

UNHCR Virtual Informal Briefing on the Programme and Modalities for the High-Level Officials Meeting 27 October 2021, 14:00-16:00 hours (CET)

Summary of Discussions

Introduction

A virtual informal briefing for Member States and other key stakeholders was held on **27 October 2021** to provide an update on the programme and modalities for the High-Level Officials Meeting (HLOM), which will take place on 14 and 15 December 2021 in Geneva. The event was moderated by Ms. Ellen Hansen, Head of Governance Service, with opening remarks from Ms. Gillian Triggs, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection (AHC-P), followed by a briefing from Ms. Perveen Ali, Head of the Global Compact on Refugees Coordination Team. The session was followed by interventions from the floor.

Opening remarks by Ms. Gillian Triggs, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection

Ms. Triggs provided a summary of plans for the forthcoming [High-Level Officials Meeting](#) (HLOM), which will be held from 14 to 15 December 2021 to take stock of progress towards our common objectives in the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). She explained that the HLOM will be a key milestone in the process of taking forward the GCR approach and advancing commitments to more equitable and predictable burden and responsibility sharing. The meeting will be an opportunity to focus on expanding support for refugees and host countries through responsibility sharing, advancing the implementation of pledges, and identifying priorities for future pledges, partnerships, and other forms of engagement.

Ms. Triggs noted that the **GCR indicator report** will be launched on the 16th of November. Despite many challenges around data availability and quality, it is hoped that the indicator report will nonetheless help to establish a baseline upon which we can collectively build to advance our shared goals over the coming years. She explained that the report will contribute to the quantitative evidence base and will be complemented by qualitative data related to progress on GRF pledges and GCR initiatives.

In terms of [pledge updates](#), expressing thanks for all pledge updates submitted, Ms. Triggs noted that over 700 pledges have been updated out of the 1,592 total pledges received since the GRF in 2019, with 326 new updates received in the latest round. Based on information received so far, 74 per cent are reported as in progress, 8 per cent are in the planning stage, and 127 pledges have been fulfilled to date – some 30 additional pledges have been fulfilled since the last update in June. States continue to lead the progress in pledges implementation, but an equal number of the pledges from other stakeholders combined (NGOs, the private sector, academics, among others) is reported as in progress.

In the context of the HLOM, Ms. Triggs encouraged all governments and other stakeholders to ensure **representation at the senior official level** at the HLOM. She invited participants to use the opportunity of the HLOM to report on progress made in the implementation of GRF pledges and GCR initiatives, share challenges faced, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and identify recommendations for the future. She also encouraged all stakeholders to share this information as a part of both written and oral interventions at the preparatory roundtables and the HLOM.

Ms. Triggs then spoke to the **GCR initiatives** launched at the GRF which continue to be operationalized, showcasing the GCR in action, with an expanded base of support and engagement. She encouraged continued and upscaled support for these initiatives, including the three Support Platforms, the Asylum Capacity Support Group, the Global Academic Interdisciplinary Network, the Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways, and the Clean Energy Challenge.

Ms. Triggs then highlighted the significant potential in **matching** host country pledges to facilitate greater inclusion, protection, and support for refugees with pledges made by donors to provide the financial, material, or technical support necessary for their implementation. UNHCR hopes

that further matches will be secured by December, to demonstrate burden and responsibility in action, as well as sustained engagement in the GCR. Several pledges have already been matched, and others are in process of finalization. She reminded stakeholders that UNHCR remains ready to facilitate this process.

Ms. Triggs concluded by stressing that the GCR has served as an important blueprint to guide collective action in support of refugees and host communities, and it is essential that the spirit of solidarity continues to be sustained and enhanced as we approach the next Global Refugee Forum in 2023.

Remarks by Ms. Perveen Ali, Head of the GCR Coordination Team

Ms. Ali provided a detailed summary of the various virtual preparatory roundtables and virtual side-events leading up to the [HLOM programme](#).

She provided a summary of the **series of preparatory roundtables**, intended to address key issues related to the priorities for the meeting. All invitees to the HLOM are invited to participate in the roundtables. Prior to each roundtable, the link to access the roundtables will be communicated to the invitees.

The first roundtable will start with the launch of the GCR Indicator Report on 16 November, which will contribute to the evidence base of how we are advancing towards the objectives of the GCR. It will also be an opportunity to reflect on where to strengthen systems for data collection and analysis related to the GCR indicators. There will be a specific conversation focused on data capacity, limitations, and needs. This will be followed by a dedicated discussion on progress in terms of burden and responsibility sharing in view of the findings of the GCR report, progress on pledge implementation, and what has been accomplished through the various GCR initiatives.

The following four preparatory roundtables which will be focused on different aspects of the GCR objective related to financing (development financing and innovative financing mechanisms), partnerships (new partnerships, new forms of collaboration with established partners, and national/regional arrangements), self-reliance (considering advancements on inclusion, facilitation of social cohesion and peaceful coexistence, and the development of protection frameworks) and solutions (resettlement, local integration, and voluntary repatriation and reintegration). Ms. Ali noted that the sessions will provide an opportunity for the different regions and various stakeholder groups (at least 15 are mentioned in the GCR) also to speak to the key outcomes of the stocktaking exercises with a regional, stakeholder, or thematic focus held throughout the year.

The final phase of the roadmap will start in December. The main event on 14 and 15 December, will be preceded by a day of **side events** for specific stakeholder groups and initiatives set out in the GCR, all of which will be held virtually on the 13th of December. There will also be a small number of linked events in the days leading up to the HLOM, which will be listed in the programme in due course.

The HLOM on the 14th and 15th, will be held in a hybrid virtual/in-person format over the course of the two days. The meeting will be co-hosted by Switzerland and UNHCR. Similar to the first Global Refugee Forum in 2019, there will only be one **General Debate in plenary**, which will continue throughout the two days. Panel presentations on the three [priorities for the HLOM](#) will be interspersed throughout this plenary to help ensure an energetic discussion. Explaining that there will not be separate discussions under each panel, Ms. Ali noted that there will be opportunities to submit statements, participate in online polling, share recommendations online, and share content for the virtual space.

Ms. Ali mentioned that a **virtual space** has been created to showcase visual works of partners towards the objectives of the GCR and its impact including through, but not limited to, videos, written stories, photos, podcasts, reports, webinars and infographics. Submissions should be made according to the [guidelines](#). The deadline for submissions is 10 December. It is intended to extend the HLOM experience online so that all participants (virtual and in-person) have access to the same level of information and access a diverse range of content sorted by their interests.

With respect to **participation**, Ms. Ali informed that States, intergovernmental organizations, specialized agencies are requested to confirm their participation by note verbale or letter of accreditation. Each State, intergovernmental organization, and specialized agency participating will have one seat allocated for in-person participation in the Centre International de Conférences Genève (CICG). The remaining members of these delegations will have access to virtual participation.

For NGOs and all other participants, a letter of accreditation transmitted on an official letterhead will be required. In the case of individuals attending in their personal capacity, written confirmation, together with a copy of the signed invitation letter, which was issued in their name, should be sent to partnership@unhcr.org. In-person participation will be prioritized for participants who have specific roles in the meeting and will be allocated further based on other considerations, including level of engagement in the GCR and ensuring regional and stakeholder balance. She also indicated that stakeholders invited to participate in person will be informed separately in early November.

Ms. Ali outlined requirements related to **registration**. For invitees attending in person, UNOG identification badges will be used for entry at the CICG. All participants that will attend the HLOM in person at any given time (including those who are already in possession of a UNOG ID badge), must register individually online through the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) Indico system at the following link: <https://indico.un.org/e/hlom>. UNOG visitor identification badges may be collected as of Friday, 10 December 2021, from 07:30 to 18:30, at the UNOG Pass and Identification Unit (Pregny Gate). All badges must be collected by Monday, 13 December at 17:00. No supplemental badges will be required for those participants already holding UNOG ID badges.

In terms of **virtual participation**, invitees can register at the link provided in the information note online. Ms. Ali informed that instructions for virtual participation will be shared in due course.

With respect to **seating arrangements**, Ms. Ali noted strict protocol will not be applied to allow for the inclusion of the stakeholder groups listed in the Global Compact on Refugees. Seating for States will, however, be organized in English alphabetical order and will follow the General Assembly seating for the seventy-sixth session. A seating plan will be published on the HLOM webpage in due course, once registration is complete.

In terms of **speaking arrangements**, Ms. Ali noted that no formal list of speakers will be published for the HLOM, and protocol will not be strictly adhered to, to ensure participation from all stakeholder groups. Due to the limited time available in plenary, delegations are encouraged to avoid formal statements and to keep their interventions as focused as possible, highlighting developments, challenges, and key areas for further engagement.

Ms. Ali noted that speakers are asked to limit their interventions to three minutes. Delegations are invited to indicate their interest to take the floor by communicating in writing to the conference secretariat hqgovern@unhcr.org (indicating the mode of participation and exact name, title and rank, if applicable).

Given the nature of the meeting and limited time available, Ms. Ali explained there will be no delivered group statements from governments during the general debate; however, written group statements may be submitted for posting on the HLOM webpage.

All governments and other stakeholders are encouraged to **submit written interventions** for the roundtables, side events, and HLOM for inclusion on the HLOM website also to inform the summary outcome document prepared by UNHCR.

Lastly, **interpretation** will be provided in all six UN languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish) and Sign Language. In order to facilitate interpretation, and while noting that formal statements are discouraged, delegations who wish to do so are asked to provide any pre-prepared statements in advance to hqgovern@unhcr.org with the name of the delegation in the subject line.

Discussion and Closing

Following the presentations, interventions from the virtual floor were made expressing support in advancing GCR implementation and in participating in the various events related to the High-Level Officials Meeting.

Opportunities provided to engage in the process were welcomed. References were made to the ongoing work being carried out to implement pledges, match and potentially announce new pledges as well as to conduct research. The potential findings of the GCR indicators report, even in light of its data limitations, was welcomed as a starting point for focusing on gaps to be addressed in the lead up to the next Global Refugee Forum.

Interventions also inquired about procedures for participation, identification of panellists, level of participation expected, and the inclusion of refugees in the process.

In response to a question regarding accreditation, Ms. Ali explained that a deadline has not yet been set, but the information note will be updated at a later stage on the UNHCR HLOM website. Similarly, with respect to a dedicated space for other delegates who cannot be present in the conference room, she explained that possibilities will be explored and will be communicated closer to the date. She also suggested that research reports and other content be submitted for the virtual space and posted in the online chat during the roundtables, side events, and HLOM plenary.

Regarding refugee participation, Ms. Ali briefed that refugees will be participating in all the roundtables and noted that side events on age, gender, and diversity will be held on 08 December and meaningful refugee participation on 13 December. Refugees will also deliver a joint statement in the opening of the HLOM, and a refugee youth will also speak on the outcomes of the ongoing youth consultations as a part of the panel on recommendations for the future.

Ms. Ali then noted that the identification of speakers took into consideration how the panels can reflect the outcome of the stocktaking that has been conducted through the year as well as how they can reflect good regional and stakeholder balance. She also confirmed that its possible to submit a recorded statement that could be posted online. Due to the limited time, it will be unlikely that it will be possible to accommodate more than one intervention per delegation during the general debate of the HLOM. She indicated that participation is encouraged at the senior official level. While the HLOM is not a ministerial-level meeting, higher-level participation, where desired by some stakeholders, would be welcome as it is a demonstration of commitment and engagement.

The AHC-P closed the session by thanking attendees for their participation. She thanked the Swiss mission for their continued support as a co-host of the HLOM and invited all participants to approach UNHCR with any creative ideas and recommendations in the context of the HLOM.