

Afghanistan's Statement at GRF

Dear Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset I would like to thank UNHCR and the government of Switzerland for co-hosting and the governments of Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Germany, Pakistan and Turkey for co-convening this event.

Mr. Chair

This Global Refugee Forum is both historic and timely—taking place at critical moment of our history as there was never as many refugees or forcibly displaced people in the world as we have today.

We all know that everyone wants to be at home, in a safe place, with their families and friends, furnished with services and opportunities. And no one wants to be a refugee. It is a common, worldwide wish for all refugees, and it is one we also share in Afghanistan.

Indeed, the Afghan government is working towards meeting those aspirations together with its regional and international partners. We are convinced that it can be achieved through concerted efforts.

Mr. Chair,

Voluntary, safe and dignified return and reintegration of Afghan refugees and migrants are at the center of our efforts. The vision of H.E. the President of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is that “without the repatriation of its refugees, the Afghanistan nation remains incomplete”.

Internal displacement is another area of concern. Afghanistan is facing a huge challenge in having more than 2 million IDPs who are displaced due to either conflicts or natural disasters such as drought and flood. Therefore we welcome Secretary General’s initiative for establishment of the High Level Panel on IDPs. We are committed to closely work with the panel.

Mr. Chair,

At the highest level, the Afghan Government has identified the return and reintegration of its citizens as one of the key priorities and a building block for peace and reconciliation. We know that this is a key objective for our neighboring countries as well. In this context, we welcome the launch of regional platform for Solution Strategy for Afghanistan Refugees, yesterday by High Commissioner Filippo Grandi.

Now on pledges: My government has identified the following areas to be considered for pledges:

Burden- and responsibility-sharing

We want to ensure full inclusion of displaced persons and returning refugees in development programming and planning, together with a call on the international community to support such inclusion

In the area of Education

We are committed to expand access to education for returning refugees—in particular for girls—so as to facilitate their sustainable reintegration, together with a call on the international community to support such expanded access.

In the area of Jobs and livelihoods

Our aim is to expand access of returnees to skills training to facilitate their sustainable reintegration, together with a call on the international community to support such expanded access. Enhanced engagement with development actors and the private sector to promote investment and create jobs is critical to achieve this goal.

In the Area of Solutions

We continue working with the international community to create stable conditions necessary for the voluntary repatriation of refugees in safety and dignity and respect of their civil and political rights. Moreover, to legalize presence of Afghans in host countries, we will expand of efforts to issue passports and Tazkiras (national ID cards) to Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran. We will also facilitate expansion of access to healthcare and other public services to support sustainable reintegration.

In the Area of Protection capacity

Afghanistan's National Asylum Law, which is approved by the legislative Committee and is ready to be sent to the Cabinet. We will also enhance data collection and data management to better address the needs of refugees and other displaced populations, and to more effectively inform planning and programming.

We are also working with our partners on creating a Trust Fund to support reintegration, shelter and employment of returnees and displaced persons.

At the end, let me pass appreciation of my government to the states, international organizations and other organizations that have helped my government in supporting the refugees, migrants, returnees and IDPs.

We are looking forward to working more closely with international community in responding this situation.

I thank you Mr. Chair.