

## CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

77<sup>th</sup> Session of the Standing Committee  
Geneva, 11 March 2020

### Remarks by Assistant High Commissioner for Protection Ms Gillian Triggs

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Delegates and Colleagues,

I am honoured to have the opportunity to address the Standing Committee on progress with implementing the Global Compact on Refugees and on the outcomes of the Forum held in December last year. It has been especially encouraging to hear such strong continued support for the principles of the Compact and I look forward to working closely with my colleagues, especially Raouf Mazou, the AHC for Operations, and Perveen Ali who heads the new UNHCR team to follow up the Forum.

May I begin by recalling the purpose of the Forum in giving effect to the Global Compact on Refugees. The Compact followed the adoption by the General Assembly, three and a half years ago of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. The General Assembly agreed that the global community needed to reinvigorate the response to the unprecedented movement of peoples across the world, specifically to ease pressures on host countries, to enhance refugee self-reliance, to expand access to third country solutions and to support voluntary returns to the country of origin in safety and dignity.

The Global Compact on Refugees has achieved a genuine advance in that States have accepted the fundamental principle that the international community shares equitably the burden and responsibility for protecting refugees. The Compact represents a breakthrough in garnering the political will to broaden the base for refugee protection.

The compact also ensures that:

- countries in the global south, where the majority of refugees reside, have the support they need to host and protect them, and
- countries in the global north continue to ensure access to their territory to claim asylum as the right of those in need of protection, and to provide resettlement and other means to ensure protection and solutions.

UNHCR has a catalytic role in supporting the implementation of the Compact through a Global Refugee Forum, to be held every four years, with regular reporting to the UN General Assembly on progress in meeting 15 agreed indicators of successful implementation.

The First forum, held in December last year, was effective in bringing the international community together to share, in practical, concrete ways, the burden and responsibility for protection.

A whole-of-society approach was taken - at the regional and international levels - by engaging with States and international organizations, the business community and private sector, NGOs and civil society, cities and local government, faith-based groups, scholars and parliamentarians and, especially, an increased collaboration with refugees themselves. There were 3,000 participants, 90 State officials at the ministerial level or above, 55 international organizations, 130 companies and foundations, 250 multi-stakeholders and 70 refugees.

Indeed, it is testimony to the solidarity of the international community in protecting refugees that the Forum proved to be effective despite these volatile and complex times.

To use the HC's words, the Forum had "*all the makings of a success*". He was wisely cautious in his assessment, for while over 1000 pledges and commitments were made - a most encouraging indication of good will - the confirmation of real success now depends on how we give practical, concrete effect to these commitments.

This is the position we are now in: how to turn the commitments into reality. To achieve this, we need to build on the momentum generated by the Forum and for this we rely again on the continued good will of the Member States and our other partners.

**The pledges made at the GRF establish a vital baseline to transform the aspirations of the Compact into concrete solutions.**

- More than 1,000 pledges were made, including joint pledges, and more than 250 financial pledges, and 410 good practices;
- Examples of joint pledges include (i) the Clean Energy Challenge, (ii) the Netherlands-led pledge on jobs and livelihoods and (iii) the Danish GCR Coalition on education. UNHCR is especially pleased to recognize over 130,000 hours of *pro bono* legal assistance to support the implementation of the Compact.

**From this encouraging start we now need to identify what needs to be done. In short, the Forum pledges now need to be translated into action.**

- **We need to match** donor pledges of financial or other support with host country pledges of policy shifts towards greater refugee inclusion. For example, we need to see improved access to services, inclusion in the labour market, efforts at reducing statelessness, complementary pathways and access to land for shelter and livelihoods.

- **We need to concretize** “soft” pledges of \$2.3 million made by donors at the GRF reflecting their budget cycles. UNHCR encourages States to provide greater specificity of funding to facilitate the matching process and give greater clarity to each pledge.
- **A vital element of the Compact is to broaden the base of support** by encouraging States and other actors to develop further and new commitments bearing in mind that the next Global Refugee Forum will be held within 4 years.

**The Global Refugee Forum also provided the opportunity to launch new arrangements as agreed in the Compact:**

***Adoption of a 3-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways***

- As has been mentioned by my colleague, the Director of the Europe Bureau, European Union Member States have committed to resettling 30,000 refugees in 2020.
- Further commitments are now urgently needed to resettle additional refugees in need of protection and to share the global responsibility.

***Asylum Capacity Support Group (ACSG)***

- We aim to match requests for support with offers of support in the area of strengthening national asylum capacities.

***Global Academic Interdisciplinary Network (GAIN)***

- The pledges that were made towards the GAIN were welcomed from a wide range of actors interested in the GAIN, including the set-up of the Secretariat.

**In addition, at the national level, there are commitments to set up national arrangements for implementing the Compact.**

**At the regional level, the Global Refugee Forum was an opportunity to launch Support Platforms to reinforce regional refugee responses, including the MIRPS in Central America and Mexico, the Nairobi Process facilitated by IGAD in the East and Horn of Africa, and the SSAR Support Platform for Afghan Refugees.**

- The Support Platforms aim to mobilize engagement of a broader and more diverse base of stakeholders, with a view to leveraging humanitarian and development interventions to ease the pressure on host countries and create conditions conducive to return in countries of origin.

**All these inspiring and ambitious pledges now need to be translated into action, which need great investment and support.**

- It is hoped that the Member States and other stakeholders will now go back to their capitals to advance the translation of commitments into action.

- UNHCR stands ready to support and work with States and others in implementing their commitments under the GRF.
  - The AHC-P maintains global oversight of these activities, in collaboration with the AHC-O, and with the support of the GRF Coordination Team and colleagues dedicated to strengthening and broadening the organization’s multi-stakeholder engagement.
  - The UNHCR Bureaux, now located closer to the operations, will be essential in this process. Together with Country Offices, they will play a pivotal role in supporting the implementation of pledges at the regional and country level.
  - All of these efforts will be made in in close partnership with States and other stakeholders to develop and implement mechanisms for follow-up, reporting and future planning.

**In acknowledging these advances and opportunities, we should remember that the aspirations of the Compact and the pledges made at the Forum build upon the strong legal standards adopted nearly 70 years ago in the 1951 Refugee Convention.**

The Compact affirms the centrality of the 1951 Convention, the 1967 Protocol, and the principle of *non-refoulement* as the cornerstones of refugee protection.

#### **In conclusion**

UNHCR thanks Member States and all our partners for their support in giving practical meaning to the inspiring vision and burden sharing adopted by the Global Compact on Refugees.