the organisation. She is also currently in charge at the IPU of work on international humanitarian law and refugee protection. Before working for the IPU, Ms. Jabre worked at UNESCO in its women and gender equality coordinating unit. She holds Masters degrees in political science and in English.



**Professor Dr. Azza Karam**  
*Secretary General Religions for Peace*

Prof. Dr. Azza Karam serves as the Secretary General of Religions for Peace – the largest multireligious leadership platform with 92 national and 6 regional Interreligious Councils. She also holds a Professorship of Religion and Development at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, where she is a citizen. Professor Karam served as a Senior Advisor

on Culture at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); Coordinator/Chair of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Development (UN IATF-R&D); and founder of the Multi-Faith Advisory Council of the UN IATF-R&D.

In these capacities, she coordinated engagement with members of a Global Interfaith Network for Population and Development with over 600 faith-based organizations from all regions of the world, representing all religions and interreligious affiliations. She was the Lead Facilitator for the United Nations' Strategic Learning Exchanges on Religion, Development, and Diplomacy, building on a legacy of serving as a trainer and facilitator of intercultural leadership and management in the Arab region as well as Europe and Central Asia. Professor Karam has served in different positions in the United Nations since 2004, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations since the early 1990s, such as International IDEA, OSCE, and Religions for Peace. Simultaneously, she lectured at various academic institutions in Europe, North America (including the United States Military Academy/West Point), Africa, and the Middle East. Her Ph.D. in 1996 focused on Political Islam and became her first book in Arabic (her mother tongue) and in English. She has since published widely and in several languages, on international political dynamics, including democratization, human rights, peace and security, gender, religious engagement, and sustainable development. She was born in Egypt and now lives in the United States.



**Ms. Hilda Kausiwa**  
*Administration and Operations Manager,  
Refugees Department of the Ministry of  
Home Affairs and Internal Security,  
Republic of Malawi | Malawi*

Ms. Hilda Alinafe Katema Kausiwa is the Administrative and Operations Manager in the Department for Refugees and the CRRF (Comprehensive Refugee Responses Framework) Focal Point for Malawi. She holds an MBA and has 14 years of experience in refugee management in Malawi.



**Ms. Rachel Levitan**  
*Vice President, International Programs, HIAS*

Working closely with partners in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration and at the UN Refugee Agency, Ms. Rachel Levitan helps drive the agency's international efforts to increase protection for particularly vulnerable refugees, including survivors of torture and gender-based violence, persons with disabilities, older refugees, and sexual minorities. She also leads efforts to maximize the impact of HIAS' international programmes in the fields of legal aid, resettlement, livelihoods, and psychosocial assistance. Prior to working



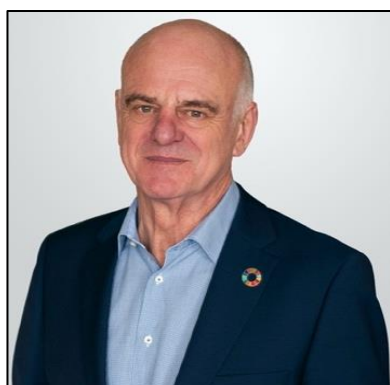
with HIAS, Ms. Levitan co-founded and directed Turkey's first legal clinic for refugees. Before that, she litigated race and gender-based discrimination claims in US federal and state courts in New York City. Ms. Levitan has published numerous journal articles and reports on international refugee protection issues. She received her Bachelor's degree from McGill University and an LL.B. from the University of British Columbia, Faculty of Law.



**H.E. Ambassador Mr. Rui Macieira**

*Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations Office at Geneva | Portugal*

H.E. Ambassador Mr. Rui Macieira is the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva. Prior to his appointment to Geneva, Ambassador Macieira was the Ambassador of Portugal to Denmark and Lithuania from 2014 to 2018. He served as Director General for Foreign Policy from 2012 to 2014; Director General for European Affairs from 2011 to 2012; Deputy Director General for Foreign Policy from 2008 to 2011; and Deputy Director General for European Affairs from 2006 to 2008. He was the Deputy Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations in New York from 2002 to 2006. Other posts he has held since joining the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in March 1984 include Deputy Diplomatic Adviser to the Prime Minister from 1995 to 1997; Deputy Head of Mission at the Portuguese Embassy in Rabat in 1995; and First Secretary at the Portuguese Embassy in Paris from 1990 to 1995. Ambassador Macieira has a degree in Economics from the Portuguese Catholic University in Lisbon (1982) and was born in 1960 in Lisbon, Portugal.



**Dr. David Nabarro**

*Special Envoy of the Director General on COVID-19, World Health Organization*

Dr. David Nabarro is Chair of Global Health and Co-Director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation at the Imperial College London. He supports systems leadership for sustainable development through his Switzerland-based social enterprise 4SD. Since March 2020, he has been appointed Special Envoy on COVID-19 for the WHO Director General. He secured his medical qualification in 1974 and has worked in over 50 countries – in communities and hospitals, governments, civil society, universities, and United Nations (UN) programmes.

Dr. Nabarro worked for the British government in the 1990s as Head of Health and Population and as Director for Human Development in the UK Department for International



Development. From 1999 to 2017, he held leadership roles in the UN system (starting with the World Health Organization and finishing in the office of the UN Secretary-General). He focused on disease outbreaks and health systems, food insecurity, nutrition, and then climate change and sustainable development. In October 2018, he received the World Food Prize, together with Lawrence Haddad, for building action coalitions for better action on nutrition across the Sustainable Development Goals.



**Mr. Georges O. Ortha II**  
*Chief State Counsel, Department of Justice,  
Republic of the Philippines | Philippines*

Atty. Georges O. Ortha II joined the government service in September 2016 when he was appointed Assistant Secretary in the Department of Justice (DOJ), a post he held until he was appointed Chief State Counsel on June 10, 2020.

Aside from his work as Chief State Counsel, he also sits as the representative of the DOJ Secretary on the governing boards of the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines, Manila International Airport Authority, and Mactan Cebu International Airport Authority. Prior to his appointment in the DOJ, Atty. Ortha was a Partner at Feria Tantoco Daos, a law firm founded in 1924. Atty. Ortha is married to Tanya, and they have three children: Gian, Elian, and Lana.



**Mr. Andrés Alfonso Ramírez Silva**  
*General Coordinator of the Mexican  
Commission for Aid to Refugees (COMAR) |  
Mexico*

Mr. Andrés Alfonso Ramírez Silva holds an economics degree from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and a Master's degree in Rural Sociology from the Autonomous University of Chapingo. He was a professor in the Economics School at the Autonomous University of Coahuila, the UNAM, and the Autonomous University of Chapingo for more than 7 years where he was also a social science researcher and Director of the Rural Sociology Department from 1982 to 1985.

Mr. Ramírez worked as an international staff member in several positions with UNHCR from 1987 to 2015. He was part of the UNHCR emergency team in Ngara, Tanzania during the Great Lakes region emergency, Representative in Brazil and Costa Rica, and Deputy Representative in Afghanistan. After his retirement, he was invited to serve as Regional Representative in Panama in March 2016. Mr. Ramírez has been appointed by the current

Government of Mexico as the General Coordinator of the Mexican Commission for Refugees. In this position, he was in charge of the MIRPS' first Presidency Pro-Tempore throughout 2019. Mr. Ramírez is author of several publications related to social sciences and refugees. He is fluent in Portuguese and English, and Spanish his mother tongue.



**Mr. Gilberto Marcos Antonio Rodriguez**  
*Professor, Center for Engineering, Modelling and applied social sciences, Federal University of ABC | Brazil*

Professor Gilberto M.A. Rodrigues is a Member of the Sergio Vieira de Mello Academic Chair (UNHCR) and Researcher at the Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq). He was a visiting researcher at the Universität Duisburg-Essen, in Germany (2019-2020); at the Center for Latin American and Latino Studies (CLALS), American University, Washington, DC (2017); and at the Law School, University of Notre Dame, USA (Fulbright, 2010).

Mr. Rodriguez is an Advisory board member of ADUS (NGO – Integration of Refugees) and member of the Red Latinoamericana de Derecho e Integración de Refugiados (RELADIR) and Red de Apoyo Legal para los Refugiados de las Americas (RALRA). He holds a Ph.D. in Social Sciences (PUC, São Paulo), a Master's degree in International Relations (UPEACE, Costa Rica), and an LLB (PUC, São Paulo).



**Ms. Yasmine Sherif**  
*Director, Education Cannot Wait*

Ms. Yasmine Sherif is the Director of Education Cannot Wait (ECW) – a global fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises established by the World Humanitarian Summit. A lawyer specialized in International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law (LL.M), she has 30 years of experience with the United Nations (UNHCR, UNDP, OCHA) and international NGOs, starting her international career in 1988. Ms. Sherif has served in some of the most crisis-affected countries and regions around the world, including Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, and across the Middle East, including Jordan (the Syria crisis) and the occupied Palestinian territory, as well as in New York and Geneva. Her expertise spans the humanitarian, development, human rights, gender, and peacekeeping spectrum. Ms. Sherif has also worked as an Adjunct Professor responsible for the Masters Programme on the United Nations, humanitarian assistance, and human rights at Long Island University (LIU), and has published on international humanitarian and development issues, as well as

international law. She is the author of the book, *The Case for Humanity: An Extraordinary Session*, which was launched at the United Nations in New York in 2015, and a Champion for 'No Lost Generation'. In 2017, she received the annual award "Sweden's UN Friend of the Year."



**Ms. Hafsar Tameesuddin**  
*Deputy Chair of the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network*

Ms. Tameesuddin is a Rohingya refugee who was recently resettled to New Zealand from Malaysia. During her time living as a refugee in Malaysia, she worked with ICMC in Kuala Lumpur. She was first employed in 2012 as a community trainer on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and gender equality issues and then in 2017 as a case manager for the Rohingya community. She has extensive knowledge of the range of SGBV issues faced by refugee women in Malaysia as well as of their experiences prior to arrival and is a passionate advocate for improved prevention and response measures to SGBV. She has been actively engaged in advocacy related to issues of SGBV, child marriage, and statelessness for over seven years. Since her resettlement to New Zealand only 18 months ago, she had already accepted numerous invitations to present at national and international conferences on issues of gender and statelessness. She was selected to represent the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network's Women, Gender, and Diversity working group at the UNHCR/NGO Consultations and the Gender Audit team for the Global Refugee Forum in 2019. She is committed to advocacy on all issues facing refugee women and girls in all their diversities, including SGBV, statelessness, and the particular risks faced by the LGBTIQ refugee communities. Her recent funded international speaking engagements include the World Conference on Statelessness in The Hague from 24-26 June 2019, the Voices of Statelessness Workshop held on 18 October at Melbourne University, and the International Rohingya Youth Conference to be held in London in November 2019. She is currently studying Social Work at Auckland University and is the Deputy Chair of the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network's (APRRN) Australia, New Zealand, Pacific Working Group (ANZWPG), APRRN.



**Ms. Raquel Vargas Jaubert**  
*Director General of Migration and Aliens | Costa Rica*

In May 2018, Mrs. Vargas Jaubert was appointed General Director of the Costa Rica's Migration Authority. In that capacity, she leads the National Coalition against Illicit Smuggling and Trafficking In persons (CONATT) and the Secretariat of the National Migration Council and is an active member of the Central American Commission of Migration

Directors (OCAM). Mrs. Vargas Jaubert has accumulated over 12 years of experience at the Migration Authority working in different positions such as Chief of the Legal Department and Chief of the Visa Department, amongst other positions.



**HE. Ambassador Mr. Michael Freiherr von Ungern-Sternberg**

*Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations Office at Geneva | Germany*

Since September 2018, H.E. Mr. Michael Freiherr von Ungern-Sternberg has been serving as Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations Office at Geneva. He was born on 2 July 1955, is married, and has three children. He first joined the German Foreign Office in 1982 and has since served in European Community Affairs of the Federal Foreign Office in Bonn; as Second Secretary at the German Embassy in Rabat, Morocco; Deputy Consul General in Leningrad/St. Petersburg, Soviet Union/Russia; and Counsellor at the Permanent Mission to the European Union, Brussels; in EU-Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and German Parliament; and as Head of Division for EU Enlargement in the Federal Foreign Office, Bonn/Berlin; Head of the Political Section of the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations, New York; Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, New York; Ambassador and Deputy Director General for the United Nations in the Federal Foreign Office, Berlin; Ambassador and Director General for the United Nations Federal Foreign Office, Berlin; Ambassador at the German Embassy in Tehran, Iran; and Ambassador at German Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia.



## Part 2

### Moderator



**Ms. Anushay Hossain**

*Correspondent, Daily Ittefaq* | Washington DC, United States

**Ms. Anushay Hossain** is a journalist and political analyst whose work is featured on CNN, MSNBC, PBS, and more. Her writings on politics, gender, race, and immigration are published in Forbes, CNN, The Daily Beast, and Medium.

She is also the host of the [Spilling Chai](#) podcast.

### Speakers



**Mr. Filippo Grandi**

*United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*

Mr. Filippo Grandi became the 11th United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on 1 January 2016. He was elected by the UN General Assembly to serve a five-year term, until 31 December 2020. He was born in Milan in 1957 and has been engaged in refugee and humanitarian work for more than 30 years. From 2010 to 2014, he served as Commissioner-General of UNRWA, the UN Agency for Palestine refugees, having previously been its Deputy Commissioner-General since 2005. He also served as Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Afghanistan and has worked with NGOs and UNHCR in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and at Geneva headquarters. Mr. Grandi holds a degree in modern history from the State University in Milan, a BA in Philosophy from the Gregorian University in Rome, and an honorary doctorate from the University of Coventry.



**Ms. Jutta Urpilainen**  
*Commissioner for International Partnerships,  
European Commission*

As European Commissioner for International Partnerships, Ms. Jutta Urpilainen oversees the European Commission's work on international cooperation and sustainable development. Before joining the Commission, Ms Urpilainen served as a Member of the Finnish Parliament from 2003 to 2019. In 2008, she became the first woman leader of the Social Democratic Party of Finland. From 2011 to 2014, she served as Finland's Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister. During that time, she became closely involved in development issues, joining the Development Committee of the World Bank Group and IMF and chairing the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development. She served as the Foreign Minister's Special Representative on Mediation (2017-19) and chaired the Finnish National Commission for UNESCO (2015-18).



**Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake**  
*United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on  
Youth*

Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake was appointed as the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth in June 2017 at the age of 26. She is the youngest senior official in the UN and the first woman to hold this position. In this role, she works to expand the UN's youth engagement and advocacy efforts across all four pillars of the organization's work — sustainable development, human rights, peace and security, and humanitarian action — and serves as a representative of and advisor to the Secretary-General. In 2019, Ms. Wickramanayake was recognized by *Time Magazine* as one of the "Time 100 Next: Rising stars shaping the future", and in 2020, she was recognized by *Forbes* magazine as part of its "30 under 30" list. Originally from Sri Lanka, Ms. Wickramanayake has worked extensively on youth development and participation, including playing a key role in transforming the youth development sector in her home country. Prior to taking up her post, she was instrumental in creating the movement for civic and political engagement of young people, especially young women, in Sri Lanka through the "Hashtag Generation" movement. Previously, she advocated for global youth development on an international level, including as the first ever Sri Lankan Youth Delegate to the United Nations and as the youth lead negotiator and member of the International Youth Task Force of the World Conference on Youth 2014 where she played a critical role in mainstreaming youth in the Post-2015 Process and in the establishment of World Youth Skills Day.

## SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

This session was attended by nearly 750 participants from 90 countries.

### Key issues

**Mr. Filippo Grandi**, *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, opened the session, noting that there is a great need for a focus on protection in the response to the pandemic as well as to any future global emergency. He appealed that States put in place measures that are temporary and not discriminatory and emphasized that looking at all aspects of the impact of the pandemic is important: immediate health, protection, poverty, education, and mental health. He also noted that inclusion and ensuring self-reliance are essential, especially for refugees, displaced, and the communities that host them. In addition, as the world is responding to a global crisis, he reminded us that it is important not to forget the other crisis of the global climate emergency, noting there is hope that the pandemic will be over soon, hope that the vaccines will work, but the impact of this crisis will remain.

### Part one: Good practices and recommendations for the future

**Ms. Andrés Alfonso Ramírez Silva**, *General Coordinator of the Mexican Commission for Aid to Refugees (COMAR), Mexico*, detailed how to ensure that asylum procedures remain operational during a pandemic or other emergency. First, the Health Council in Mexico established extraordinary measures to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. The right to seek and continue to register and process asylum claims is considered a fundamental right during the pandemic. Therefore, attention to asylum seekers *in situ* is reduced, and communication via electronic means is prioritised, including for interviews. An operations plan to ensure that asylum applications are taken care of was put in place through the adoption of a new resolution.

**Ms. Raquel Vargas Jaubert**, *Director General of Migration and Aliens, Costa Rica*, explained the country's response to ensure protection in the context of an emergency. Costa Rica has played an important role as a host country not only for Venezuela but also for other countries in central America such as Nicaragua, Colombia, and Cuba. This commitment has continued during the pandemic through several initiatives on labour, social help, and health as well as the formulation of a decree on complementary protection initiatives for people from Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba.

**Mr. Malangoni Ibrahim**, *Director General of Civil Status and Refugees, Ministry of Interior, Public Security, Decentralisation, and Customary and Religious Affairs, Republic of Niger*, highlighted how Niger found a way, despite the pandemic, to continue to provide protection to refugees. He expressed how the territory has been protected and public health guaranteed through the set-up of screening facilities and quarantine procedures for refugees and asylum seekers. Registration and documentation to access health facilities and target vulnerable populations has also been key.

**H.E. Ambassador Ms. Maria Nazareth Farani Azvedo**, *Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations Office at Geneva*, shared her top recommendations for effectively communicating with displaced people in the context of an emergency. She advised listening to the concerned community; being creative and adapting existing tools to specific needs of displaced communities; fighting misinformation by spreading the right information as fast as possible to the largest possible group of people; and building solid and robust partnerships.

**Ms. Rachel Levitan**, *Vice President, International Programs, HIAS*, discussed how gender-based violence (GBV) is increasing in the face of the pandemic. She suggested that governments and NGOs expand and specialize GBV responses to ensure they are accessible to all, establish safe spaces for women and adolescent girls, build supportive relationships and engage in safety planning, and increase programming that integrates GBV with economic inclusion involving the private sector and financial institutions. Donors, building on the outcomes of the Global Refugee Forum and the Annual NGO consultations, should fund community-based approaches to GBV in Venezuela, host countries, and other regional emergencies and more specifically address child and forced marriages. Lastly, all agencies must regularly train on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and implement safe and confidential reporting mechanisms.

**Ms. Hafsar Tameesuddin**, *Deputy Chair of the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network*, highlighted the best practices emerging from the previous High Commissioner's Dialogue sessions for addressing gender issues now and in the future. She proposed moving from using language sensitivity to gender transformation; acknowledging skills, knowledge, and the role of all women and girls; urgently providing adequate funding, resources, and structure; and organizing transparent consultations between refugee communities, including women, girls, NGOs, civil society, and donors. She also proposed acknowledging and responding to the rights of the LGBTQI community and providing guidelines to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on LGBTQI persons. In addition, she recommended that reproductive healthcare, response to survivors of violence, and education for all refugee women and girls are key to gender equality and preventing GBV. All women need access to justice and livelihoods, including women with disabilities.

**H.E. Ambassador Mr. Rui Macieira**, *Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations Office at Geneva*, detailed Portugal's strategy on resettlement and gave recommendations for ensuring the continuity of critical programmes in the context of the pandemic. Portugal granted residence to all asylum seekers during the pandemic to ensure that vulnerable people could access national health services, bank accounts, and rental contracts, among others. He also stated that other countries must continue to receive refugees through voluntary resettlement programmes. The implementation of complementary pathways for refugees and an evaluation of how we implement these commitments are also needed.



**Dr. David Nabarro**, *Special Envoy of the Director General on COVID-19, World Health Organization*, set out five learnings from the pandemic to prepare for potential future crises such as climate change. When it comes to an infectious disease, people are the solution, not the problem. Trust is key to achieve any action or objective. Local organizations have proved to be immensely powerful, sometimes even more than central governments. In addition, good quality public health services are essential, and governments need to come behind people-centred responses. If more countries did so, there would be similarly excellent impacts on climate. Countries should learn from those that are succeeding.

**H.E. Ambassador Mr. Michael Freiherr von Ungern-Sternberg**, *Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations Office at Geneva*, shared some of the measures Germany has taken to promote refugee higher education in Germany and other parts of the world. Germany kept education going during the pandemic to avoid mental health issues. With its funding, Germany enabled a response to COVID-19 through the DAFI scholarship programme; offering online classes and learning packages; broadcasting lessons via radio stations; sending mobile teachers to visit refugees who were without access to remote education; ensuring vocational training; and continuing the programme of the German academic exchange service that implemented measures for digital teaching and learning, among others.

**Ms. Kareen Jabre**, *Director, Division of Programs, Inter-Parliamentary Union*, addressed how parliaments could promote inclusion of refugees in emergencies and long-term responses. She detailed that their role is to be open and accessible, carry out decision making, and reach out and engage with all sectors of society, including refugees, internally displaced persons, and stateless men and women. Parliaments must also build legal frameworks with provisions to protect and ensure the most vulnerable are not excluded from emergency assistance, and adopt budgets, especially for recovery, that address not only immediate needs of refugees, but also structural and longer-term issues, including the economic empowerment and self-reliance of refugees. Finally, they have to speak out against discrimination, xenophobia, and racism.

**Ms. Veneranda Ingabire**, *Coordinator, Single Project Implementation Unit of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugees of the Republic of Rwanda*, explained what needs to be in place to ensure that refugees can be included in health responses. She suggested that joint efforts with partners and States on refugee management must be continued to ensure sufficient resources to treat infection in urban areas. Refugees must also have access to vaccinations, and a clear and proper information campaign to raise awareness and encourage mobilization for and of refugees should be implemented to obtain viral load testing.

**Ms. Anh Thu Duong**, *Senior Policy Advisor, Geneva Cities Hub*, made recommendations to increase inclusion efforts in the future, including during responses to challenges posed by climate change. Cities need to expand their current capacities, and international funds are needed. Cities have a real role to play in multilateral migration debates, finding pragmatic global solutions, and addressing inequalities.

**Mr. Georges O. Ortha II**, *Chief State Counsel, Department of Justice, Republic of the Philippines*, detailed how the country protected the most vulnerable populations. The Philippines adopted a circular directing local governments to ensure that persons of concern are included in the programmes and services offered to the communities, even in times of public emergencies. The Labor and Employment Department also issued an order to ensure that persons of concern and displaced people could benefit from social assistance; and the Department of Trade and Industry took some measures, including for refugees, to defer the collection of payments of residential and commercial rents for one month.

**Ms. Yasmine Sherif**, *Director, Education Cannot Wait*, made recommendations to address growing inequality during the pandemic. She emphasized that the absolute priority is to ensure the focus on those left further behind in emergencies and throughout the crisis. Amongst those left behind are girls – young girls, adolescent girls, refugee girls, and girls with disabilities.

**Ms. Bahati Ernestine Hategekimana**, *Youth Activities Coordinator, UNHCR Kenya*, shared recommendations, based on her experience as a refugee, for ensuring that refugees are included, not only as recipients, but also as providers of support in the context of the pandemic. She reiterated the need to invest in education and explained that youth programming should be focused on youth engagement, providing opportunities for refugee youth to develop and implement solutions for themselves. She also suggested an investment in capacity building and training that focuses on hands-on skills.

**Ms. Hilda Kausiwa**, *Administration and Operations Manager, Refugees Department of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Internal Security, Republic of Malawi*, described how Malawi is working to ensure that refugees can access the labour market and continue to contribute to the country's economy. She first expressed the need for a policy review and to investigate how refugees can obtain documents to work or business permits at reasonable fees. This requires enhanced coordination of stakeholders and constant engagement with authorities in immigration and labour. There is also a new need for us to promote harmonious existence with communities and address negative perceptions of refugees. The inclusion of refugees in national agendas could also be expanded by considering how they can benefit society and fill the gaps in labour demands.

**Ms. Maha Al Barjas**, *General Secretary, Kuwait Red Crescent Society*, shared some lessons learned from her experience in challenging operations during the pandemic. She proposed that civil society initiatives should be complementary to government efforts to avoid overlap in the emergency response, and she stressed the importance of promoting volunteer work and raising community awareness.

**Dr. Azza Karam**, *Secretary General Religions for Peace*, illustrated how religious leaders and institutions can mobilize displaced people in the context of the pandemic and in the future. He stated that religious actors, leaders, institutions, and communities are ready and willing to work with each other in times of peace as well as in times of humanitarian crisis. Multireligious and multi-stakeholder engagement serves all communities, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, and working together is essential.

**Mr. Gilberto Marcos Antonio Rodriguez**, *Professor, Center for Engineering, Modelling, and Applied Social Sciences, Federal University of ABC, Brazil*, recommended ways that academic actors can encourage socioeconomic inclusion and maintain focus on protection during the pandemic. Universities from all over the world need to receive support from governments and the international community to keep working with refugees and asylum seekers, protecting and including them, and supporting the rule of law, particularly international refugee law, in times of pandemic.

**Mr. Michel Botzung**, *Manager Fragile and Conflict Situations in Africa, International Finance*, described some of the most effective ways for the private sector to be engaged as partners in supporting refugees and host communities during the pandemic. Innovation and corporate responsibility need to be part of core business. He also encouraged development finance institutions to acknowledge the forced displacement crisis and come up with impactful private sector-led solutions. Lastly, he recommended that UNHCR embrace the private sector option and enable it on the ground by engaging with all the key actors in a more systematic way.

#### Part Two: Recommendations

**Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake**, *United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth*, shared with participants how the pandemic has affected the most vulnerable youth and how her office is working to address these challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has had first and foremost an economic and social impact. It has affected young people, young women, LGBTQI, indigenous young people, and young refugees. Many might not have the opportunity to resume studies because of school closures; difficulties paying for tuition, uniforms, or books; or because they are required to work or support their families. The restrictions also have caused severe mental health issues among young people dealing with fear, anxiety, anger, sadness, and grief. Young refugees have addressed the needs of their communities through crowdfunding and crowdsourcing and found solutions, resources, and food. They also circulated information in their camps and amongst other people in their community. In this crisis, while we see that young refugees are the most

affected and most vulnerable, they have also shown some of the most incredible resilience and innovative solutions in very difficult circumstances.

**Ms. Jutta Urpilainen**, *Commissioner for International Partnerships, European Commission*, discussed with participants how to ensure that solidarity makes a difference for the most vulnerable individuals, both now and in future global emergencies. Through the principle of multilateralism, the European Union (EU) has dedicated around 80 per cent of its Euro 2.8 billion humanitarian budget between 2018 and 2019 to interventions helping forcibly displaced people as well as host communities. The EU will be active in the participation in and organization of the three regional support platforms. The European Commission is participating in the COVID facility with Euro 500 million. Together with Member States and financial institutions, the EU has managed to direct Euro 38.5 billion to support its partner countries and the UN response coordinated by the Secretary-General. This global responsibility sharing in a global crisis demonstrates concretely solidarity in practice. She also reflected on how to ensure that no one is left behind in this process, advising a focus on education as the COVID pandemic has interrupted education for 1.6 billion learners. Millions more refugee children might drop out of school. Therefore, taking “leave no one behind” seriously means focusing efforts and resources on those most at risk of education disruption, especially refugees and displaced learners. At least 31 per cent of schoolchildren worldwide cannot be reached by any of the distance learning programmes so far rolled out. We must protect and support teachers as frontline workers and deliver education safely as we learn to live with COVID-19.

**Mr. Filippo Grandi**, *High Commissioner for Refugees*, closed the discussion by recommending how to engage refugees better, support them, and support the solutions that they suggest. He advised starting from the bottom up, ensuring that the refugee community roles are clear, and making investments in refugee-led organizations both in terms of space given, capacity building, and advice and support, concluding that inclusion is key. He then summarized the key recommendations emerging from the session.

Throughout the series of dialogues, participants made the following further recommendations related to participation of refugees, internally displaced persons, and stateless persons in supporting the response through the online Q&A as well as in written statements:

- Focus on both the immediate crisis response as well as medium- term development challenges for those forcibly displaced.
- Address the long-term health and socioeconomic effects of COVID-19 for refugees, internally displaced persons, stateless persons, and host communities.
- Include women and girls, especially at risk, at the centre of the response.



- Support the self-reliance of refugees and their host communities, including through promoting their right to work and inclusion in the labour market.
- Promote the GCR principles of solidarity and inclusion and implement the GCR and Global Refugee Forum commitments to support the response to the pandemic.
- Strengthen coordination between humanitarian and development actors.
- Adapt humanitarian programmes to the COVID-19 context.
- Build upon the innovations displayed during the crisis, including digital technologies, which are solutions that should not be lost post-crisis.
- Build resilience and take preventive action to ensure a better response to pandemics in the future.
- Ensure availability and quality of key socio-economic data on forcibly displaced persons to inform action.
- Recognize and support the role of cities in ensuring protection and inclusive approaches in response to the pandemic.
- Recognize and support the crucial role of religious and community leaders during the pandemic.