

Structure of the Global Refugee Forum Information Note

Introduction

The Global Refugee Forum (GRF) will bring together United Nations Member States, at ministerial level, and other relevant stakeholders every four years to: i) announce pledges and contributions, and ii) consider opportunities, challenges, and ways in which international burden and responsibility-sharing could be improved.¹ The first GRF in 2019 will be dedicated to receiving formal pledges and contributions,² and will provide an opportunity to exchange good practices and experiences.³ This Note sets out key considerations for structuring the first GRF to achieve these objectives, and a preliminary outline of the agenda.

The first GRF will be held on 17 and 18 December 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland. The current planning figure for participation is up to 1,200 persons. On 16 December 2019, rooms are additionally reserved at the Palais des Nations for side events and meetings in the lead-up to the GRF.

The following key outcomes are expected from the GRF:

- Significant joint and individual pledges and contributions aimed at achieving the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugee (GCR)
- Report of key outcomes
- Compilation of the pledges and contributions in digital and hard copy formats
- Compilation of good practices on the GRF website and the GCR digital portal

Key considerations

The following considerations are central in planning the structure of the Forum:

- **Time, space, and capacity** – as the GRF will be held over two days, with some 300 delegations of States and other relevant stakeholders expected to participate, careful consideration needs to be given to the format. Also, a traditional format of exclusively formal statements made by each delegation will not be conducive to the kind of dialogue envisaged for the Forum. An alternative format with sessions that provides space for the engagement of States and a wide range of stakeholders is foreseen.
- The need for an **innovative and substantive event** focused on delivering and showcasing impactful contributions and good practices that demonstrate how the GCR is making a difference.
- The **prominent role** of participating Heads of State/Government, Ministers, and other high-level participants, including the co-hosts, co-convenors, and co-sponsors.
- The centrality of **host countries**, particularly in relation to specific refugee situations, and the importance of pledges and contributions responding to their needs.

¹ Global Compact on Refugees, para. [17].

² Ibid, para. [19].

³ Ibid, para. [103].

- The **multi-stakeholder** approach to broaden the base of support for implementing the GCR, including humanitarian and development actors, financial institutions, United Nations organizations, international and regional organizations, local authorities, cities, parliaments, civil society organizations, faith-based actors, the private sector, academics, sports organizations, and refugees.
- The meaningful **participation of refugees**, including women, persons with disabilities, and youth, and ensuring the inclusion of their perspectives.
- The **areas of focus** for the first GRF (arrangements for burden and responsibility sharing, education, jobs and livelihoods, energy and infrastructure, solutions, and protection capacity).
- **Demonstrating the success** of the first GRF, through impactful contributions and sharing of good practices in each area of focus.
- Ensuring the **visibility of contributions** made by States and other stakeholders, particularly high-impact joint pledges and contributions.
- **Showcasing good practices**, to recognize ongoing contributions, particularly of major host countries and donors, and to inspire new pledges and contributions in the areas of focus for the first GRF.

Main elements of the GRF

- An **opening plenary on burden and responsibility sharing**, featuring welcoming remarks from the co-hosts and statements from the co-convenors (at Head of State/Government level), the United Nations Secretary-General, and other dignitaries.
- Following the opening, the GRF will be structured around a series of **high-level sessions** related to each of the areas of focus for the first GRF and to specific refugee situations. These sessions would:
 - Allow for interaction, diversity, and dynamism in different session formats, such as panels, Ted talks, and interactive Davos-style interviews;
 - Focus strategically on good practices and pledges and contributions for longer-term change (policies, financing mechanisms, national arrangements, etc.) to demonstrate how the GCR can make a difference; and
 - Involve both host and donor countries from different regions (particularly those who have made significant contributions and who are co-sponsors), other relevant stakeholders, refugees, and high-profile moderators.
- A limited number of **side events** would run in parallel to each other throughout the day on 16 December and during the lunch periods on 17 and 18 December. These would provide additional time and space to go into more depth on sub-thematic areas (i.e. tertiary education, green energy, etc.) and focus on specific refugee situations.
- A **“marketplace”** where approximately 10-15 selected innovative and forward-looking good practices could be exhibited. These would be linked to the areas of focus or to specific refugee situations where comprehensive approaches are being applied.

- Follow-up on **initiatives** set out in the GCR, including: a report on the methodologies for measuring the impact of hosting refugees; indicators for the GCR; contributions announced towards the Asylum Capacity Support Group and the Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways; and contributions made from the Global Academic Network.
- Reserved spaces for **bilateral meetings**.
- Reserved spaces for **press interviews**.
- A series of **events in the City of Geneva** in the week leading up to and during the GRF (to be confirmed).
- A special event with community and faith leaders on **building inclusive societies** (time and location to be determined)

The high-level sessions, side events, and exhibitions for the marketplace will be conceptualized and developed with the support and engagement of the **co-hosts, co-convenors, and co-sponsors**.

Preliminary agenda

Monday, 16 December

- Multi-stakeholder roundtables or side events organized on topics that are relevant to the GCR.

Tuesday, 17 December

Morning

- Commemorative photo of ministers and high-level dignitaries.
- Opening plenary on burden and responsibility sharing, featuring remarks by the co-hosts (UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Government of Switzerland), the co-convening States (at Head of Government/State level), the UN Secretary-General, and other high-level dignitaries.

[All pledges and contributions will be projected on a large screen in the plenary room throughout the session.]

Lunch

- Lunch for participants at the ministerial level and other high-level dignitaries.
- Side events relevant to specific topics within the areas of focus for the first GRF.

Afternoon

- Plenary sessions on the “Compact in Action”, focusing on good practices and lessons learned from recent regional comprehensive responses in (1) IGAD and (2) MIRPS to inform future approaches.
- Plenary session with refugee representatives from the co-sponsorship groups, reflecting upon the outcomes of the first day of the GRF

- Evening reception

Wednesday, 18 December

Morning

- Private sector breakfast (to be confirmed)
- Two parallel high-level sessions on (1) Education and (2) Energy and Infrastructure
- Two parallel high-level sessions on (1) Jobs and livelihoods and (2) Protection Capacity

Lunch

- Side events relevant to specific topics within the areas of focus for the first GRF.

Afternoon

- Two parallel high-level sessions on Solutions: (1) Voluntary Repatriation and Local Solutions and (2) Resettlement and Complementary Pathways
- Plenary closing remarks by the co-hosts

Modalities

States and other stakeholders are encouraged to share their pledges and contributions and good practices with UNHCR **well in advance of the Forum**, to facilitate the preparation of visual presentations for the GRF.

During the GRF, **pledges and contributions** can be publicized in the following ways:

- The key elements of the contributions can be projected on screens during the sessions. They can be organized according to area of focus. For example, during the session on jobs and livelihoods, all pledges and contributions made related to jobs and livelihoods can be projected on the screens.
- The contributions that are relevant to the specific area of focus in the session can be announced by speakers in the high-level sessions, as a part of statements made from the floor, or during side events. For example, at the session on education, speakers may reference their contributions on education.
- Pledges and contributions will also be consolidated and available for viewing online. They will then be compiled into an outcome document following the GRF.
- Pledges and contributions can also be announced during interviews with the media.

During the GRF, **good practices** can be publicized in the following ways:

- Those that are relevant to the specific area of focus in the session can be mentioned by speakers in the high-level sessions, as a part of statements made from the floor, or during side events.

- Good practices will also be consolidated and available for viewing online on the GRF website. They will then be included in the GCR digital portal once it is fully operational.
- Selected good practices can be shared in exhibits set up during the GRF.

Special arrangements for Ministers and other high-level dignitaries

- Commemorative photo of ministers and high-level dignitaries
- Ministerial lunch on the 17th of December (to be confirmed)
- Statements made during various high-level sessions and/or side events
- Bilateral or other private meetings (organized by the delegations)
- Media interviews, press briefings, or press releases (organized by the delegations)

Guidance will be issued on the procedures for proposing a side event or exhibit, or requesting space for bilateral meetings or press interviews.