



UNHCR Virtual Briefing

Global Compact on Refugees and the 2021 High-Level Officials Meeting

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Statement delivered by H.E. Pascale Baeriswyl
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Assistant High Commissioner, Mrs Triggs – thank you for the invitation to co-host this briefing and to speak today. Mrs Ruven Menikdiwela, Director of UNHCR here in New York, thank you for convening us today and for moderating the meeting.

As co-host of the first Global Refugee Forum in 2019, Switzerland has worked closely with UNHCR to highlight and to implement the Global Compact on Refugees. We support UNHCR's efforts in preparation for the upcoming High-Level Officials Meeting to take place in Geneva in December this year.

The most recent events in Afghanistan show that displacement is and will remain one of the key challenges of our time, with drivers of displacement becoming increasingly complex, spurred by conflict, natural disaster and/or climate change.

The events in Afghanistan, but also the unprecedented level of displacement in Central America – which Mrs. Triggs witnessed firsthand during her recent mission – further highlight the relevance of regional platforms such as the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) or the MIRPS. These Platforms are proving to be instruments with considerable potential for bringing together a diversity of actors to contribute to specific regional displacement situations. Now is the time to further support these platforms as they adapt their approach in light of the fast-evolving displacement trends we are witnessing in Afghanistan or in Central America. Please be assured that Switzerland will continue to play an active role in both of these platforms.

Coordinated and collaborative solutions are undoubtedly necessary to address these complex crises, even more so in the midst of a global pandemic. More than ever, it is clear that only together we can overcome global challenges. Forced displacement is a global challenge that must be addressed collectively, through shared responsibility.

The Global Compact on Refugees remains an essential beacon for an impactful, sustainable, dignified and equitable approach to refugee movements. In this context, the

stocktaking exercise that is currently ongoing is critical to assess what has already been achieved, and to identify where gaps remain and where additional efforts are needed. The High Level Officials Meeting is therefore a key point in the 2021 agenda and Switzerland stands ready to play an active role.

Internally, we are hard at work developing new pledges in line with identified gaps and challenges, while also progressing the implementation of pledges made at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum.

One of the pledges we plan to make relates to the development of the Geneva Technical Hub. The objective of the Hub is to support UNHCR's technical field operations with a view to strengthening assistance to the forcibly displaced with environmentally-sustainable solutions, whether in the area of shelter, water, sanitation or waste management. Such a hub is well placed to respond to environmental and energy challenges.

We further welcome the opportunity to build on each other's strengths through a process of matching pledges, with financial, material and technical support. There is no doubt that achieving the objectives of the Global Compact will require further expanding the support base; all of us have a role to play in this regard.

Let me end my remarks by reminding us that, at the center of what we do, are people, real lives impacted by forced displacement, as we see in Afghanistan today, and beyond. It is our collective responsibility to make sure that the upcoming High-Level Officials Meeting will place people at the center, give them a voice, and constitute a tangible step in improving lives. You can count on Switzerland's full support for a productive High Level Officials Meeting.

Thank you very much.