

HIGH LEVEL OFFICIALS MEETING
14-15 December 2021

Written Statement from the Global Academic Interdisciplinary Network

Thank you High Commissioner, distinguished representatives, and others here today for the opportunity to make this intervention.

Paragraph 43 of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) called for a “global academic network on *refugee, other forced displacement, and statelessness issues* [to] be established, to facilitate *research, training and scholarship opportunities* which result in specific deliverables in support of the objectives of the global compact.” The Global Academic Interdisciplinary Network (GAIN) was launched at the Global Refugee Forum in 2019 to implement this goal. As Chair of the GAIN Secretariat, I have been privileged to see progress on all elements of Paragraph 43 in the past two years.

RESEARCH

More than 20 million USD of multi-year research has been commissioned on GCR objectives since the 2019 Global Refugee Forum,¹ the results of which will be available for the 2023 GRF. In these efforts, we particularly note good practices, like the International Development Research Centre's Forced Displacement Chairs--announced yesterday--that prioritize and strengthen research by local universities in refugee-hosting countries.²

4) To highlight some of these research efforts, the University of Essex and UNHCR co-hosted a virtual conference in January 2021 to mark the 70th Anniversary of the Statute of UNHCR.³ The panels, done in partnership with ten other universities and research institutes across the world, presenting different aspects of research on protection and solutions were made up of 50% early career researchers and 49% of persons with lived experience of displacement.

TEACHING

5) Research and teaching can never be separated in higher education and it is an area where good practices are particularly important. As mentioned in the GAIN side event Monday, one such good practice from 2019, the Brazilian-led Sergio Vieira de Mello Chairs, is now being replicated in both the Dominican Republic and Ethiopia.⁴

6) Building teaching capacity through innovative approaches is also needed. Since 2019 the growing member numbers and the playbook of the Connected Learning in Crisis

¹ This includes the PROECT Consortium Project (<https://protectproject.w.uib.no/>) and Protracted Displacement in an Urban World (<https://www.protractedisplacement.org/>), outcomes of which were both pledged at the 2019 GRF.

²Announcement of eight research chairs funded by the International Development research Centre (<https://globalcompactrefugees.org/article/research-chairs-will-anchor-knowledge-forced-displacement-global-south>)

³ The "70 years protecting people forced to flee" event report and session recordings are available here (<https://www.essex.ac.uk/events/2021/01/18/gain-conference---opening-and-closing-ceremonies>)

⁴ Academic HLOM side event recording is here (<https://www.unhcr.org/high-level-officials-meeting-advanced-day-13-dec-side-events.html>) and the 2019 De Mello Chairs Good Practice is here (<https://globalcompactrefugees.org/article/education-forwith-refugees-parana>)

Consortium have expanded to help facilitate the scale up of quality distance and blended learning for refugee students to continue their studies in spite of pandemic lockdowns.⁵ Significant progress is also underway to help equip inclusive campuses in Europe through the development of the UNISTAR curriculum for university staff working with refugee students, which will be released in 2022.⁶ We also note the pledge completed by the International Institute for Humanitarian Law to develop courses for government officials and civil society on the GCR, which was resulted in 592 participants from 122 countries being trained since 2019.⁷

SCHOLARSHIPS AND SOLIDARITY

7) Progress has been seen towards the 15x30 target --which in support of Sustainable Development Goal 4--works to ensure that 15% of persons living in forced displacement are in tertiary education by 2030.⁸ At the launch of the project after the 2019 GRF, there were only 3%, now it is 5%. However, there is still a long way to go to triple enrolment by 2030.

7) In 2019 we additionally did not have data on the numbers of displaced scholars and scientists looking to return to safe and dignified work in line with SDG 8. We now know that this number is around 10,000 and the growing, multi-stakeholder, Science in Exile network is advocating for solutions for them.⁹

As we look to continue to innovate solutions for these students, scholars, and scientists, we need to ensure their voices help shape the interventions we design in solidarity between now and 2023. Progress on pledges like the University of New South Wales Displaced Scholar Mentor Program help ensure this happens ¹⁰

8) A written version of this statement, with links to the various initiatives described is available online. Thank you.

⁵ The playbook of the Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium is available here (<https://connectedlearning4refugees.org/digital-playbook/about-the-playbook/>)

⁶ More information on the UNISTAR curriculum is available here (<https://www.vub.be/en/theworldneedsyou/people/project/unistar#about-unistar>)

⁷ Detailed progress on the International Institute for Humanitarian Law, San Remo pledge is in the Virtual Space (<https://globalcompactrefugees.org/article/online-capacity-building-programme>)

⁸ The strategic roadmap for 15x30 is available here (<https://www.unhcr.org/605a0fb3b>)

⁹ Science in Exile Network Virtual Space submission (<https://globalcompactrefugees.org/article/podcast-gives-platform-refugee-scholars>)

¹⁰ University of New South Wales Displaced Scholars Peer Mentor Program Virtual Space submission is here. (<https://globalcompactrefugees.org/article/displaced-scholars-peer-mentor-program>)