

Virtual informal briefing on the preliminary outcomes of the stocktaking on the Global Compact on Refugees 8 July 2021, 14:00-17:00 hours (CET)

Summary of Discussions

Introduction

This virtual informal briefing for Member States and other key stakeholders was an opportunity to discuss the preliminary outcomes of the ongoing stocktaking process on the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) in preparation for the High-Level Officials' Meeting that will take place on 14 and 15 December 2021, as well as to provide an update on other aspects of the preparatory process. The event was moderated by Ms Karin de Gruijl, the Chief of Secretariat in UNHCR's Governance Service, with opening remarks by the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Ms Gillian Triggs.

Opening remarks

Ms Gillian Triggs, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection

Ms Triggs gave an update on the implementation of the initiatives and pledges made at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum from a global perspective. She noted the ongoing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic—in particular in relation to education, jobs and training, and third-country solutions—but also the admirable adaptation and innovation displayed by many pledging entities determined to demonstrate solidarity with people who are forcibly displaced. She noted that updates had been received in relation to more than 600 pledges and that, of these, 75 per cent are in progress with a further 9 per cent in the planning phase. Almost 100 pledges have been fulfilled, and 80 new pledges have been received to date in 2021. There remains scope, however, for further implementation, matching, and concretization of pledges.

Ms Triggs outlined five main themes that have emerged from the stocktaking process, namely:

- i. **Inclusion and self-reliance:** This proved to be of particular importance during the pandemic. Development actors, UN agencies, and cities have played a leading role in supporting the inclusion of refugees in the health response to the pandemic. Strong progress has also been made in the implementation of a range of pledges in the field of education (in particular connectivity for education, which has taken on new importance during the pandemic), and more support is needed in particular for secondary and tertiary education. More support is also needed for those countries that pledged to establish legal frameworks to support economic inclusion.
- ii. **Protection:** Notable progress has been made in relation to pledges focused on gender-based violence (another area in which challenges have multiplied during the pandemic), child protection, and resolving major situations of statelessness. Of particular note in this regard is progress made by a number of States in acceding to the UN statelessness conventions, establishing statelessness determination procedures, and adopting national action plans on statelessness.
- iii. **Solutions:** A key highlight has been the adoption by Somalia of a national durable solutions strategy that fully embodies the kind of comprehensive approach that is needed in present circumstances. Despite challenges, a number of pledges for voluntary repatriation were implemented or are in progress. Engagement with the 3-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways remains high, and more commitments to multi-year resettlement programming and scaling, easing access to, and supporting third-country solutions are encouraged.
- iv. **Whole-of-society approach.** The criticality and centrality of all stakeholders playing a role in the response have been demonstrated repeatedly during the pandemic. Many private sector pledges were adapted and expanded, and the global legal community

delivered well above its pledge by providing 165,000 hours *pro bono* to refugees and refugee causes. Parliamentarians, faith-based groups, and sports organizations have also made progress in supporting protection and solutions. and—of the utmost importance—there is a promising trend towards a deeper and more meaningful engagement of refugees and refugee-led organizations in processes and programmes.

- v. **Burden and responsibility sharing:** This principle lies at the heart of the GCR. Preliminary data—in advance of the release of the GCR Indicator Framework report in November—appears to show that support for refugee situations has been sustained throughout the pandemic, though data collection systems need to be strengthened in order for the financing picture to be reflected more accurately. Progress has also been made in relation to key initiatives under the GCR for burden and responsibility sharing, in particular the three Support Platforms, the Clean Energy Challenge, the Asylum Capacity Support Group (where important matches have been made), and the Global Academic Interdisciplinary Network.

A key issue that cuts across all of these five themes, however, is the need for additional **financial, material, and technical support** for pledge implementation, in particular in developing countries and including through the ongoing matching process.

Ms Triggs concluded her remarks by thanking pledging entities for their ongoing engagement, encouraging them to redouble efforts at concretizing broad or unspecified pledges, and at supporting host country policy pledges through matching.

[Please note that further information related to progress in the areas of thematic and stakeholder engagement is available [here](#).]

Update on preparations and programme for the 2021 High-Level Officials' Meeting

Ms Perveen Ali, Head of the Global Compact on Refugees Coordination Team

In her [presentation](#), Ms Ali provided updates on the preparations and programme for the High-Level Officials' Meeting in December, including:

- an updated roadmap to the Meeting and the [calendar of stocktaking events](#) that is online and is continuously updated;
- the schedule and proposed themes for the five Virtual Preparatory Roundtables that will take place from 16 November to 2 December;
- the draft programme for the Meeting itself on 14 and 15 December (with advance events on 13 December).

Ms Ali also reiterated the priorities for the High-Level Officials' Meeting, which are to make progress towards the GCR objectives through:

- expanding support through responsibility sharing for refugees and host countries;
- implementing pledges made at the 2019 GRF; and
- identifying areas in need of support with a view to preparing pledges and initiatives towards the GCR objectives for the next GRF in 2023.

Finally, Ms Ali introduced a regional infographic that highlights matching opportunities in the East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes Region, and noted that similar [infographics](#) will shortly be available for all regions.

Briefings on regional stocktaking

Representatives of each of UNHCR's seven Regional Bureaux then provided updates on regional stocktaking. The slides that accompanied each presentation and the videos of each presentation are available [online](#).

Western and Central Africa: Ms. Aissatou Masseck Dieng-Ndiaye, Deputy Director

Constraints related to COVID-19, an ongoing lack of funding for refugee responses in the region, and structural challenges at the national level have posed significant challenges to implementation of State pledges related to inclusion. However, there remains strong commitment

to the implementation of the GCR at the regional level (including from the Economic Community of West African States and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community). A fourth Support Platform for the situation in and around the Central African Republic is being explored, and strategies for the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin are in place. Further support is required for the implementation of pledges made by the host countries in the region, as well as for addressing energy and environmental factors that contribute to forced displacement in the region.

Southern Africa: *Ms. Angele Dikongue-Atangana, Deputy Director*

80 per cent of the 130 pledges from the region are in the process of implementation. Highlights include progress in accession to the 1954 and 1961 statelessness conventions, a range of law reform efforts, programmes for data collection and birth registration, and the inclusion of refugees in national systems for health, education, and livelihoods. Goodwill for the implementation of the GCR abounds, but there is a need for funding and technical expertise, including for birth registration, as well as a willingness to match pledges. UNHCR hopes that a deepened relationship with the Southern African Development Community can bring an additional regional focus on pledge implementation.

The Americas: *Ms. Maria Bances del Rey, Senior Protection Coordinator*

The Americas is experiencing unprecedented levels of displacement, combined with growing mixed and secondary movements, a range of protection challenges, and donor fatigue. In spite of this, good progress has been made in developing comprehensive regional responses, responding to statelessness, and making advances in relation to education, protection capacity, and third-country solutions. A range of regional initiatives are supporting the implementation of the GCR, including the MIRPS support platform amongst others, and the whole-of-society approach, cooperation and partnership, and innovative and pragmatic solutions are all proving crucial. More support is needed for inclusion of refugees in national protection and development plans, the implementation of host country policy pledges, family reunification, access to third-country solutions, inclusion, empowerment of communities.

Europe: *Ms. Anne-Birgitte Krum-Hansen, Senior Protection Coordinator*

Good progress has been made in the implementation of pledges in Europe, with progress reported against almost three-quarters of all pledges. Highlights include progress in implementing pledges relating to the prevention and reduction of statelessness, third-country solutions (including community sponsorship), access to education, economic inclusion and livelihoods (particularly through public and private initiatives), and through the Asylum Capacity Support Group. More engagement is needed to facilitate integration and inclusion, as well as resettlement and complementary pathways.

The Middle East and North Africa: *Ms. Shaden Khallaf, Senior Policy Adviser*

The Middle East and North Africa has a long cultural and historical legacy of providing asylum, and this has continued to the present day (including through the contribution made by the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan to the thematic development of the GCR). Good progress has been made in implementing pledges (86 per cent are in progress) and the whole-of-society approach, for example through the engagement of faith-based organisations, refugee-led organisations, and academic, and there is a growing role for development actors and Islamic philanthropy in refugee responses. A number of regional gatherings and national stocktaking opportunities are helping to consolidate progress.

Asia and the Pacific: *Ms. Karen Gulick, Senior Policy Advisor*

Highlights of pledge implementation in Asia and the Pacific include efforts to enhance the meaningful participation of refugees, measures to resolve statelessness, reform of a range of laws and procedures relating to refugees, improved access to services for refugees, and greater access to solutions. Of particular note, the SSAR Support Platform builds on the success of the quadripartite Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees and lifts existing regional cooperation to the global level. Key lessons learned include the strong correlation between pledge implementation progress and the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders in the development of pledges, as well as the utility of stocktaking exercises to identify outstanding gaps.

The East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes: *Ms. Anna Gaunt, Senior Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Officer*

A number of stocktaking events in the region have served to drive forward progress by States (in particular the meetings of the Nairobi Process and the work of the IGAD Support Platform), civil society organisations, parliamentarians, and the Poverty Alleviation Coalition. These events have highlighted the importance of the meaningful participation of persons of concern and refugee-led organisations, joint advocacy with a wide range of stakeholders, visibility of progress, implementing and matching of pledges, flexible funding, and the need to bridge the gap between shorter-term humanitarian and development funding. A recently held EU-ACP joint Parliamentary Assembly session highlighted potential matching opportunities with a strong focus on EHAGL. The Regional Economic Inclusion Exchange East Africa Group comprised of some 200 members is a good practice. NGOs have called for greater cooperation with UNHCR and donors on joint advocacy as well as greater financial support for their various programmes.

Discussion

Following the presentations, interventions from the virtual floor focused on the ongoing importance and utility of the stocktaking exercise, the importance of supporting the leadership of host countries, and the need for more financial and other support for pledge implementation efforts. The High-Level Officials' Meeting and the next Global Refugee Forum in 2023 were seen as essential to pushing forward progress. UNHCR was encouraged to continue to empower and meaningfully engage refugees, including by facilitating their participation in the preparatory processes for the meeting in December.