

**Opening Statement by Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations
Development Program**

UNHCR High-Level Officials Meeting – 15 December 2021

High Commissioner for Refugees, **Filippo Grandi**,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This High-Level Official Meeting is a moment to maintain the momentum that is now building towards the objectives of the **Global Compact on Refugees**.

Significant progress has been made since the Compact was adopted.

Since 2016, **more refugees have been resettled, voluntarily repatriated, or integrated into new communities than during the previous five years.**

However, **the number of refugees is at an all-time high.**

And significant **gaps exist in access to durable solutions while funding for the responses faces a significant shortfall.**

Most notably, the COVID-19 pandemic has **further aggravated the vulnerability of displaced populations across the globe.**

At the **Global Refugee Forum**, the United Nations Development Programme pledged to support refugees and host communities by strengthening access to justice, local governance, access to work, and self-reliance.

We also committed to do more to **prevent forced displacement by addressing its root causes.**

Together, we are making significant advances.

Through our Joint Action Plan with UNHCR and our partners, **we scaled-up our engagement to address refugee situations in over 40 countries.**

We are also assisting **regional support platforms.**

That includes the **Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees.**

This is vital at a time when communities across Afghanistan and neighbouring countries -- especially displaced women and girls -- are facing unprecedented challenges.

Or look to the **Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework on Mexico and Central America**;

and to the **Intergovernmental Authority on Development** which is helping to address challenges in **Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan**.

Other efforts are gaining traction.

UNDP's **Rule of Law and Local Governance Partnership Framework** is **supporting 15 countries in Africa to improve access to justice and social cohesion**.

Or consider **Mexico and Central America**, where we have launched a new toolkit to help local governments to integrate displaced populations into development plans.

This engagement is also prompting the private sector to **provide new opportunities for refugees in the form of jobs and livelihoods**.

And we are increasingly leveraging **digital solutions**.

In **Peru**, for example, the Municipality of Lima has adopted a digital platform that helps displaced Venezuelans and members of the host community to access new job opportunities.

Such efforts build on UNDP's engagement with communities across the globe.

That includes the **crisis in Syria**, where UNDP and UNHCR are co-leading the **Regional Refugee Response and Resilience Plan**, or 3RP.

We are working closely with national governments and engaging over 270 partners on the ground.

The 3RP model is a clear example of the "humanitarian-development nexus" in action.

And it holds the potential to be replicated in other crisis contexts.

Yet **much more must be done**.

In particular, refugee responses need to incorporate more "**development approaches**" and **build national ownership and accountability** in order to be sustainable and inclusive.

Indeed, there is still a clear need for **increased cooperation between development, humanitarian, and peace actors.**

Crucially, **refugee responses require more predictable and sustainable financing, beyond immediate humanitarian interventions.**

While Official Development Assistance for refugee responses has increased, only 29% goes towards development solutions.

Notably, **only 4% of these finances are channelled through national actor, which is far from the Grand Bargain target of 25%.**

High Commissioner for Refugees,

Distinguished Delegates,

As the UN's lead development agency, UNDP is committed to continue advancing the Global Compact on Refugees in all aspects of our work.

For the first time ever, our new **Strategic Plan** includes a **specific programmatic objective on forced displacement.**

It commits the organisation to invest more in prevention and solutions -- and strengthen our partnership to this end.

It is a clear mandate we have received from Member States through our Executive Board.

And this is a mandate that we intend to fulfil, working with UNHCR, the entire UN family and our many partners.

No longer can the world shift responsibility.

To achieve the **Global Goals, we must "invest in humanity".**

This is indeed the best way to secure that peaceful and sustainable future for all.

Thank you.

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