

Global Programmes
Remarks by the Director of the Division of Resilience and Solutions,
Mr. Sajjad Malik
Standing Committee of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's
Programme (89th meeting)
Geneva, 13-15 March 2024

Distinguished Chairperson and esteemed delegates,

UNHCR's global programmes remained focused on delivering much-needed humanitarian assistance – while also championing resilience for both displaced populations and their host communities.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We saw **promising developments in economic inclusion and self-reliance**. The **Global Survey on Livelihoods** showed an increase in refugees' access to formal employment – **up to 45% in 2023. Marking a 27% increase since 2019**. While more refugees now have the right to work and open bank accounts –practical and legal barriers continue to be obstacles.

In this regard, the multi-stakeholder pledge on economic inclusion and social protection presented at the GRF was critical. It **galvanized 200 stakeholders towards enhancing legal frameworks, expanding programmes to boost employability and entrepreneurship, as well as bolstering data and evidence**. This year, UNHCR intends to build on this by working together with the co-conveners to support pledge implementation in 10 countries.

Building the self-reliance of refugees through economic inclusion also needs to be accompanied by access to quality education. **Only 7% of refugee youth manage to attain higher education**. Within this context, **the enrollment of 420,000 children across 14 countries, together with Educate A Child, is a vital achievement**. UNHCR has also developed the Global 15by30 Roadmap to elevate refugee youth enrollment in higher education. **To reach this goal, it is imperative to bolster initiatives like the DAFI**

scholarship programme. With decreasing funding, I call on member states for amplified support in this area. The response to education at the Global Refugee Forum was also heartening. Over **145 pledges were made.**

On the health front, **UNHCR is enhancing collaboration with governments and stakeholders to address the deadly impact of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs),** such as heart disease, cancer, chronic respiratory disease, and diabetes, in the refugee community. A recent achievement is the high-level **meeting on NCDs in humanitarian settings, hosted by Denmark, co-hosted by Kenya and Jordan, and co-organized by WHO and UNHCR.** This event reinforced the need to include refugees in health systems, while supporting those systems to be strengthened. **At the GRF, the Group of Friends of Health for Refugees and Host Communities, created with WHO, generated over 150 health-related commitments.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In response to the worsening **global food security crisis,** UNHCR has **partnered with key organizations such as UNICEF, FAO, and IFAD within the Global Network Against Food Crises as well development actors like World Bank and AfDB to tackle these issues more effectively.** Seizing agricultural opportunities to bolster refugee livelihoods, food security and economic inclusion is important in these partnerships.

In parallel, we're dedicated to more **environmentally sustainable solutions in our settlements, shelters, and across our WASH and energy projects.** The **human settlement pledge at GRF promoted holistic approaches to transition refugee camps into sustainable settlements that benefit both refugees and host communities.**

Kenya's Shirika Plan is a standout example. This plan leads the way by integrating refugees into socioeconomic frameworks alongside host communities. Similarly, **the transformation of Melkadida refugee camp in Ethiopia – and opportunities in Zambia and Malawi – into an urban settlement represents a significant step towards integrated sustainable development solutions for all.**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our strategic partnerships with development actors continued to play a crucial role in amplifying the reach and impact of our global programmes. As highlighted by the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations in his opening statement, our **Strategy on**

Engagement with Development Actors – introduced in 2023 – underpins our deepening engagement with global and regional IFI's as well as bilateral development actors. To implement this strategy, **UNHCR is working with development partners to ensure they include forcibly displaced and stateless people in their research, censuses and funding programmes, and that host governments have the support they need to include these populations** – in education, health care, housing, legal/administrative systems and the economy as a whole.

Notable achievements have been observed in countries where political will and development finance have played key roles. For instance, **in Uganda and Mauritania, transitions from humanitarian to development-led initiatives in the health, water, and education sectors** showcase successful socio-economic inclusion under government leadership.

Ahead of the GRF, **UNHCR worked closely with OECD DAC-INCAF Members to support Common Position on Addressing Forced Displacement with a Comprehensive Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Approach**. Now adopted, this strong policy commitment that outlines priority engagement areas for development co-operation, peace, and climate action.

The partnership between **UNHCR and the IMF has deepened** – with a notable focus on data-driven policies and analytics. This is reinforced by UNHCR's staff on loan to the IMF in Washington DC. For example, the recent inclusion of a dedicated section on Sudan and refugees' spillover in the IMF Regional Economic Outlook paper is a positive step in supporting much needed development approaches to the Sudan crisis.

Continuing the **theme of data and evidence, the ongoing support of the World Bank and UNHCR Joint Data Center** in utilizing data to inform humanitarian interventions remains important. Positively, **increasing number of governments are incorporating displaced and stateless persons into their national data systems, as evidenced by the 60 pledges made at the recent Global Refugee Forum**.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Moving forward, we remain committed to building on these successes and addressing the ongoing challenges we face.

Thank you.