



Oxfam International Statement to the UNHCR's High-Level Officials Meeting of the Global Refugee Forum, December 2021

Oxfam would like to present the following priority areas as essential in the run up to the next Global Refugee Forum:

1. Stakeholders need to ensure direct and meaningful participation from refugees and host communities, in particular women, children, and other vulnerable groups, in decisions that affect their lives. While at the global-level momentum was built at the GRF to increase meaningful refugee participation, refugees continue to tell us that they are still excluded from decision-making processes in refugee response. When Covid-19 hit, refugees were on the forefront of the response. Yet this did not lead to the shift in power needed to localise humanitarian and refugee response, with refugee-led and women-led organisations still struggling to be adequately funded or to have a seat at the table in decision-making forums. It is therefore important to enable refugee leaders to have direct access to policy spaces around the HLOM and other similar processes. This needs to be accompanied by inclusion of refugee advisors in Member State delegations to the HLOM and other key events; as well as active participation of refugees in policy design and implementation; and increased levels of localisation in accordance with the Grand Bargain.

2. The commitments made for women and girls in the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) need to be upheld. Despite the pledges made at the GRF, funding to crucial gender empowerment and SGBV activities in refugee response and direct funding to women's organizations, especially local and refugee-led women's organizations playing an active role in supporting refugee women and girls around the world, has been very limited. All stakeholders need to mainstream an Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) approach and ensure that women's organizations, especially grassroots and refugee-led women's organizations are included in all stages of policy processes. This approach improves the effectiveness of responses by ensuring that no one is left behind.

3. There is also a need to ensure refugees' access to Covid-19 vaccines. Covid-19 has impacted all of us but has had a particularly significant impact on refugees and displaced people who can be particularly vulnerable to the pandemic because of their living situations, their role as essential workers, or other factors, and often lack access to vital protections like healthcare. Covid-19 vaccines must be made available to refugees and displaced people. Governments and other stakeholders need to tackle the barriers to equitable vaccine access, especially for women, and put their national policies and commitments from the GCR on inclusive healthcare into practice. Effective vaccine roll-out to include refugees and displaced people will also require more vaccine doses to be made available for lower-and middle-income countries and additional funding



commitments for delivery of vaccines, especially where lower-income countries are hosting large numbers of refugees.

4. To meet the ideals of solidarity, and equitable and predictable, responsibility sharing espoused in the GCR and the GRF, all countries need to step forward to increase their resettlement places.

5. States need to put in place the necessary measures to welcome spontaneous arrivals of asylum seekers rather than seeking to close their borders, forcing people to turn to smugglers and to take unnecessary risks. The ability to apply for refuge at the borders of a state is crucial to the protection of those fleeing war and persecution.

6. While equitable responsibility sharing through resettlement and other safe and legal routes is the priority, the financial support to host countries remains essential. However, this financial aid to host countries must not be instrumentalised as a tool of migration management to keep refugees from migrating on to northern countries. Governments must meet their aid commitments and increase their long-term, multiyear, predictable funding in a conflict- and gender-sensitive manner so that refugee-hosting countries can respond adequately to the needs of both refugees and host communities.

Since the GRF, Oxfam International has been committed to implementing the multi-stakeholder pledge on meaningful refugee participation, which was spearheaded by the Global Refugee-led Network. We see the HLOM as an important moment to take stock on progress since the first GRF and look forward to working with partners further implement the commitments in the GCR – now, more than ever, we need equitable responsibility sharing and meaningful refugee participation in refugee response.