



High-Level Officials Meeting 2021

Preliminary Considerations

Success under the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) is assessed in terms of progress towards the achievement of its four objectives.ⁱ The main vehicles for follow-up and review under the GCR include the Global Refugee Forums (GRF) held every four years, High-Level Officials Meetings (HLOM) held two years after each GRF, the biennial GCR indicator report, and the High Commissioner's annual reporting to the General Assembly. The first GRF was held in 2019, and the first HLOM will take place on 14 and 15 December 2021 at the International Conference Centre (CICG) In Geneva.ⁱⁱ

The HLOM is an opportunity for senior government officials and representatives of relevant stakeholder groupsⁱⁱⁱ to take stock of progress and maintain the momentum towards achievement of the objectives of the GCR.^{iv} It is part of the process of building a long-term framework for engagement of States and other actors in refugee situations, as set out in the GCR. It is a dynamic moment and milestone in implementing this approach. Participants will identify progress and challenges, as well as where further engagement is needed to increase support, self-reliance, and access to solutions for refugees in line with the GCR objectives, taking into consideration the unique challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic since early 2020.

The international community will take stock of efforts towards **easing the pressure** on countries hosting the largest populations of refugees, including through support for additional instruments and programmes for refugees and host communities. This support is also crucial for the national arrangements and refugee responses that are coordinated across government sectors and other stakeholder groups, which are central to the approach set out in the GCR.

The international community will consider the extent to which refugees have been able to achieve **self-reliance** and how they and their host communities are faring economically. Self-reliance requires that refugees have access to jobs, livelihoods, and educational opportunities and that they are included in national systems. This enables them to participate in the social and economic life of their host communities and contribute to rebuilding their countries should they be able to return.

Recognizing that many endeavours to facilitate **solutions** have been delayed by travel and other restrictions during the pandemic, the HLOM will be an opportunity to review where efforts have continued or been adapted. It will also review what more is needed both to advance third-country solutions addressed in the three-year strategy on resettlement and complementary pathways, and to support conditions in countries of origin for sustainable voluntary return in safety and dignity.

This review of progress, challenges, and areas in need of support of these objectives will shape the substance and implementation of both ongoing and future pledges, support, partnerships, and initiatives to strengthen international cooperation in refugee responses and translate the GCR into concrete improvements in the lives of refugees and the communities that host them.

Proposed Roadmap

Tentative dates	Topic
January-December	Regional, thematic, stakeholder-specific stocktaking
27 January	Consultation on the HLOM and orientations for the GCR indicator report
May	Request for updates on progress through the pledges dashboard
23 June	Informal briefing on preliminary outcomes of stocktaking to date
October	Request for updates on progress through the pledges dashboard
27 October	Consultation on the modalities and programme for the HLOM
November	Issuance of the background paper for the HLOM
14-15 December	High-Level Officials Meeting at the CICG in Geneva

Stocktaking

To facilitate a mid-term review of progress and regular stocktaking, the HLOM will focus on the progress, challenges, and areas in need of support in meeting the objectives of the GCR. Regional, country, thematic and stakeholder-specific stocktaking started in 2020, following the first GRF, and will continue throughout 2021, culminating in the HLOM. Stocktaking is integrated into other events and processes or, where necessary, in standalone events and is aligned with the GCR objectives.

Stocktaking assesses the following:

- Progress towards the GCR objectives, as reflected in the **GCR indicator report**.
- **GRF pledges follow-up**, including implementation of pledges and support from donors and other actors related to the policy commitments made by host countries.
- **Implementation** of the regional support platforms, the asylum capacity support group, the three-year strategy (2019-2021) on resettlement and complementary pathways, the global academic interdisciplinary network, and the clean energy challenge.
- Implementation of **comprehensive refugee responses** in the field, reflecting on national arrangements and coordinated refugee responses.
- The **response to the COVID-19 pandemic** and how the GCR can guide emergency preparedness in the future through good practices and the adaptation, acceleration, and development of pledges and national arrangements to support the response.

The stocktaking will provide the substantive analysis of progress towards the GCR objectives that will be required for shaping the current and future engagement of States and other stakeholders. The analysis will reflect on opportunities and challenges, as well as the areas in need of support that could be addressed through scaling up or increasing exchanges of good practices, and adapting or developing pledges, initiatives, partnerships, and regional approaches.

The **background paper for the HLOM**, consolidating outcomes of the stocktaking will be issued in November.

Global briefings and consultations

There will be a **virtual consultation with States and other stakeholders** in Geneva on **27 January 2021**, from 15:00-18:00 CET, to consult on the preliminary considerations for the 2021 HLOM and the proposed orientations for the GCR indicator report.

The **June informal briefing** will review the preliminary outcomes from the GCR indicator data collection process and stocktaking to date.

The **October consultation** will review the modalities and programme for the HLOM.

UNHCR will also provide an oral update on preparations for the HLOM to the **Standing Committee** in July and September.

High-level officials meeting

The HLOM will be held on 14 and 15 December 2021 at the **senior official level**, and participation from heads of line ministries responsible for refugee matters will be encouraged. Invited participants also will include relevant stakeholders as set out in the GCR.

UNHCR will explore possibilities for a **hybrid in-person/virtual modality** at the CICG to facilitate greater participation.

It is proposed that the **meeting** could include the following:

- **A general debate:** States and other stakeholders would make interventions, outlining progress, challenges, and areas in need of support, as well as announce any new commitments.
- **Four multi-stakeholder panels** focusing on the GCR objectives.^v The panels could address the results of the GCR indicator report complemented by additional information from the stocktaking, focusing on progress, challenges, and areas in need of support.
- **A closing session** summarizing the key areas where strengthened engagement is needed to work towards the GCR objectives. These areas would inform the next steps as well as the preparation of future pledges, partnerships, and initiatives, including for the next GRF.

It is proposed that there be **side events** during the HLOM. The themes of these side events remain to be confirmed. The panels in plenary and side events would be organized by the UNHCR, together with States and other stakeholders.

UNHCR will explore the possibility of creating a **virtual exhibition space** for showcasing multi-stakeholder interventions; progress in implementing pledges, initiatives, and comprehensive responses; opportunities to strengthen engagement; and areas in need of support.

UNHCR looks forward to working with member States and other stakeholders to ensure that the HLOM takes stock of progress and maintains the momentum needed to build on the important commitments made in the Global Compact on Refugees, both at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum and in actions taken since for the benefit of refugees and the countries and communities that host them.

UNHCR, 14 January 2021

ⁱ The objectives of the GCR are to: “(i) ease pressures on host countries; (ii) enhance refugee self-reliance; (iii) expand access to third country solutions; and (iv) support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity” (GCR, ¶7).

ⁱⁱ Note that there will be no High Commissioner’s Dialogue convened in 2021.

ⁱⁱⁱ Including national and local authorities, international organizations, international financial institutions, regional organizations, regional coordination and partnership mechanisms, civil society partners (including faith-based organizations and academia), the private sector, media and refugees themselves.

^{iv} The HLOM will “allow for ‘mid-term review’ of progress, facilitate regular stocktaking and sustain momentum” (GCR, ¶104).

^v In recognition that the international community committed to “do its utmost to mobilize support for the global compact and the achievement of its objectives on an equal footing” (GCR, para. 101).