

Towards a Global Compact on Refugees

UNICEF's written contribution to the Programme of Action

I: BACKGROUND

Around the world, nearly 50 million children have migrated across borders or been forcibly displaced- and this is a conservative estimate. More than half of these girls and boys fled violence and insecurity -28 million in total. Including 10 million refugee children, 1 million asylum-seeking children, an estimated 17 million girls and boys who have been internally displaced due to conflict and violence.

The number of child refugees under UNHCR's mandate has more than doubled in just 10 years. Millions more have been uprooted by natural disasters or because of climate change. In situations of forced displacement, children are not just another vulnerable group - they make up more than half of the world's refugees today. The Global Compact for Refugees is essentially for and about children. The Programme of Action must reflect this reality and pay specific attention to the youngest and most at risk.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child protects all children in a state, no matter where they come from, who they are or what caused their displacement. A child is a child. Every child has the same right to be protected, to keep learning and to receive the care and services she needs to reach her full potential.

By adopting the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants at the United Nations in 2016, world leaders acknowledged children's vulnerabilities and specific needs, and committed to fully protect their rights, regardless of status.

In 2016, UNICEF developed a six-point agenda for action for Children on the Move, including refugee children, internally displaced children and child migrants. The six priority areas cover protection from exploitation; ending child immigration detention; keeping families together and giving children legal status; securing access to health and learning; addressing root causes and combating discrimination and xenophobia.

UNICEF is committed to support Member States, UNHCR and other stakeholders to realize the rights of all refugee children as stipulated in the CRC. This paper presents the specific actions and support that UNICEF is committed to provide to protect, integrate and support refugee children and their families as well as host countries and communities.

II: UNICEF's VALUE-ADD & CORE ROLE

UNICEF's presence in countries of origin, transit and destination, and its dual development and humanitarian mandate allow the organization to tackle the complex challenges of migration and forced displacement. UNICEF's established relationships with line ministries (child protection; social protection; health; education; justice; water & sanitation), civil society and community partners are instrumental to support the inclusion of refugee, returnee, stateless, and/or unaccompanied children in national social protection systems, national development plans and enable their access to social services. By combining strong emergency response capacity, direct service provision through a wide range of partners, technical support to national authorities, strengthening national systems, resource mobilization capacity, and evidence-based advocacy and public engagement, UNICEF is firmly committed to support the response to

needs and rights of children forcibly displaced as part of a comprehensive response for refugees and host communities.

III: PRIORITIES AND UNICEF'S PREDICTABLE RESPONSE TO ENSURE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND NEEDS ARE FULLY REFLECTED IN THE GCR

UNICEF's contribution to ensure better preparedness for and rapid responses to large movements of refugees

Preparedness and contingency planning:

UNICEF contributes to coordinated U.N. emergency contingency planning for possible refugee influxes in full cooperation with national authorities and UNHCR. UNICEF's response capacity covers preparedness arrangements, including area-specific contingency planning and pre-positioning of essential emergency items.

To enhance the effectiveness of a collaborative response to emergencies that may trigger large population movements across international borders, UNHCR and partners can rely on UNICEF to keep them informed on the development and maintenance of its **emergency response capacities**, such as, for example, emergency staff training and rosters, standby arrangements, material stockpiles, or development of telecommunications networks.

For improved coordination and rapid assessments to inform response plans, UNICEF can draw on **established partnerships with line ministries** (e.g. Disaster management and Relief, Humanitarian affairs, Public infrastructure, Health, Child and Social Welfare, et al), UN and NGO partners, including both international and national NGOs as well as community based organizations.

UNICEF stands ready to join the **Global Refugee Response Group** suggested by UNHCR to strengthen local and national capacities for preparedness and contingency planning and early warning monitoring to inform preparedness measures. Such planning activities provide an important opportunity to review with national counterparts in line ministries in key sectors and UNHCR ongoing country operations and identify needs for adjustments to enable UNICEF to be prepared to provide emergency assistance in pre-identified sectors and support national partners to be better prepared accordingly.

UNICEF also supports the idea of **solidarity conferences** to mobilise and coordinate support at the onset of crisis. These conferences should be tailored to each situational context and held primarily in support of hosting countries and communities, as experienced for example with the solidarity summit in Uganda or the IGAD Nairobi Declaration.

Assessment and monitoring:

To improve assessment and monitoring, the Programme of Action could suggest the development of jointly agreed guidelines and specific methodologies for assessing and monitoring the situation of forcibly displaced children which are gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive, and establish mechanisms to exchange information on assistance required.

The Programme of Action could also include a specific focus on sharing risk analysis data more frequently and conducting joint horizon scans for more effective responses. Staff exchanges and joint trainings between relevant agencies and actors involved could also be considered.

To strengthen the linkages between short and longer term interventions, the Programme of Action could also suggest developing joint action plans focusing on sector specific objectives.

CRRF PILLAR 1: RECEPTION AND ADMISSION

UNICEF's support for host states to receive large number of refugees at the onset of crisis

To address immediate humanitarian and protection needs of refugee children and their families, host states can rely on UNICEF to provide the following lifesaving interventions and technical support, in collaboration and coordination with UNHCR and relevant stakeholders.

Coordination, information and integrated support services:

- Support **coordination, information management and support services** in the areas of WASH, nutrition, education and child protection in line with existing coordination mechanisms
- Reinforce cross-regional dialogue and cooperation between UN agencies, UNICEF Offices and Governments to provide refugee children with a continuum of care all along migratory routes
- Provide **training and support to frontline and community-based workers** on nutrition and essential lifesaving health interventions (e.g Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illness (IMNCI)/Integrated Community Case management (iCCM), maternal and newborn care), psychosocial support as well as mine risk education (MRE) where applicable, and provide the necessary guidelines and support to personnel
- Contribute to the identification, development and implementation of inter-agency strategies to enable **rapid, unimpeded and principled access** to humanitarian assistance and protection for refugees, in-line with humanitarian principles and relevant bodies of law

Health and Nutrition:

- Provide **lifesaving interventions** including **immunization** to prevent and address common newborn and childhood illnesses and support equitably access to **essential health services** for children, adolescents and women and sustain inclusive coverage of high-impact preventive and curative interventions
- Provide technical support to host governments to ensure refugee children and women with **preventable illnesses and/or acute malnutrition** have access to appropriate management services, as well as micronutrients from fortified foods, supplements such as vitamin A and iron or multiple-micronutrient preparations.
- Support **behavior-change communication interventions** and access to information for affected women and children to improve health-care and feeding practices and support host states to provide for appropriate infant and young child feeding (IYCF)

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- Provide **sufficient water of appropriate quality and quantity** for drinking, cooking and maintaining personal hygiene.
- Provide **toilets and washing facilities** and **hygiene kits**, for displaced populations that are culturally appropriate, secure, sanitary, user-friendly and gender-appropriate.
- Provide refugee children and women with **critical WASH-related information** to prevent child illness, especially diarrhea
- Provide technical support on **menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in emergencies**

Education

- Set up safe **temporary learning spaces** for all age groups in consultation with communities and, where appropriate, establish **community services** – such as water supply and sanitation – around schools, complemented by hygiene promotion.

- Arrange referrals to public schools where policies allow the inclusion of refugees, and support those schools in strengthening their capacities such as roster of teachers, class formation, etc.
- Engage stakeholders to **address violence in and around learning spaces and schools** – including safety of children on the way to school and gender-based violence– with a focus on adolescent girls.
- Mobilize available **psychosocial support for teachers and students**, and provide appropriate activities for them in temporary learning spaces, and for young children and adolescents in child-friendly spaces; and establish initial links to basic health and nutrition services.

UNICEF’s support for host States to identify and address specific child protection risks and needs of refugee children early on and in protracted displacement situations

UNICEF’s child protection response focuses on acute protection needs, in particular for unaccompanied and separated children, while strengthening national child protection systems to be inclusive of refugee children and equipped to address child protection needs equitably and sustainably. Host governments can count on UNICEF to provide the following support and interventions in coordination with UNHCR and other stakeholders:

i) Registration and identification of needs

- Build capacities of national authorities to conduct systematic and individual **Best Interests of the Child determination** procedures through training, development of relevant policy and legal frameworks and establish mechanisms for cooperation across sectors.
- Assist with the **identification and registration of unaccompanied and separated children**, provide temporary care and support and reunite separated children with their families and caregivers as quickly as possible
- Support states in developing **alternative care mechanisms** and robust **guardianship systems** as important safeguards to the rights of children and their best interest.
- Conduct a rapid assessment on specific protection needs of refugee children at the onset of large movements including identification of gender and disability specific needs, as well as protection monitoring at key service points.
- In order to give refugee children a voice and agency, UNICEF commits to support and facilitate their access to **child-friendly information and counselling** so they are fully aware of their rights and supported in taking informed decisions.
- Provide technical support to authorities to reduce the length of procedures to obtain asylum/resident permits in host/transit countries.
- Support states to establish **alternatives to detention** that are based on community engagement and non-custodial measures and strengthen **cooperation between child protection actors and relevant line ministries and migration/asylum authorities**

ii) Case management

- Support host governments to **develop case management, screening and referral mechanisms**, including for victims of trafficking and survivors of torture or trauma, or those with other urgent medical needs
- Support host governments and regional bodies to strengthen **cross-border cooperation on child protection**, including for family tracing and reunification, safe sharing of information and transfer of care and case management across borders

iii) Reception

- Set up **Child Friendly Spaces** and provide targeted child protection services and support which are gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive, including psycho-social assistance.
- Support the development of **minimum child protection standards and child safeguarding policies** as required to provide technical guidance to personnel stationed at **reception and accommodation centres** housing refugee children
- Provide training to **front line workers and support community-based mechanisms** as critical components of the national system and strengthen host governments' capacities for referrals, information sharing and monitoring
- Support **coordinated child protection responses**, including prevention and response to gender-based violence, mental health and psychosocial support, using standard inter-agency tools and case management systems
- Continue **monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children in armed conflict**, including attacks on health and education, abductions and denial of humanitarian access, as well as advocating for the respect of relevant international law and principles
- Provide **special programmes for protection and assistance to refugee children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups**, particularly their rehabilitation and reintegration.

CRRF PILLAR 2 & 3: SUPPORT FOR IMMEDIATE AND ONGOING NEEDS & SUPPORT FOR HOST COUNTRIES AND COMMUNITIES

UNICEF's contribution to mobilise resources for humanitarian and development assistance to host states

UNICEF supports the call by host countries and partners for additional resources for more equitable burden and responsibility sharing and integrated, comprehensive responses that benefit refugee and host communities. Furthermore, UNICEF will contribute to mobilize and leverage resources by supporting host countries in receiving funding under the new lending scheme and/or development funding mechanisms to ensure additional funding benefits both refugees and host communities. Where there is good economic sense to invest in permanent rather than temporary infrastructure and public goods, UNICEF will seek to engage concessional and commercial investors to save costs over the medium term and enlarge our development impact.

During crises, business actions and operations can directly or indirectly contribute to or aggravate the threats faced by children and their families, including heightened risk of child labour, separation from family and exploitation. UNICEF has a long history of working with business and will continue to harness their power in support of the most disadvantaged children including refugees by ensuring that partnerships with business maximize results for children through income, influence and core business and assets; by addressing the positive and negative impacts of business activities on the rights of children and by mobilizing business and business stakeholders as advocates for children. UNICEF will encourage business to engage holistically in risk reduction, mitigation and preparedness in order to build resilient communities, as well as to facilitate response, recovery and rebuilding, and to contribute to long-term peace and sustainable development.

UNICEF will also continue to invest in addressing data and evidence gaps related to refugee children, including systematic age and gender disaggregation, data on children with disabilities, internal displacement, inclusion of refugee education data in national education management information systems, longitudinal studies on long-term impacts of return on refugee children, et al.

UNICEF's support for inclusion of refugee children in national systems

UNICEF will continue to engage with national and local authorities from the onset of the crisis. That includes concerted efforts to strengthen national social service delivery systems with a focus on education, child protection, health and WASH, and to provide overall support to integrate refugee population in national systems including addressing their specific needs.

Health & Nutrition

- Provide technical support to partners and host governments during the preparedness and planning phase, **build capacity building of service providers at all levels of health and nutrition preparedness and response**, including training community health workers, stockpiles of supplies, advocacy and fundraising
- Provide technical support to national and local authorities in prioritizing **health and nutrition interventions** including Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH), Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) programmes for refugee children, adolescents and women
- Engage in a coordinated manner with national and subnational authorities in conducting **health and nutrition assessments of refugees and host communities** using harmonized methodologies.
- Advocate for the **inclusion of refugee populations in national health and nutrition plans, strategies, policies and programs**, leveraging UNICEF's established partnerships with line ministries, data and evidence generation and capacity building support
- Support the development of communication strategy for health and nutrition education and promotion with all partners and sectors.

WASH

- Support host governments in developing medium to long term **WASH strategies and response mechanisms on linking humanitarian and development assistance** in collaboration with UNHCR, including service provision to the most vulnerable and provision of coordination platforms supporting convergence for sustainable solutions.
- Build resilience in countries to prepare for potential and unexpected crises triggered by large-scale displacement

Education

To ensure refugee children are in school as soon as safely possible after displacement and national education systems are strengthened, states can rely on UNICEF to provide the following support and interventions:

- **Support local education authorities to expand facilities** and work with partners at all levels of government, multilateral system, civil society and communities to increase capacity to advance three elements critical to the integration of refugee children into national systems - policy and programme development, financing, and advocacy
- Sustain the momentum to **transform education financing through global partnerships and alliances** such as The Education Commission, Education Cannot Wait and the Global Partnership for Education. The Global Compact on Refugees provides an important opportunity for states to commit that humanitarian funding and financing packages for relief and recovery include education supported through **multi-year planning and financing** - as required to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4.
- UNICEF will continue to support states and partners in **risk-informed education planning, programming, and education sector analyses**, including costing of refugee inclusion in national education systems and the development of **GPE-supported multi-year education sector plans**;

- Taking advantage of the respective strengths of each partner, and remaining focused on providing learning opportunities for the most excluded and disadvantaged children –**pursue innovative financing mechanism and support innovative programming**, including using technology to improve quality and content in classrooms
- Support states in scaling up **early childhood development (ECD)** accessible for refugee children
- Provide special education programmes for the most marginalized such as out-of-school children and children with disabilities, etc.

Child Protection

Host States can rely on UNICEF to provide the following support and interventions:

- Promote the inclusion of refugee children in child protection systems and social services, which are gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive, through investing in national capacities to **strengthen the social services' workforce**, increasing coverage, quality and professionalization of social services
- Support governments to build national **birth registration** systems to ensure that every child's birth is registered including refugee children as a key measure to preventing statelessness and ensuring access to services
- UNICEF, in cooperation with UNHCR through **the Joint Campaign to End Childhood Statelessness** will continue to provide policy support to adjust national legislation, as well as to strengthen birth registration/Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems to minimize the risk of childhood statelessness.

Social Protection

To enable sustained access of host and displaced communities to social protection, UNICEF will continue to work with national governments to:

- Design or adapt **inclusive social protection systems** that are risk informed and shock responsive and able to absorb additional funding to include more people and provide higher benefit levels. This may include distribution of cash to both host communities and refugees.
- Provide **training and capacity building of the social protection workforce** to support host and refugee communities to access social services
- Use the opportunity of **humanitarian cash transfers** to design and implement nascent social protection systems where they do not exist.
- Where social protection systems exist, revive and strengthen them at the national and sub national levels so that they are able to support refugees. This includes following a system-based approach to strengthen the institutional (policy and coordination), organizational (governance and capacities) and operational (targeting & management of data, disbursement of payment) capacities to ensure they can respond to an increased volume of activities.

UNICEF's contribution to innovative approaches in refugee response

UNICEF and its partners have developed an open source technology platform known as **Primero** to help social workers manage the cases of children forced to flee their homes to facilitate the secure collection, storage and sharing of data to improve child protection case management, incident monitoring and family reunification services by key players in the humanitarian sector. Primero strengthens the ability of governments and aid organizations to identify vulnerable children, provide them with life-saving services and protect them from exploitation and violence. Primero is currently being deployed in Jordan and the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, and deployments are underway in Iraq, Lebanon, and Bangladesh. UNICEF is committed, in collaboration with UNHCR and other actors, to provide technical support for scaling up its use in other humanitarian situations including refugee response.

CRRF PILLAR 4: DURABLE SOLUTIONS

UNICEF's support for voluntary and sustainable return

- Build the capacity of national authorities to conduct **Best Interests of the Child determination** to precede voluntary repatriation of children, including assessment of country of origin reports, to make sure that children are not returned to face persecution or life-threatening danger.
- Support the development of internationally agreed **standards and procedures for child-rights compliant** repatriation and provide **child rights and child protection training** and support to authorities implementing repatriation.
- Provide technical support to asylum authorities to develop **child-focused country of origin information reports** that cover child and gender-specific drivers (e.g. Gender-based violence, domestic violence, FGM, recruitment by armed groups, etc.) and provide accurate information on actual risks and effective access to critical services for children
- Provide technical support to the countries of origin and partners for sustainable **reintegration of returnees** including inclusion of returnee children in their national systems and development plans, and assessment of appropriateness of services in areas of return.
- Support the inclusion of returnee children and youth in decision making and design of reintegration strategies and programmes.

UNICEF's support for expanding resettlement and complimentary pathways

- Advocate for the **expansion of safe and legal channels** for children, including family reunification, humanitarian admission programmes and **child-specific complimentary pathways**
- **Review/expand vulnerability criteria for children**, including those with families, in collaboration with UNHCR, other partners and States.
- Support states to prioritise and **accelerate family reunification procedures** involving children by supporting the development of robust and effective procedures, broadening the definition of family and developing guidance and capacity building
- In certain critical circumstances where children are exposed or face extreme levels of exploitation and abuse, UNICEF will advocate for and support the immediate release of any and all children in detention due to their migration status and support countries to identify and operationalize alternatives measures such as the surrender of passport and regular reporting requirements; guarantors or bailees who may be family members or community supporters; foster care and supervised independent living).

UNICEF's support for addressing root causes of forced displacement

The protection and inclusion of refugee boys and girls is a core intervention of UNICEF development and relief programming globally. Setting standards, providing direct service provision and supporting governments and partners in fulfilling their commitments to basic service provision for displaced and vulnerable host communities has been UNICEF's core business for decades.

UNICEF's regular programmes seek to improve conditions in countries of origin, in transit and host communities, prevent and address drivers of forced displacement and increase the range of viable life opportunities available to families and children. This includes technical support and capacity building to support host governments in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals on protection, education, health and nutrition, social policy and WASH indicators.

Around the world, UNICEF works with authorities and implementing partners to provide protection services against violence and exploitation of children, including trafficking, introducing or expanding alternatives to detention to immigration detention, preventing family separation and building national capacities to identify, trace, reunify and provide alternative care to unaccompanied and separated children globally.

UNICEF will continue in providing technical support and advocate with governments to include all children, irrespective of location, migration or citizenship status, in basic service provision. This includes policy analysis on differential service provision and technical support to adapt existing services to the needs of forcibly displaced and mobile populations or to establish new services.

Regular programs also strive to support peace and reconciliation efforts, prevent protracted displacement and generate support for durable solutions, as well as addressing inequity and mitigating impact of climate change both of which would contribute to forced displacement and fuel conflicts and different forms of violence, including through technical support and advocacy to promote respect for humanitarian and human rights laws, refugee law and IDP guiding principles.

UNICEF's engagement with the whole of society

Recognising the increasingly protracted nature of displacement, UNICEF engages with national and local authorities from the onset of the crisis to strengthen their national systems across social sectors to cater for increased and specific needs of refugee children and their families, as well as to integrate refugee population in the national system.

UNICEF builds on its engagement with line ministers, local governments, and civil society organizations and invests in building local capacity of individuals, communities and systems that provide integrated basic social services, for both forcibly displaced, returnees and host communities.

UNICEF also works to address exclusion and xenophobia programmatically and through campaigns, including **UNICEF's global campaigns like Children Uprooted (#A Child is a Child)** that is built on the premise of UNICEF's 6-point Agenda for Action for refugee and migrant children, or a global campaign on Education in Emergencies.

To address discrimination, xenophobia and exclusion of refugee children, UNICEF will continue to invest in data and evidence generation and develop innovative ways of engaging with public audiences, community and thought leaders and the media through advocacy and Communication for Development (C4D) interventions to identify discriminatory and exclusionary attitudes, address behaviors and social norm and build public support accepting and supportive of child refugees. Furthermore, UNICEF will strive to provide protective measures to all children on the move, including internally displaced and migrant children, as well as children in host communities, in order to avoid stigmatization and tensions between communities.

Accountability to Affected Population (AAP) is key to ensure stable and dignified living conditions for refugees and host communities. Listening to, engaging and holding ourselves accountable to affected people and communities helps drive appropriate, timely, effective humanitarian action, and also provides an opportunity to link humanitarian and development programming. UNICEF is contributing to this effort based on its experience and expertise in community engagement and communication for development. In particular, UNICEF is committed to ensure that the views of refugee children and young people are heard and taken into account in all matters which concern and affect them.