

Draft Joint Co-Convenor/Host Statement - Delivered by the Republic of Turkey
Opening of the High-Level Officials Meeting - 14 December 2021

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Swiss Confederation, the Republic of Costa Rica, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Turkey, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in our capacity as the co-hosts and co-conveners of the 2019 Global Refugee Forum (GRF).

We take this opportunity to welcome you to the first High-Level Officials Meeting. We are pleased by the impressive level of participation by Governments, international organizations, NGOs, the private sector, refugees, and many other stakeholder groups. This meeting is an important milestone in our effort to take stock of what has been achieved since the affirmation of the Global Compact on Refugees in 2018 and the Global Refugee Forum in 2019 and to identify what still needs to be done. It is an important benchmark and opportunity: to sustain engagement, to reinforce action, to increase visibility, and to progress towards our common objectives, as we continue to amplify and galvanise political engagement and broaden the base of support for refugees and host communities around the world.

The world is in a completely different place since we assumed our role as co-hosts and co-conveners in early 2019. New conflicts have erupted while we failed to find political solutions to protracted ones. The climate crisis has intensified. The COVID-19 global pandemic has worsened already dire situations and, as a result, socio-economic inequalities have widened, in particular to the detriment of the forcibly displaced. The pandemic has also hindered resettlement efforts, widening the gap between resettlement needs and available places, while ongoing conflicts have prevented most refugees from returning home. All the while, the number of the world's forcibly displaced has continued to grow at an alarming pace.

The GCR indicator report, launched last month, demonstrated an important reality: We have made great strides overall with a whole of society approach including international financial institutions, the private sector, new partners, and critically refugees and host communities themselves. But the responsibility for addressing the challenges we face must be shared more equitably - both now and in the years to come. Although there has been some progress in terms of support to low-income countries, the provision of solutions, and refugee access to work and education, countries with limited resources continue to shoulder the lion's share of responsibility for new and protracted refugee situations. More needs to be done. To achieve our common goals there is a need to build on progress with even more quality financing, including and especially more development solutions. In addition, willingness to host refugees and to find durable solutions are crucial elements.

These are the findings that must be our call to reinforce our engagement and to build on the important progress we made so far. Let us use the High-Level Officials Meeting to this end.

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We commend all those that so actively participated in the various stocktaking events, preparatory roundtables, and side-events over the past weeks and months, the results of which will enable us to focus our collective action and engagement on burden and responsibility sharing in the areas that need it most, including as we look ahead to the next Global Refugee Forum in 2023. We are deeply encouraged by the resounding commitment to ensuring that support to refugees and hosting communities is more predictable, timely and equitable, in line with the Global Compact on Refugees, including by way of greater investment in localization, refugee self-reliance, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

We also take this opportunity to commend States, refugees, and other stakeholders for their engagement in the Support Platforms, aimed at mobilizing necessary political, financial, humanitarian, and development support for some of the most protracted refugee situations. We remain hopeful that the Support Platforms will continue to serve as key mechanisms for concrete burden and responsibility sharing.

As we surpass the half-way point until the next Forum, reflecting on the recommendations from the GCR indicator report and the main recommendations from the preparatory roundtables, we wish to outline four considerations moving forward:

First, the COVID-19 pandemic has, no doubt, created significant challenges and aggravated existing difficulties, but has also provided an opportunity for States and other stakeholders to adapt, develop, and innovate pledges and commitments made at the Global Refugee Forum. We acknowledge the development of new modalities, such as pledges and initiatives, towards the provision of humanitarian aid and development assistance, as well as the facilitation of solutions, including effective GRF pledge implementation. We call on all of you to maintain that momentum.

Second, we call for reinforced efforts to create conditions conducive for voluntary repatriation, increased resettlement opportunities and complementary pathways, as well as for increased long-term investments in the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts. More needs to be done to address root causes. Greater engagement through the humanitarian-development-peace nexus is needed to support returnees in countries of origin as well as refugees and their communities in host countries. This a joint effort that can only be achieved through enhanced global cooperation and solidarity.

Third, while international support has shown progress for refugee situations in some countries with lower income economies, others hosting large caseloads are in further need for diversified and broadened donor base and contributions, including through fostering synergies between humanitarian and development funding, and to identify innovative approaches to financing, to ease burden on host countries.

Lastly, the Global Compact on Refugees has proven to be a crucial blueprint for governments, international organizations, development actors, the private sector, and others to work together to ensure that refugees can lead productive more resilient lives and host countries get the humanitarian and development support they need. It is essential that this spirit of solidarity is sustained and enhanced as we approach the next Global Refugee Forum in 2023.

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It has truly been an honour serving as co-hosts and co-conveners over the last two years, and we welcome your continued engagement and leadership as we look towards the future.

Significant progress has been made, collectively, over the last three years, amidst the challenges, we encourage all States and other stakeholders to take concrete steps towards burden and responsibility sharing.

Our message is one of persistence.

Concretely, we call on governments and other stakeholders to redouble their efforts towards advancing GRF pledge implementation, concretizing existing pledges, supporting the many strong policy pledges made by host countries in relation to protection and solutions, and announcing new commitments both during the next two days and in the months to come. We also welcome those States, which want to step up their engagement, to contact and work with us in the preparation of the next Forum.

We stress that a continued and firm commitment to operationalise the principle of burden and responsibility sharing, at the heart of the Global Compact on Refugees, is needed more now than ever.

Millions of people are counting on us to stay the course.

We thank you.