

Global Refugee Forum 2023

Summary of Second Formal Preparatory Meeting

17 May 2023, 15:00-18:00 hrs CEST

The second formal preparatory meeting for the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) 2023 was held on Wednesday 17 May 2023, bringing together States and other stakeholders to share updates and discuss preparations for the GRF 2023. The session was opened by H.E. Jürg Lauber, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations Office in Geneva, and Ms. Gillian Triggs, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, UNHCR, as Co-Hosts of the GRF 2023. Mr. Sajjad Malik, Director, Division of Resilience and Solutions, UNHCR, presented the outcomes of the 2022 High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges as well as UNHCR's Strategy on Engaging with Development Actors. Mr. Arafat Jamal, Coordinator for the GRF 2023, UNHCR, then presented an update on the preparations for the Forum, and Ms. Perveen Ali, Senior Policy Advisor and Head of the Global Compact on Refugees Coordination Team, UNHCR, presented the proposed key outcomes and draft programme for the GRF. During the discussion that followed, Colombia, France, Japan, Jordan, the Niger, and Uganda made individual statements as the GRF 2023 co-convenors, followed by interventions from other States and stakeholders.

Opening remarks

H.E. Jürg Lauber, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations Office in Geneva

Ambassador Lauber welcomed the participants and reaffirmed Switzerland's continued efforts as co-host to ensure a successful GRF 2023. He commented on the Ambassadorial and expert-level joint meetings of the co-hosts and co-convenors held on 16-17 May 2023, underscoring the commitment of all present to ensure that the Forum in 2023 has a genuine transformative impact and leads to concrete outcomes for refugees and host communities. Ambassador Lauber then recalled Switzerland's inclusive strategy to bring together domestic and international stakeholders working with refugees in the lead-up to the Forum, and Switzerland's ongoing initiatives focused on the priority themes of protection, sustainable solutions, localisation, climate action, and resource mobilisation. With Switzerland chairing the United Nations Security Council, Ambassador Lauber recalled the centrality of protection, the lack of conditions for voluntary and sustainable return in many contexts, and the need for humanitarian, development, and peace actors to work hand in hand. Finally, Ambassador Lauber appealed to all States, particularly those that have the capacity to do more, to strengthen their commitment to responsibility sharing to realise the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR).

Ms. Gillian Triggs, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, UNHCR

Ms. Triggs extended her thanks to those who travelled from capitals of co-convenor States to join the meetings on 16-17 May 2023. Looking towards GRF 2023, she emphasised the priority for a multi-stakeholder and partnership approach and strong engagement from refugees and refugee-led organisations. Ms. Triggs indicated that the second Forum needs to demonstrate that the GCR provides the way forward to respond to growing forced displacement. In this regard, she urged stakeholders to advance the implementation of existing pledges and/or initiatives. So far, UNHCR has received updates

on more than 1,000 pledges made in 2019, of which, 27 per cent are fulfilled and 66 per cent are in progress.

Secondly, Ms. Triggs highlighted the complementarity between the GCR and the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) and their contribution to [Leave No One Behind](#) principle of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) and the [2030 Agenda](#). Investing in refugees can help promote sustainable and inclusive growth, and refugees are already contributing to the realization of the SDGs. She recalled the importance of UNHCR continuing to work with development actors to enable inclusion and self-reliance, also highlighting how engagement across the two Compacts in an “all of route” approach is a way to better respond to the movement of displaced people. In closing, Ms. Triggs invited stakeholders to share feedback on the proposed key outcomes and the draft programme. She also extended her condolences to the family of Mr. Thomas Fohgrub and remembered his dedication to ensuring that forcibly displaced people have access to clean and sustainable energy.

Outcomes of the 2022 High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges: Development Cooperation and UNHCR's Strategy on Engaging with Development Actors
Mr. Sajjad Malik, Director, Division of Resilience and Solutions, UNHCR

Mr. Malik noted that most refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs), asylum-seekers, and stateless people, live in low- and middle-income countries. Against this backdrop, the 2022 High Commissioner's Dialogue sought to identify opportunities to broaden and bolster development cooperation in the thematic areas of early action, inclusion, and solutions, underpinned by protection as the central objective. Drawing from the recently published [outcome document](#), Mr. Malik presented the cross-cutting and thematic policy and operational messages that emerged from the Dialogue, accompanied by concrete proposed actions as a way forward for UNHCR and partners, including towards the GRF 2023.

Subsequently, Mr. Malik presented UNHCR's [Strategy for Engaging with Development Actors](#). The strategy focuses on enhancing the organization's capacity to engage with development partners and hosting and return countries. UNHCR has set four measurable objectives, namely to: (1) foster commitment to protection and inclusion, (2) ensure equitable access to public services, (3) increase access to economic activities and employment opportunities, and (4) redouble joint efforts to support voluntary returns. He then outlined the key actions that are at the core of UNHCR's work towards these objectives. Finally, Mr. Malik recalled that the outcomes of the Dialogue and objectives of UNHCR's Strategy for Engaging with Development Actors are strongly aligned with the GCR objectives and with the proposed key outcome areas for the GRF 2023, and shared some key asks for development partners ahead of the Forum.

Global Refugee Forum 2023 – Preparations update
Mr. Arafat Jamal, Coordinator for the Global Refugee Forum 2023, UNHCR

On preparations for the GRF 2023, Mr. Jamal noted that many countries are holding national consultations as part of GRF preparations to discuss whole-of-society pledges. He underscored the need for new pledges and support, pre-matching of pledges with host countries, and policy commitments to advance responsibility sharing. Mr. Jamal highlighted the work of the various GCR initiatives to develop impactful joint pledges. For instance, UNHCR and the World Health Organization (WHO) launched the [Health Group of Friends](#), and the Peacebuilding Support Office established a GRF working group to develop a pledge to address root causes and enable solutions through peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Mr. Jamal recalled his recent visits to many of the co-convenor countries, with more to follow, and with each bringing something different to contribute. Several of the co-convenor and co-host countries have

established inter-ministerial bodies to work with UNHCR, civil society, and other stakeholders in a comprehensive, whole-of-society approach to the GRF. Lastly, Mr. Jamal noted that the GRF in 2023 must be seen as a benchmark in the spectrum of multilateral milestones over the course of the year, such as the SDG Summit, the Summit for the Future, the New Agenda for Peace, COP28, and more.

On pledge mobilisation, Mr. Jamal recalled that the success of the GRF 2023 depends on the quality and nature of the pledges made. Pledges should be ambitious and specific, by linking to specific contexts and by making financial, technical, or material contributions. For example, UNHCR seeks to leverage the GRF to bring actors together around the Rohingya situation. He also noted the crucial role of the private sector and invited all private sector actors to integrate and employ refugees.

Mr. Jamal introduced the concept of ‘mega pledges’ – transformational and inspirational pledges that capture the imagination of the larger public while bringing together the commitments of individuals and groups of various stakeholders. These should be multi-partner and multi-year, make a difference on the ground for refugees and host communities, contribute to realising the GCR objectives and the eight proposed key outcomes for the GRF 2023, and be clearly resourced. Emerging topics for mega pledges include education, climate, economic inclusion, labour mobility, financing windows for refugees, health, sport, and solutions, as well as more situation-specific pledges for the Rohingya, in the IGAD region, and in the Americas. Finally, Mr. Jamal reported that UNHCR is also working with partners to mobilise pledges on creating conducive conditions for voluntary and sustainable returns (GCR objective 4) and for the GRF 2023 to be a platform to support peace and durable solutions.

Global Refugee Forum 2023 – Key outcomes and draft programme

Ms. Perveen Ali, Senior Policy Advisor and Head of the GCR Coordination Team, UNHCR

Ms. Ali presented the proposed key outcomes, the draft programme, and the roadmap towards the GRF 2023. The proposed key outcomes were developed based on the recommendations from the [2021 High Level Officials’ Meeting](#) and through discussions with co-convenors and co-host, hosting and donor Governments, development partners, and many others. The eight key outcomes are grouped across the GCR’s four objectives, recognizing the need for equal attention and investment towards all GCR objectives. The proposed key outcomes are outlined in the [background note](#) for the meeting. Ms. Ali further highlighted the 200+ host country policy pledges made since 2019 and the overarching goal to see those policy pledges implemented with sustained support from donors, private sector, development actors, and other stakeholders.

On the [draft programme](#), Ms. Ali reported that due to the ongoing renovations of the Palais des Nations, UNHCR is finalising arrangements for an alternative venue in Geneva for the GRF 2023, to be announced shortly. The programme will include a plenary session running over three days, which will feature “GCR in Action” moments as opportunities for diverse stakeholders to announce the most impactful multi-stakeholder pledges. The GRF 2023 will also feature side events, a broader “GRF ecosystem” across Geneva, and the Nansen Refugee Award ceremony and reception. Key considerations for the development of the programme include the priority to give visibility to pledges that contribute to the GRF’s key outcomes, the multi-stakeholder nature of the event, diversity, inclusivity, and the meaningful participation of refugees and stateless persons, and finally, the goal of highlighting the GRF cycle from pledge implementation since 2019, what remains to be done as shown by the GCR indicator report, and the new pledges announced in 2023 to address the gaps. Finally, Ms. Ali presented the roadmap for the

remaining six months before the Forum, which is available [online](#). Invitations to the Forum have gone out to Governments and will go out to other stakeholder groups in the coming weeks.

Discussion and interventions

Co-convenor States made statements outlining their updates and their thematic priorities for the GRF 2023. Priority themes that were raised include mixed migration; the GRF as a milestone among the spectrum of multi-lateral processes in 2023 including the G7 meeting in Japan; the humanitarian-development-peace nexus; the need to alleviate pressure from host countries and expand access to third-country solutions; a holistic approach to climate change; and the need for new multi-year financing to fill identified gaps, including sustained financing for peacebuilding efforts. Overall, there was a broad call for other States and stakeholders to implement commitments made during the first Forum and to make ambitious and meaningful pledges at the GRF 2023.

Further interventions were made by (in order) Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Philippines, Germany, United States of America, Lebanon, Mexico, Australia, Ethiopia, Tanzania (United Republic of), Spain, Kenya, United Kingdom, Denmark, Bangladesh, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Pakistan, Nigeria, Brazil, Zimbabwe, European Union, World Bank, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Initiative for Child Rights in the GCR, Advisory Board to the UNHCR Task Team on Engagement and Partnership with Organizations led by Displaced and Stateless Persons, Family Reunification Network, Global Refugee Network, International Council of Voluntary Agencies, Mayors Migration Council, and International Organization for Migration.

Due to time constraints, the World Health Organization, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Labour Organization, Olympic Refugee Foundation, and Refugee Environmental Protection Fund submitted their statements in writing, and these are also reflected in this summary.

Stakeholders announced, during the meeting as well as thereafter, the following **multi-stakeholder pledges under development**:

Theme	Announcing stakeholder	To get involved, please contact the relevant GCR Initiative
Economic inclusion and social protection	United States of America	The Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative Virtual meeting on 15 June 2023
Regional arrangements	Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)	Support Platforms
Child protection	Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts	Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts
Family reunification	Refuge Point	Global Family Reunification Network
Peacebuilding	Peacebuilding Contact Group	UN Peacebuilding Strategy and Partnerships
Meaningful refugee participation	Global Refugee Network	Global Refugee Network
Local governments	Mayors Migration Council	Call to Local Action
Mixed movements	International Organization for Migration	Asylum and Migration UNHCR

Health	World Health Organization	Health Group of Friends
Sports	Olympic Refugee Foundation	Sport for Refugees Coalition
Climate action	Refugee Environmental Protection Fund	Refugee Environmental Protection Fund

Interventions also addressed the following themes and feedback on preparations for the GRF 2023:

- **On pledge implementation**, updates were shared in the areas of education, asylum capacity, voluntary repatriation, self-reliance, and tertiary education. Interventions recalled the need for tracking tools to document pledge implementation and progress.
- **On pledge development**, ongoing efforts were presented in the areas of climate finance, resilience and solutions for Rohingya refugees, documentation for stateless people, labour mobility, resettlement, localisation, private sector engagement, economic inclusion, social protection, and critical infrastructure.
- Interest was expressed in **exploring multi-stakeholder pledges** on the themes of gender, access to livelihoods, freedom of movement, climate action, root causes and peacebuilding.
- Support was expressed for the collective efforts around the **proposed key outcomes**, including welcoming the outcomes on climate action, human settlements, support for host country policies, resettlement, complementary pathways, and support for sustainable returns. The need for an ongoing multi-stakeholder dialogue around the key outcomes facilitated by UNHCR was reiterated.
- On the **draft programme**, the need for clear formats and goals that allow for diverse participation and partnerships was conveyed.
- Attention was called to the central role played by **host countries**, who make and act on pledges every day, not only every four years at the GRF.
- The importance of using the GRF 2023 as a platform to take stock of the **implementation of pledges made since 2019** was stressed, and to facilitate the **pre-matching** of new pledges.
- The need for **better alignment of financial and technical support** to the policy pledges of host countries was highlighted. Stakeholders welcomed the focus on **quality financing** for humanitarian-development-peace collaboration and urged caution towards loan-based financing.
- **Strengthening development partnerships** was pointed to as a valuable resource towards achieving the key outcomes for the GRF 2023.
- A **reaffirmed commitment** to the GCR and the principle of responsibility-sharing was expressed, as well as commending the **significant progress made by host countries**. Stakeholders recalled that the GRF is not an objective in itself, but rather a **tool to implement the GCR** and a key opportunity to assess implementation and renew political commitment to the Compact.
- The **meaningful participation** of refugees and stateless persons during the GRF process was highlighted as a priority, including as **thematic experts** to support pledge development. The utilisation of technology to **widen participation and access** to events and decision-making processes was recommended.
- Stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment to **strengthening data and evidence approaches** to forced displacement, to measuring the impact of hosting refugees, and to tracking progress and quantifying pledge implementation and impact. The forthcoming publication of the **GCR indicator report** was welcomed as a way to support stakeholders to focus, prioritize, and sequence collective action.

- The success of the GRF 2023 was recommended to be measured based on **improvements in the daily lives of refugees**; Governments were encouraged to **reflect the spirit of the GCR in national policies**.
- UNHCR and stakeholders were encouraged to **include local governments at the GRF 2023** and within the programme, and cities were invited to pledge via the [Call to Local Action](#). Stakeholders were urged to **consult with local governments on pledge development** and policy solutions.

Ms. Triggs took note of all the interventions and responded as follows:

- Expressed appreciation for all the interventions made and for the updates provided on pledge implementation and development.
- Thanked stakeholders who shared updates on the mobilisation of multi-stakeholder pledges. Recalled that leadership is important to drive multi-stakeholder initiatives that can encourage the engagement of many stakeholders from Governments to civil society, the private sector, and more.
- Highlighted that the GCR indicator report will be the primary tool for assessing implementation of the GCR, and it will be launched on the 17 November 2023.
- Emphasised that it is a priority for UNHCR to support conditions conducive to sustainable return, but recognised the persistence of protracted conflict situations.
- Stressed the role of development cooperation in supporting self-reliance and inclusion and the importance of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach within GCR implementation, with a particular focus on the peacebuilding component.
- Reaffirmed UNHCR's efforts to increase resettlement opportunities following the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on human mobility, and reiterated the need to secure other durable solutions because resettlement alone is not meeting the needs of mounting numbers of people forced to flee.
- Commended stakeholders for highlighting the need to understand and include diverse groups in the GRF 2023. Reaffirmed UNHCR's commitment to ensuring the meaningful participation of refugees and stateless people throughout the process for the GRF 2023.

Closing Remarks

H.E. Jürg Lauber, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations Office in Geneva

Ambassador Lauber's closing remarks, shared in writing due to time constraints, noted that the diversity of stakeholders in the room and online during the meeting was a testament to the success of the first GRF in broadening the base of support for refugees and stateless people, and suggested that the GCR initiatives are the next step in this process, showing how this wide group of actors can collaborate towards the key outcomes presented earlier. He closed by remarking that the Forum in December is not an end in itself, but a benchmark in the long-term implementation of the GCR: now is the time to mobilise collective support toward all four GCR objectives, with a view to the years ahead.