

National Statement, Ireland

Global Refugee Forum, 17-18 December

**Delivered by David Stanton TD, Minister of State for
Equality, Immigration and Integration**

Your Excellencies,

I would like to thank UNHCR for convening this important Forum.

Faced with the largest flows of displaced people since the Second World War, it is vital that we act – collectively, determinedly and urgently, to implement the Global Compact on Refugees.

Our collective responsibility is to shift the landscape faced by the most vulnerable people on the planet.

Ireland was proud to be involved from the start of the process which led to the Global Compact on Refugees:

We will play a full part in seeing it implemented.

We believe that we need to act in three ways.

Firstly, we must offer support to those in need.

UNHCR, and other humanitarian organisations, work in some of the most challenging contexts around the world, and bring hope to those who need it most.

You have my thanks and those of my country.

I would also like to thank UNHCR for the essential support it provides to our domestic international protection process.

Ireland will continue to support you by advocating consistently for a safe and open humanitarian space, in which humanitarian actors can freely operate.

Financially, we have pledged €15.5 million to UNHCR for 2020.

We are acutely aware that the vast majority of refugees are in developing countries.

Ireland's new development policy, A Better World, commits us to providing 0.7 per cent of GNI by 2030 in official development assistance.

We will target that assistance towards the furthest behind first.

Secondly, we must act with renewed urgency to tackle the underlying causes of displacement.

The reality is that conflict is the single greatest driver of humanitarian need. We cannot tackle displacement without determined action to help countries resolve and emerge from conflict.

Ireland is firmly committed to peacebuilding, and has a proud record of continuous provision of peacekeepers since we joined the UN 64 years ago this week.

Should Ireland be elected to the Security Council next year, we will focus our efforts on addressing the root causes of conflict.

Thirdly, we must make our own countries places of welcome for those in need.

For many decades, Ireland was a country of emigration.

Today, we are country which welcomes those from around the world.

These arrivals enrich our society, and we are proud to welcome their voices, experience and skills.

Today, my Government agreed to increase by one-third by 2023 the number of UNHCR refugees we bring to our country compared to our target for this year.

We will diversify the cohort we welcome, and will accelerate the complementary pathways we offer.

We want to ensure that refugees who arrive in Ireland feel fully integrated into the community.

Our Community Sponsorship programme enables citizens to support refugees and to extend hands of friendship and welcome to them when they arrive to Ireland.

If each country can take steps like these, we can shift the landscape from one of despair, to one of hope.

I wish the UNHCR, and all of us, every success as we take these vital steps to implement the Global Compact.

I look forward to hearing the commitments of others.