



THE ROAD TO 2023

ASSESSING PROGRESS AND
ACCELERATING DELIVERY
ON THE UN COMMON PLEDGES
IN ADVANCE OF THE NEXT
GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM

November 2021

At the 2019 Global Refugee Forum (GRF) the international community came together to demonstrate solidarity with the world's refugees and the countries and communities that host them, and to make pledges aimed at engaging all stakeholders to build long-term solutions. A pledge made by the UN Secretary-General, and another made by the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator, committed UN entities to consider refugees in their own analyses and plans, and to advocate with refugee hosting governments to facilitate refugees' inclusion in national systems. These two pledges are the focus of this report.¹

UN Common Pledge

- We stand by refugees and will work with governments to include refugees and returnees in relevant development programmes.
- We will advocate for refugees and returnees to have access to national services in countries of origin, countries of transit and refugee-hosting countries.
- We will advocate for the inclusion of refugees and returnees in regional frameworks and national development plans and reviews, as well as the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. We will work to provide technical, financial and programming support to host countries for this purpose.

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Pledge

- The IASC agencies will work with UNHCR and host governments to ensure that all our analysis, policies and response plans integrate the needs of refugees and displaced people.
- We pledge to systematically consider how to allocate technical, financial and programming support to host countries in line with the GCR and SDG pledge of Leaving No One Behind.
- The IASC member agencies commit to work with UNHCR to support refugees and host governments, to put the needs of refugees and returnees at the centre of humanitarian and development projects.

¹ Whilst returnees are mentioned in the pledges, this is a much smaller group than refugees. Incidents of voluntary return continue to be rare, whilst forced displacement is growing. For these reasons the focus of this report is refugees.

Co-authored by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the United Nations Development Coordination Office (UNDCO), this report provides an account of progress to date in implementing these pledges; shares some of the learning generated so far; and outlines key strategic actions that the UN and others need to take in order to realize these commitments by 2023, when the next GRF will take place. The report draws on the following data sources:

1. Results from a [desk review](#) of system-wide, country specific UN plans undertaken in April 2021
2. Responses from a [survey](#) compiled by a majority of UN agencies on actions taken by them to deliver against the pledges, undertaken between March and May 2021
3. Outcomes from a [virtual stocktaking event](#) on the pledges held on 26 May 2021.

This report does not provide an exhaustive account of the many actions and adjustments across the UN system that are helping to realize the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). These include policy shifts such as the new Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR), as well as structural changes linked to the reform of the UN development system; and the reconfiguration of the UN at regional level. Instead, this report offers an overview of trends in UN system-wide planning tools, and insights arising from the experience of those UN entities whose work includes a focus on refugee issues.

The learning and key asks presented here are intended to inform discussions at the High-Level Officials Meeting in December 2021, where the international community will review how far the ambitions of the GCR have translated into concrete improvements in the lives of refugees and host communities. The idea is to examine progress made so far, identify accelerators, and set the strategic direction for the next round of pledging at the 2023 GRF.

Diomade Manman, an urban refugee from Côte d'Ivoire, stands in front of her street food stall in Ajah market, Lagos state.



Evidence of progress

Findings from a desk review of interagency, country specific UN plans

In collaboration with UNDCO and OCHA, UNHCR undertook a desk review of the following interagency planning documents in refugee hosting countries², before and after the UN common pledge and IASC pledge were made:

- United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs)
- Socio-Economic Response Plans for COVID-19 (SERPs)
- Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs)
- Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs).

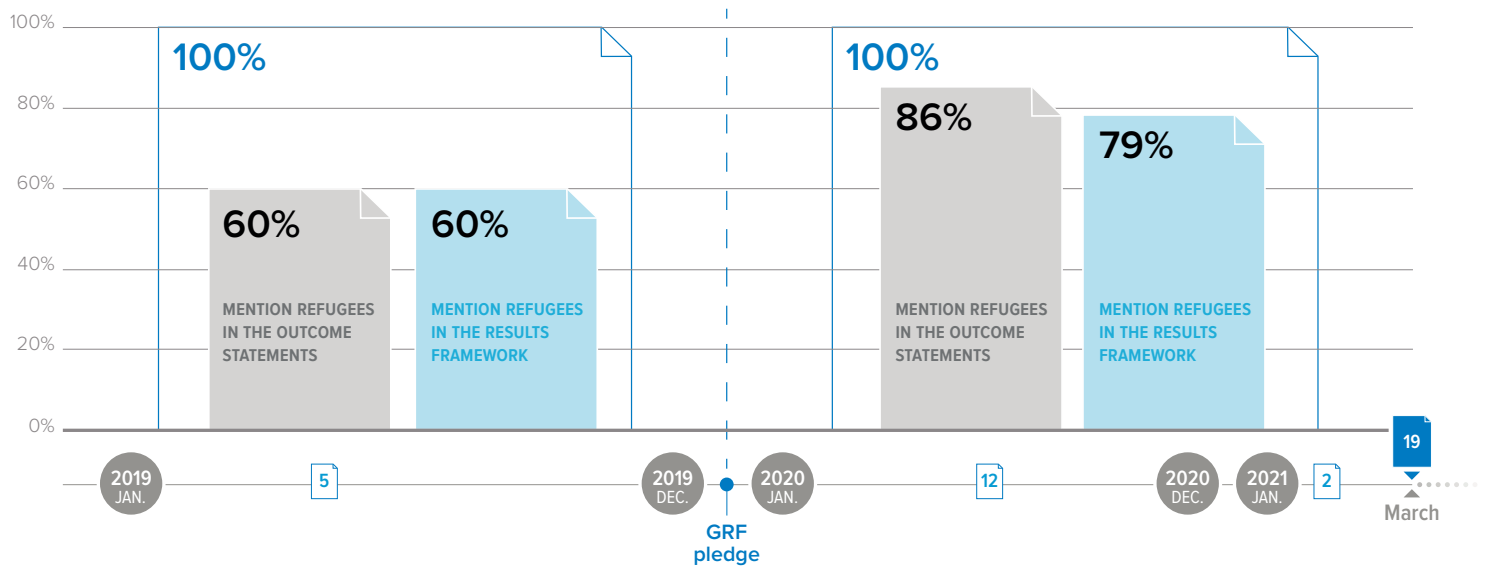
The review assessed the extent to which these plans include refugees³, and any changes following the pledges (with the exception of the SERPs, since these were one-off plans developed in 2020 due to COVID-19). Agreed criteria were applied to assess whether plans included refugees or not.

The overall finding of the desk review is that, for the period assessed from January 2019 to December 2019 (pre-pledge) and from January 2020 to March 2021 (post-pledge), the inclusion of refugees in the plans reviewed has been strong, both on the humanitarian and the development side, with a slight increase in the period since the pledges were made.

2 The World Bank criteria for eligibility to its refugee sub-window was used to select the refugee hosting countries, that is: *if the country hosts at least 25,000 refugees or if refugees make up at least 0.1 per cent of the country's population.*

3 According to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Article 1 A.(2) the term refugee applies to any person that: "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it."

Extent to which United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks in refugee hosting countries include refugees⁴



As the backbone of UN engagement at country level, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) outline the UN Country Team (UNCT)’s agreed strategic direction and priorities. Data gathered demonstrated that the majority of UNSDCFs in refugee hosting countries tend to include refugees. Increased attention was clear following the 2019 pledges: from 60 per cent mentioning refugees in the outcome statements and in the results framework prior to the pledges, to 86 per cent mentioning refugees in the outcome statements and 79 per cent mentioning refugees in the results framework post-pledge.

Refugees are commonly included by being listed as one of several vulnerable groups, which are then referred to generally throughout the document. However, in some cases the framework specifically focuses on the needs and vulnerabilities of refugees, with corresponding actions to promote and support their inclusion in national systems. For example, the UNSDCF for the Democratic Republic of the Congo 2020-2024 specifically

⁴ Three UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) developed before the introduction of the new UNSDCF were included in this desk review.

includes refugees as a target group in each of the three pillars of its results framework (which cover human rights, socio-economic development, and access to services).

Another positive example is the UNSDCF for Mexico 2020-2025, which is organised around four mutually reinforcing priority areas: Equality and Inclusion; Prosperity and Innovation; Green Economy and Climate Change; and Peace, Justice and the Rule of Law. Migrants and refugees are considered as a *transversal area* across all the priorities, together with gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. As a result, refugees are considered in all development strategies as well as being included in the results framework.



Announced by the government in February 2021, temporary protection status is a legal mechanism offering temporary protection to Venezuelans in Colombia for 10 years and complements the international refugee protection regime. Official status will enable them to earn a living and establish socioeconomic inclusion for Venezuelans, many of whom have struggled to integrate and rebuild their lives.

Congolese refugee, Josephine Mbayo, 48, stands among her maize, grown with water gathered from Tongogara camp's newly improved water system in Chipinge, south-eastern Zimbabwe.



Extent to which Socio-Economic Response Plans for COVID-19 in refugee hosting countries include refugees

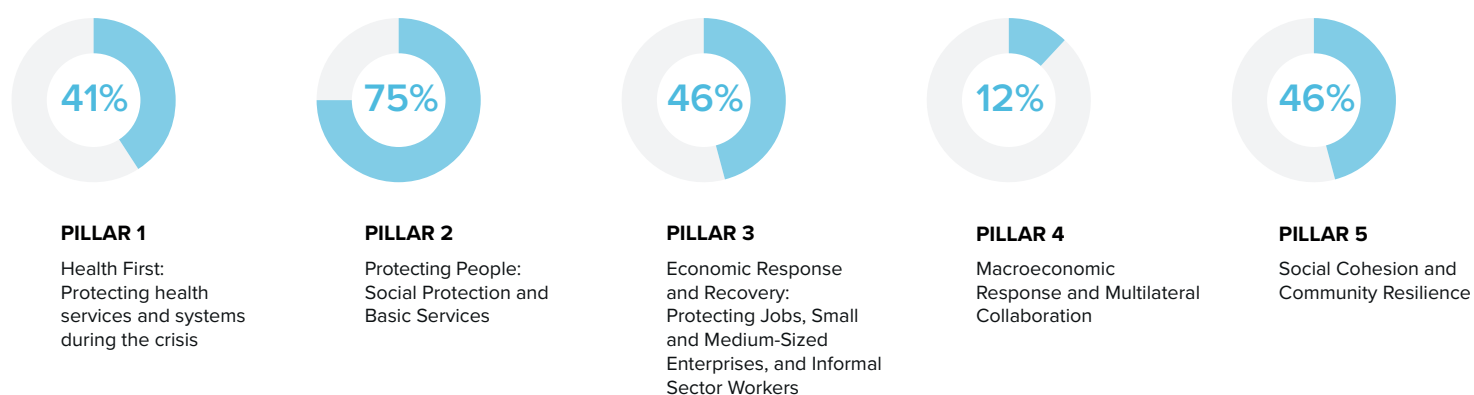
The SERPs could be considered a ‘stress test’ of the UN system, were produced by the UN Country Team (UNCT) under time pressure to respond to the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 and set strategic directions for recovery. As such, they include both humanitarian and development elements and reflect the UN’s priorities in both the short and medium term.

Inclusion of refugees in the SERPs was consistently high in refugee hosting countries, with 98 per cent of SERPs making at least one reference to refugees and 88 per cent including refugees in their strategic pillars. Several SERPs also made links with pre-existing refugee

focused plans, for example Turkey's SERP referred to interventions under the Syria Crisis Regional Refugee Response Plan (3RP) and the Latin American SERPs were also aligned with the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela.

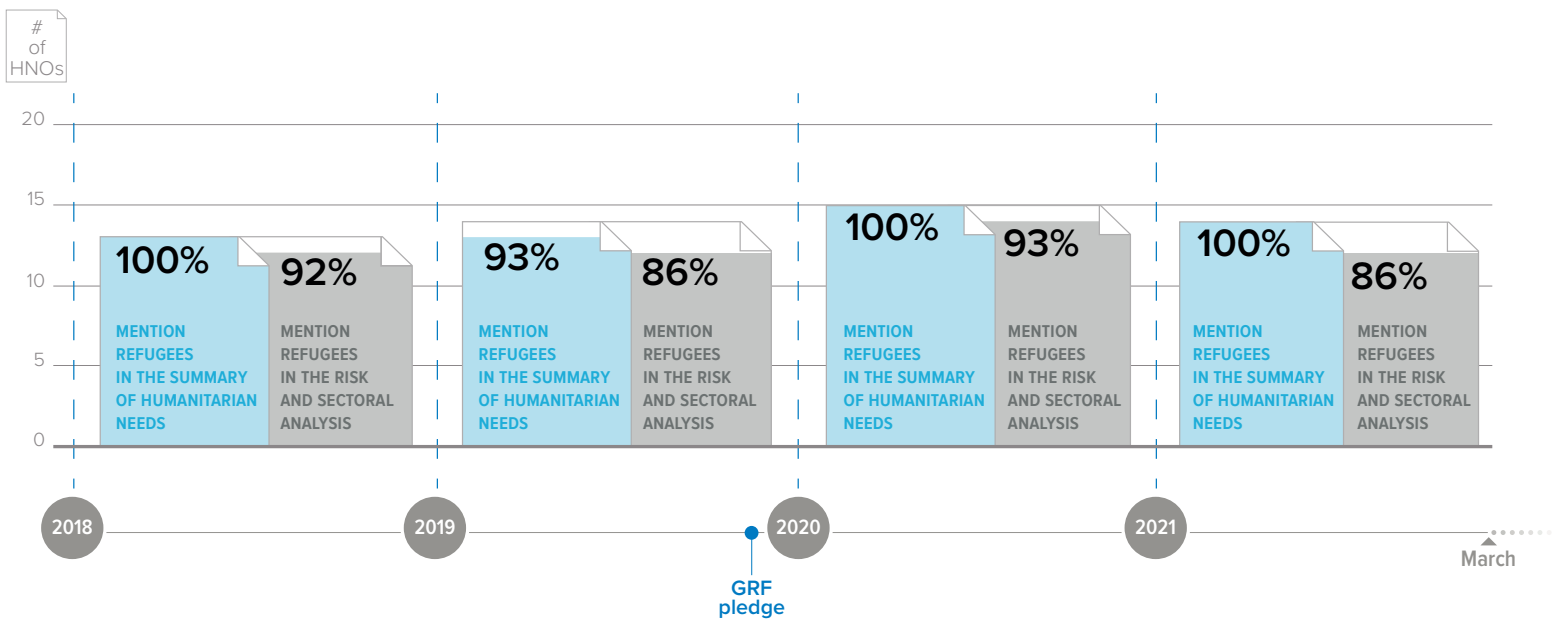
As with the UNSDCF, UN Country Teams most often opted to include refugees in SERPs by listing them as a vulnerable group affected by the pandemic. There are variations in whether they specifically included refugees in each of their five pillars, as illustrated below.

PROPORTION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESPONSE PLANS INCLUDING REFUGEES IN EACH STRATEGIC PILLAR



Exceptionally, the SERP for Brazil includes refugees in all five pillars, recommending for example that refugees and migrants be included in the socioeconomic and environmental response, both as beneficiaries of life-saving interventions (noting that essential services and information should be accessible in relevant foreign languages), but also as a source of social and economic capital. The plan promotes investment in skilling and re-skilling refugees, migrants, and returnees to increase their access to decent work and includes support to entrepreneurship initiatives and social innovation. These kinds of provisions for refugees are essential to increase self-reliance, in line with the vision set out under the GCR. They also represent a clear example of the UN family living up to its commitments under the UN common pledge and IASC pledge.

Extent to which Humanitarian Needs Overviews in refugee hosting countries include refugees



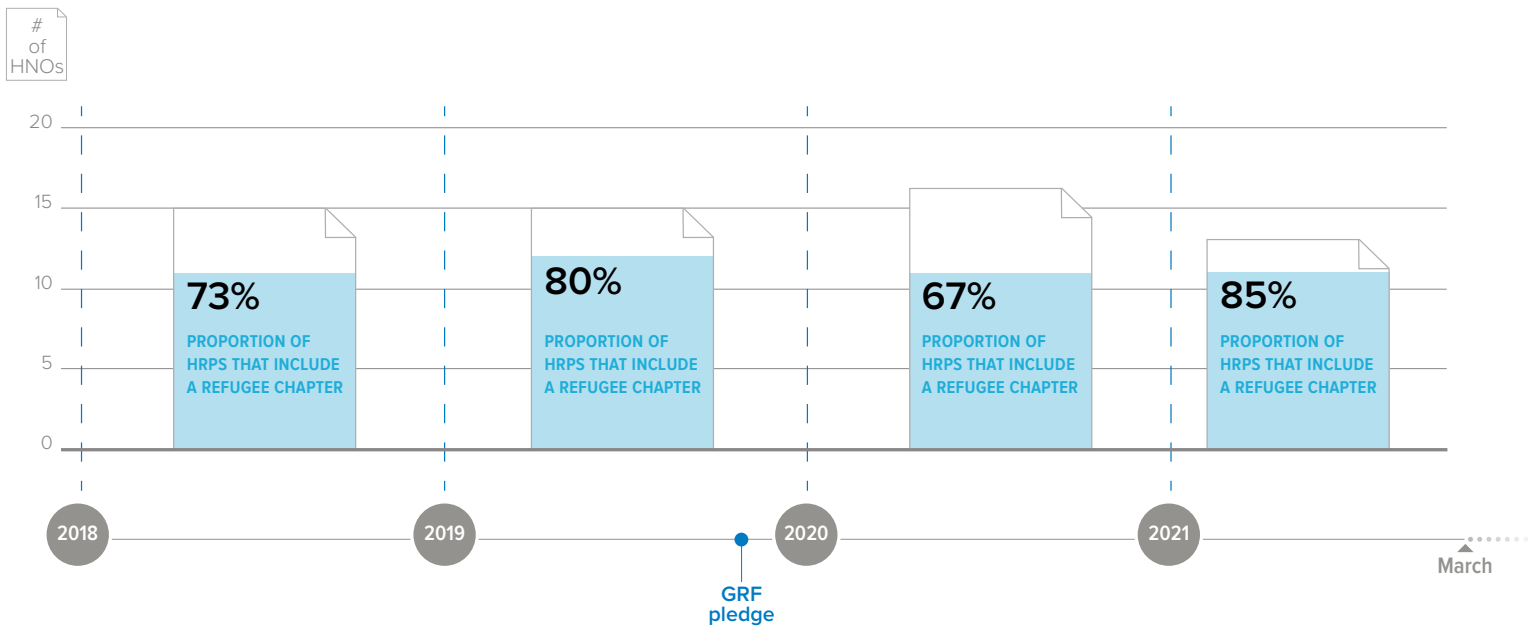
As the above graphic demonstrates, refugees tend to be consistently included in HNOs. Taking an average across all four years covered by the review, 98 per cent of HNOs in refugee-hosting countries refer to refugees in the summary of humanitarian needs, and 89 per cent refer to refugees in the risk and sectoral analysis section. There is also evidence of further incremental strengthening of this aspect of HNOs – since the pledges, *all* HNOs in refugee-hosting countries include analysis of refugee needs at least once in the summary of humanitarian needs, compared to 96 per cent before the pledges; and 90 per cent mention refugees in the risk and sectoral analysis, compared to 89 per cent before the pledges.

Further examination reveals that a holistic approach tends to be used in HNOs, so that references to refugees can sometimes include returning refugees who are nationals of the country, or national refugees in neighbouring countries. Even where refugees are not considered in the risk and sectoral analysis, they may nonetheless be considered in other parts of the document that cover the impact of the crisis and humanitarian consequences – as is the case in the 2020 Nigeria HNO for example.



Diffa, Niger. Two young girls go over the lesson of the day on the blackboard at their school Boukari Sabo I. The class has welcomed and included 5 refugees from Nigeria.

Extent to which Humanitarian Response Plans in refugee hosting countries include refugees



A similar positive picture emerges from the review of HRPs: inclusion of refugee needs was already high following close coordination between UNHCR and OCHA before the pledges; and across the two subsequent years an average of 76 per cent of HRPs had a dedicated refugee chapter. Further reading and comparison reveals that absence of a dedicated chapter (the criteria used to assess inclusion of refugees) does not tell the whole story. For example, the 2020 Iraq HRP does not have a dedicated refugee chapter, but it targets populations in acute need of humanitarian assistance (not excluding refugees). In addition, the document mentions that the refugee response in Iraq is covered by the 2019-2020 Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP). In the 2020 Afghanistan HRP, there is no refugee chapter, but it is mentioned that the HRP draws on the GCR and the Global Compact on Migration to support durable solutions to displacement; and refugees are included as one of the prioritized population groups.

Results from a survey of UN entities on pledge implementation

In the period March-May 2021, 20 UN entities who had actively engaged in the 2019 GRF⁵ were invited, through a survey, to share an account of the actions they had taken to implement the pledges. The survey included questions about attention to refugees in programming and advocacy, and any adjustments made in relation to human resources and budget in order to deliver on the pledges. Sixteen survey responses were received.

The survey responses detail an impressive range of actions taken by different UN offices and agencies, highlights of which are summarised in Annex 1. Data indicate that several agencies have established new initiatives, often in the areas of partnerships and coalitions, and in some cases these are linked to specific pledges made by the same agencies at the GRF. An example of this is the *Clean Energy Challenge* which aims to provide affordable,

5 UN Entities that had made pledges at the GRF were considered to have actively engaged in the event and were invited to respond to the survey. These included: FAO, IOM, ITU, OCHA, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Peace Building, Support Office, Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against Children, ILO, UN Women, UNDCO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNV, WFP, and WHO.

Samuel, a 23-year-old refugee from Ethiopia, sifts grain he received in a food handout in Um Rakuba refugee camp in eastern Sudan before taking it to be milled.



reliable, and sustainable energy to all settlements of forcibly displaced people and nearby host communities by 2030.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the COVAX programme, from the outset, included refugees and migrants as a disadvantaged group and made provisions to make vaccines available to refugee populations. WHO has worked with UNFPA, UNICEF and UNHCR to develop a Minimum Service Package for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for refugees and displaced people.

Some UN entities have set up specific guidance and programming to ensure that refugees/returnees are 'mainstreamed' in their plans, programming, and advocacy, while others have specific programmes to improve refugees' access to basic social services, decent work, and self-reliance. For example:

- UNICEF and UNHCR have developed a 'Blueprint for Joint Action for Refugee Children' to accelerate efforts under a transformational agenda to promote and protect the rights of refugee children and communities that host them through the inclusion in national plans, budgets and service delivery systems in education, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and child protection, reaching 20 per cent of the world's refugee children.
- UNV and UNHCR have established a 'Refugee UN Volunteer Special Initiative' that enables refugees to take a remunerated UN Volunteer deployment according to their competencies and skills, which allows them to become active agents of change.
- To counter refugees' vulnerability to job losses due to the pandemic, ILO has worked in many countries to ensure social protection for refugees, returnees and host communities, and has sought to support employers to retain workers to deal with the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.

Other UN entities, such as the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, and the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, are using their unique vantage point to advocate on refugee rights and promote access for refugees to nationally available protections and services.

Highlights from a stocktaking event on the UN Common pledge and IASC pledge

On 26 May 2021, UNDCO, OCHA and UNHCR co-convened a discussion with 100 UN personnel from 15 UN entities, based in different countries and regions, through a virtual platform, to assess progress in fulfilling the UN common pledge and the IASC pledge, and harvest learning.

During the discussions, experiences shared demonstrated that the following approaches have proven to be helpful:

- **Joint efforts between multiple UN agencies** to support inclusion of refugees in national systems, rather than efforts that rely on the capacity and expertise of one agency.
- **Tailored programmes** to promote and support inclusion of refugees in national and local service delivery systems (rather than imposed from outside) that are aligned with local strategies.
- **Approaches that consider refugees as active agents of change** and valuable human capital, rather than as passive recipients of services.
- **Flexible, multi-year funding** which allows the UN and partners to adapt to changing needs, constraints and opportunities on the ground which are a feature of many refugee situations.
- **Pragmatic approaches which cut out unnecessary process**, such as multiple or duplicated pre-assessments of refugees' and host communities' needs.

Afghan returnee and tomato grower, Freshta Akbari, 23, inspects her greenhouse harvest, in the Jebraail district of Herat province, Afghanistan.



Emerging challenges

Discussions at the stocktaking event revealed the following key challenges in implementing the UN common pledge and the IASC pledge:

- **Refugees are often hosted in marginalized and underserved areas**, resulting in protracted provision of parallel services under a UN-led response. Transition to national service provision requires extension and strengthening of national systems and can sometimes also bring the risk of a drop in quality.
- **In some contexts, refugees are a sensitive political issue, or a low priority** and the government may be reluctant to invest in local solutions. It can be challenging for the UNCT to reconcile the imperative of championing refugee rights at the same time as building a constructive and positive relationship with government.
- **Engagement between UN agencies and local/municipal governments is underdeveloped**; as a UN family the locus of our engagement tends to be at capital level. We rarely facilitate technical and financial support to cities, municipalities and communities hosting refugees. It was noted that funding can often get ‘stuck’ in the capital.
- **As a UN family, we under-use the peace pillar of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus** to address refugee issues. There is room to engage refugees more in efforts to promote peace and stability.
- **In mixed settings there are challenges associated with having different coordination systems**. It is essential that in contexts where there are both refugees and IDPs, the Humanitarian Coordinator – in partnership with UNHCR on refugees and further organizations on IDPs, based on the roles and responsibilities set by the 2014 Joint UNHCR-OCHA Note on Mixed Situations – ensures coordination is streamlined, complementary and mutually reinforcing for all humanitarian, development, and peace actors.

- **Connectivity in poor urban and refugee-hosting areas has been deprioritized** by some governments where budgets are tight, despite this being considered basic infrastructure.
- **There has been slow progress towards enhancing refugees' self-reliance and livelihoods** while the COVID-19 pandemic has increased refugees' vulnerability and their need for access to decent work.
- **Protracted conflicts and insecurity have been major impediments to humanitarian and development access**, making it hard to promote refugee inclusion.
- **Global and national reprioritization of resources as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic** has led to resource limitations, with direct impact on refugee operations in various countries.

An audience poll conducted during the stocktaking discussion generated the following common priorities:

- 1.** The challenge most in need of collective attention is ensuring financing for refugee host countries.
- 2.** The most relevant action to realize the pledges is to advocate for refugees to be included in national plans and budgets.

Conclusions

1. There has been positive progress in including refugees in the UN humanitarian and development plans, such as the Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) and Socio-Economic response plans to COVID-19 (SERPs).

The UN Resident Coordinator coordinates all elements of the United Nations system supporting development initiatives, to ensure that the UN provides coherent, effective, and efficient support to global, regional, and national goals. The Resident Coordinators' leadership is therefore key in mobilizing the UNCT's support to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This can be done by leveraging the diverse mandates, leadership, expertise, capacity, resources, and influence across UN entities. The Resident Coordinator system represents a formidable lever to advance the fulfilment of the two pledges on refugees. In countries where it works well, the whole UN family advocates with one voice for refugees to be included in national plans, budgets, and service delivery systems while contributing to the support required at national and sub-national levels to achieve this.

The refugee elements of the UN's humanitarian planning tools (HNOs and HRPs) have benefited from the overall increase in quality achieved over recent years through the enhanced Humanitarian Programme Cycle. The process is accompanied by greater emphasis on inter-sectoral analysis, examining the combination of factors that affect the way in which different people experience crises. This holistic approach is reflected in the way that some of these plans integrate refugee-related issues across all relevant sections as well as in stand-alone chapters.

2. Individual UN entities are committed to deliver on the pledges and are doing so.

Many have adjusted their policies and processes to ensure the inclusion of refugees in their plans, programming, and advocacy. Several have extended their programmes,

leveraged their strengths, and formed new partnerships to bring together complementary expertise to better reach and serve refugees. Some UN entities have specific programmes to promote the inclusion of refugees and improve their access to basic social services and decent work.

3. There is further room for improvement. Whilst the UN family is doing well on inclusion of refugees in its own plans, we can and must extend efforts more consistently, in partnership with host governments, to facilitate the inclusion of refugees in national systems. This means inclusion in national and municipal datasets, plans, budgets, and service delivery systems. It also means ensuring that refugees' potential to contribute socially and economically is recognized and developed. This makes economic sense and ensures refugees' dignity.

How the UN can deliver better

The UN entities who contributed to this report⁶ commit to accelerating realization of the

1

Consistently advocating for the rights and the protection of refugees, recognizing that the GCR is built on the foundations of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, and remains crucial.

2

Advocating for refugees' inclusion in national plans and budgets as a *collective UN priority*. We will leverage the Resident Coordinator's leadership to mobilize the expertise, resources, capacities, and influences of each member of the UN family in support of refugees' inclusion.

3

Demonstrating solidarity, persistence, and political courage where inclusion of refugees in national plans and budgets is politically sensitive or a low priority, or where access to refugees is limited.

4

Leveraging regional UN structures to promote refugees' inclusion, and to exchange learning (e.g. Regional Collaborative Platforms, Issue Based Coalitions).

5

Partnering with national and local authorities (including municipalities) to develop approaches to refugee inclusion which are tailored to local realities and strengthen delivery of services, including connectivity.

⁶ These are: FAO, ILO, IOM, ITU, OCHA, UNDCO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, UNV, WFP, WHO, the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, and the Peacebuilding Support Office.

At the global level, the UN family will continue to track progress and share learning on implementing the UN common pledge and the IASC pledge. Where possible, moments of reflection will be built into existing reviews and processes such as the Global Humanitarian Overview, the UNSDCF's reviews and the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. A **second stocktaking in the first quarter of 2023** will review progress based on a refreshed dataset that will also include Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the review criteria to develop a holistic understanding of responses to forced displacement.

The next GRF in 2023 is an important opportunity to further transform the protection, care and opportunities for all those forced to flee and the communities that host them.

ization of the pledges by:

- 6** Fully applying humanitarian, development and peace capacities in support of inclusion of refugees in national systems, recognizing that there is room to further leverage and complement the UN's development capacities and the peace pillar in most contexts.
- 7** Working in partnership with refugees to ensure that programmes are relevant and empowering. We will prioritize socioeconomic integration, including through access to decent work and social protection systems. For children – who make up 42 per cent of refugees globally – we will prioritize access to education, child protection and child-sensitive services, such as water and sanitation facilities that are safe for boys and girls.
- 8** Promoting social cohesion, including through leveraging media organizations, educational institutions, and the cultural industry. In many contexts, discrimination and intolerance, exacerbated by misrepresentation in the media and misinformation (especially in online spaces), inhibit progress on the common UN pledges.
- 9** Continuing to build the evidence base on a) what works to progress refugee inclusion and b) the benefits of inclusion – to better make the case with governments and be more effective partners.
- 10** Advocating for increased financing for refugee hosting countries with member states, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), the corporate sector and others.

How refugee-hosting governments, donors and institutions can support fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda

Refugee-hosting governments; donors in the humanitarian, development and peace spheres; and IFIs such as the World Bank and regional development banks; have significant capacity to support realization of the UN common pledge and the IASC pledge. Therefore, the UN family is making the following strategic asks to ensure the inclusion of refugees in national plans, budgets, and service delivery systems:

For refugee-hosting countries

- Include refugees in national datasets, plans and budgets, using participatory processes.
- Identify and cost the extensions and improvements to national service delivery systems needed to reach refugees (including access to decent work and connectivity), advocating for international support as needed.
- Use the 2023 GRF to mobilize greater and more effective international support; elevate the challenges; and build solutions to enable inclusion of refugees in national and local services.
- Secure UN and UN partners' access to refugee-hosting areas so that they can provide support.
- Collect evidence on what works to progress inclusion of refugees in plans, budgets, service delivery systems and the job market – and design approaches built on this evidence. Enlist refugees, the UN, civil society, the local private sector, local and municipal authorities, local and national media organizations, and academia in this effort.

donors and international financial the UN common pledges

For international financial institutions

- Continue to expand support (loans and grants) to refugee-hosting countries; apply mechanisms to ensure that this financing does not get 'stuck' at the capital level but reaches refugee-hosting municipalities and localities.

For donors

- Use your resources and influence to promote and support refugees' inclusion in national plans and budgets, and to leverage international financing to facilitate this.
- Provide flexible, multi-year funding to UN entities working on refugee issues to enable an adaptive and effective response, oriented to medium-term goals, and aligned with the UNSDCFs, HRPs and Refugee Response Plans in refugee-hosting countries.
- Ensure that support you provide reaches the areas where refugees are hosted e.g. by providing or facilitating technical assistance, and tracking benefits.

Annex

Examples of actions taken by different UN entities to fulfil the UN common pledges



RAVES project in Kenya.

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Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

The FAO has invested in increasing its capacity to advocate for inclusion of refugees and returnees in country level programming and policy. The organisation has provided technical, financial, and programme support to host governments to address the needs of refugees and returnees, while strengthening their resilience and self-reliance - including through sustainable, agriculture-based livelihoods. Together with partners, FAO has implemented programmes on sustainable management of forest resources for energy access, livelihood resilience, and food security; thereby supporting the economic inclusion of

refugee and host communities in agricultural value chains. *A Value chain approach for economic integration and self-reliance of refugees and host communities in East Africa (RAVES)* initiative was launched on April 2021 in Kenya, in partnership with UNHCR. In addition, as part of a UN joint project on enhancing self-reliance of refugees and host communities, FAO is using Farmer Field School extension methodology to enhance crop and livestock production, livelihoods, and natural resource management for refugees in Kalobeyei and host locations.



KIGEP programme aiming to facilitate access to the formal labour market and retention of formal jobs to bolster both refugees and host communities' resilience in Turkey.

© ILO / RIVANIC OZVAEDAR

International Labour Organization (ILO)

The ILO advocates to support refugee inclusion in labour markets, promoting decent work and creating an enabling environment for socio-economic development in host communities and refugee integration. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ILO developed contingency planning and mitigation strategies to support the inclusion of displaced populations in COVID-19 response and recovery process. To counter the vulnerability of refugees to job losses, ILO has promoted social protection and support for employers to enable them to retain workers. In Turkey, there is evidence that workers who received support from ILO's *Transition to Formality Programme* (KIGEP) were able to keep their jobs.

ILO's engagement in refugee contexts has seen an increase in dedicated staff who provide technical support; as well as joint resource mobilization with UNHCR and other agencies. Results are already evident under *PROSPECTS*, where in August 2020, the ILO and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) signed an implementation agreement to boost formal employment amongst displaced and host populations. In the Latin America and Caribbean region, as co-lead of the *Socioeconomic and Cultural Integration Sector of the R4V Platform*, ILO is implementing a *Regional Strategy for the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelan refugees and migrants and their host communities* jointly with UNDP.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

IOM works with governments and UNHCR to arrange safe and dignified movement of refugees. This includes providing health assistance to ensure early detection and treatment of conditions of individual and public health concern, as well as pre-departure orientation (PDO) for refugees, including youth and children. UNICEF, IOM, UNHCR, OECD and other partners have joined forces to protect children through the International Data Alliance on Children on the Move which aims to improve data and statistics to support evidence-based policymaking. IOM, the European Union (EU) and UNHCR are also joining forces to promote

integration and peaceful coexistence among refugees, migrants and vulnerable host communities in a new initiative launched in 11 countries throughout Central and South America, and the Caribbean. IOM has prioritized assistance to vulnerable individuals including refugees impacted by the pandemic through Business Development Support services such as advising and counselling, vocational trainings, on-the-job trainings, and Business Support Packages to increase beneficiaries' skillsets and promote income generation at the household-level.

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

ITU works to include marginalized populations across its key thematic areas of work, which include digital policy and regulation, digital services and applications, cybersecurity, and digital inclusion. Mobile phones and the internet provide refugees and individuals on the move access to family, support networks, and to vital information. They can also be a portal to mobile money services and can provide access to education for displaced children, so that they do not fall behind through lack of schooling. Grounded in ITU's mandate to "connect

the world" the *Connect2Recover* initiative was created as an umbrella for a broad range of activities, each of which addresses a fundamental part of the vision of bringing affordable and accessible broadband to all, including refugees. A *Giga* joint school connectivity initiative between ITU and UNICEF aims to connect every school to the internet; and funds have been allocated to ensure that schools in refugee camps and refugee-hosting schools are included as part of connectivity and technology pilots.

Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO)

Efforts across all pillars of the UN system are necessary to fulfil the UN common pledges, and the peace component remains key. The Peace Building Fund (PBF) strategy 2020-2024 identifies displacement as a trend intrinsically related to the surge in violent conflict around the world since 2010, and as a trigger for new tensions and violence. The PBF places special emphasis on supporting durable solutions for displaced and host populations by complementing humanitarian efforts with investments in conflict management and dialogue in these specific contexts. At country level, refugee issues are reflected in PBF strategic engagement documents used to guide investments in countries eligible to receive PBF funds under the Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility. At project level, PBF investments in displacement-related issues have steadily increased through projects implemented by UNHCR. From 2015 to 2020, the PBF approved 37 projects totalling US\$24 million to UNHCR in 18 countries. UNHCR implemented these projects with other UN entities for a total PBF investment of around \$86 million.

In addition, the proportion of Official Development Assistance (ODA) that has globally been directed to refugee/displacement has increased over the past few years. At policy level, forced displacement has featured prominently under the UN-World Bank Partnership,

notably as one of the four priority themes for country level work across the HDP nexus in the 2020 UN-WB partnership report. The UN and the World Bank have cooperated on policy and programmatic aspects of the World Bank's financing instruments for refugee-hosting countries as well as on data collection and analysis, building on the establishment of the Joint Data Center and a mature bilateral partnership. In addition, the "Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding and Partnership Facility" within the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund supports UN Resident Coordinators and country teams to partner with the World Bank to align programmes and foster a common understanding of the drivers of conflict, including in countries affected by displacement such as Lebanon, Jordan, Cameroon, Niger and Burkina Faso.



Sheila Achieng doing her studies at home in Kibera. Once every week her teacher sends them revision questions via her parents' phone. She prints them, fills in the questions and returns to school for the teacher to mark. Sheila is in her last year of primary school but she's worried that due to the COVID-19 pandemic which led to the closure of all schools in Kenya, she might fail her examinations or be forced to repeat the same class in Kenya.

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United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF advocacy focuses on all children and promotes inclusion of refugee and displaced children in programmes and national services. Since the GRF, UNICEF and UNHCR have developed a *Blueprint for joint action for refugee children* which aims to reach up to 10 million children in 10 countries (Bangladesh, Cameroon, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, and Rwanda), focusing on the promotion and protection of the rights of refugee children and communities that host them through

supporting their inclusion and access to national systems/services in areas of education, water, sanitation and hygiene, and child protection.

UNICEF continues to work to ensure continuing education for the most vulnerable children and has a partnership with Microsoft to provide access to online quality education for all children. Finally, in the context of COVID-19, UNICEF is advocating with governments to ensure a refugee inclusive vaccine roll-out.

United Nations Development Coordination Office (UNDCO)

UNDCO works to deliver on the 2030 Agenda commitment to ‘Leave No One Behind’ and ensure an inclusive approach to sustainable development and sustained peace that addresses the needs of the most vulnerable population groups, including refugees. UNDCO facilitates information sharing and knowledge management through the provision of tools, instruments, and platforms that support the Resident Coordinator (RC) system, enhance accountability, and enable new funding approaches. The UN reform planning instruments at country level ensure greater inclusion of refugees and returnees in the UNSDCFs and the Common Country Analysis (CCA) leading to Joint Work Plans. A strong data repository including critical analyses, data sets and information about refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless persons has informed CCAs which in turn has strengthened planning and decision-making in the UNSDCF.

UNDCO and UNHCR are collaborating closely to achieve a whole-of-

system approach to meet the aspirations of forcibly displaced persons and address the drivers of their displacement through: joint advocacy; information sharing and knowledge management; dialogue between RCs, the High Commissioner for Refugees, and UNHCR country representatives; collaboration around existing regional or sub-regional crises or issues through DCO regional offices; UNHCR regional bureaus and Issue Based Coalitions (IBCs); an increased focus on forced displacement in UNSDCFs and SERPs; and programmatic engagement of RCs and UN Country Teams (UNCTs) to prevent and address root causes of forced displacement. As an example, in Latin America and the Caribbean, the RCs of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico worked under ECLAC leadership and with other UN entities to support a comprehensive intergovernmental plan for Central America covering economic development, social welfare, environmental sustainability, and migration management.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDP’s development and solution-focused approaches to forced displacement build on the organization’s extensive policy and programming expertise, and emphasize the socio-economic response, including access to

jobs. Examples include a digital platform for skills-building in Jordan; assessment of feasibility for a digital platform for market access in Colombia; and a partnership with Kiva focusing on access to financial services for refugee

entrepreneurs. Going forwards, UNDP and UNHCR plan to launch a multi-stakeholder *Consortium to Offer Digital Work for Refugees and Host communities*.

UNDP's work also has a strong focus on building the evidence base. An SDG Appraisal Tool for Forced Displacement and Statelessness Contexts, developed with UNHCR in 2020, is now applied in an increasing number of contexts with government and/or other partners' involvement. This tool serves to strengthen the evidence base for refugees and stateless people, in line with national and local plans and policies. In addition, a UNDP-UNHCR *Diagnostic Toolkit on Local Governance, Rule of Law and Forced Displacement* has been finalized this year. The COVID-19 socio-economic impact assessments by UNDP Country Offices have analyzed household and business/market-level impact in refugee-hosting areas and looked at issues such as social cohesion between forcibly displaced and local populations.

UNDP's inclusive programme responses

were adapted to COVID-19. Examples include: raising awareness on stigma among communities and local authorities in Ethiopia; engaging private sector for inclusive outreach to local and Syrian youth in Turkey; advancing community-based production of personal protective equipment and soap in Niger; and training security forces on human rights standards in the context of State of Emergency measures in Angola. A training on forced displacement for UNDP country, regional and global staff was attended by over 150 participants in 2020.

Alongside active regional engagement in the GCR Support Platforms, UNDP has, through the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan to the Syria Crisis, continued to promote resilience-based programming in line with the needs of refugees and host communities, supporting socio-economic integration of refugees, expanding opportunities for enhanced livelihood opportunities, and strengthening social cohesion.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

UNESCO has provided technical and programmatic support to Ministries of Education and advocated on refugee inclusion in national education systems; and supports the recognition of prior learning and qualifications for refugees, thereby advancing their inclusion. Through the *Global Education Coalition*

established at the onset of the pandemic, UNESCO has supported joint advocacy efforts with UNHCR on the need to include refugee learners in national education systems. Furthermore, the *Global Education Coalition* is supporting the Ministries of Education of Palestine and Peru, with the backing of partners, in

the training of teachers for distance learning on digital skills and socio-emotional well-being for refugees. Further, UNESCO's city networks, and notably its *International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities* (ICCAR), have the potential to provide significant support to local and municipal authorities.

UNESCO also supports the safeguarding of the living heritage of refugees and displaced populations, and builds the capacity of media to practice professional, ethical, and balanced reporting on refugee issues. The agency has published *Reporting on migrants and refugees: handbook for journalism educators*, and

in December 2020, the UNESCO regional office in Costa Rica, together with IOM, launched the *Central American Support Group for Migrant, Displaced and Refugee Journalists*.

In the field of Science, UNESCO, together with the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) and the International Science Council (ISC), have implemented the *Sida-World Academy of Science Refugee and Displaced Scientists Project* since 2020, and in its *2021 Science Report*, UNESCO included a chapter entitled "The integration of refugee and displaced scientists creates a win-win situation".

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

UNHCR has engaged with other UN entities to deliver on the common pledges and has signed or renewed 14 Memoranda of Understanding and Joint Letters which support realization of the pledges. Collaborations include programmes that advance refugees' self-reliance, as well as initiatives that specifically promote inclusion. As an example, UNHCR is collaborating with UNICEF on the Blueprint for Joint Action to accelerate joint efforts under a transformational agenda in line with the GCR, aiming to promote and protect the rights of refugee children and the communities that host them through their inclusion in national plans, budgets, and service delivery systems.

Committed to the 2030 Agenda and to "Leave No One Behind", UNHCR has made playlists on the SDGs and UNSDCF, including videos developed by other UN entities, available to all staff. Other newly available learning programmes include a module on the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus and the UN development system. UNHCR has developed and proactively disseminated to all operations a guide to support their engagement in the UN development system and in UNCTs which is accompanied by a resource package and access to on-demand technical assistance.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

OCHA has played a leading role in ensuring that the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) incorporates the needs of refugees in all stages of the process, particularly through the HNOs and HRP. Since 2019, regional refugee response plans have been incorporated into the Global Humanitarian Overview, accounting for roughly 30 per cent of funding requirements. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the UN launched the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 which included a dedicated, overarching strategic priority to address the needs of refugees, migrants and IDPs. Addressing the humanitarian consequences of population displacement and mitigating new displacement is an essential part of humanitarian action funded by pooled funds (the Central Emergency Response Fund or CERF and country-based pooled funds or CBPFs). In 2020, CBPFs funding assisted 14.7 million people, of which 40

per cent were refugees, IDPs or returnees. The CERF in 2020 enabled partners to provide assistance and protection to 40.6 million people in 59 countries and territories. Of these, 13.3 million were IDPs, 4.5 million were refugees, 2.6 million were returnees and 20.2 million people were in communities hosting displaced populations. This represents 59 per cent of all people targeted with CERF funding. OCHA continues to advocate for displaced people and refugees and amplifies dozens of stories and messages highlighting refugee needs and resilience on its social channels. OCHA is also committed to providing support to improving coordination in 'mixed response settings' and between humanitarian and development organizations to promote dignity and self-sufficiency for refugees.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

UNFPA works to include refugees as a population group requiring humanitarian and development assistance, while upholding their rights. It provides sexual and reproductive health services; prevention and response to gender-based violence; and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS).

UNFPA and UNHCR are operationalizing their joint menstrual health management (MHM) commitment at country level through the implementation of a project aimed at strengthening intersectional MHM coordination and programming, within the framework of a coordinated humanitarian response in three humanitarian crises. The lessons learned



Midwife Rotna speaks with Minara about her new-born baby. Maternal health services are continuing despite the pandemic.

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from this process will be used to inform inter-sectoral programming within the entire sector.

In addition, UNFPA is strengthening mental health and psychosocial support programming for refugee women and girls. In Brazil, strategic partnerships have led to the establishment of the *Centre for Conviviality and Psychosocial Care*, which serves Venezuelan refugee survivors of GBV, including youth, LGBTI persons, the

elderly, and persons with disabilities. UNFPA's MHPSS strategy in Iraq has focused on strengthening the capacity of psychosocial service providers to support Syrian survivors of violence. A partnership with Bilgi University in Turkey is securing national capacity now and into the future as providers are trained on refugee mental health and the psychological care of survivors of sexual violence.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) provides essential services, primarily in the form of basic education, primary health care, relief and social services, infrastructure and camp improvement, microcredit, and emergency assistance, including in situations of armed conflict, to registered Palestine refugees within its five fields of operation (Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza). It was established on 8 December 1949 by resolution 302 (IV) of the UN General Assembly following the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1948.

Palestine refugees make up one of the largest and longest-lasting protracted refugee situations in the world today. The 5.7 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA at present account for 21.5 per cent of the world's total refugee population and 26.5 per cent of protracted refugees. Until a just and lasting solution to the plight of Palestine refugees is achieved in accordance with international law, including relevant UN General Assembly resolutions such as resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, UNRWA will continue to carry out its specific mandate, given to it by the General Assembly. In doing so, UNRWA contributes to the human development services and humanitarian assistance to Palestine refugees, thus helping them maintain hope and dignity.

The Agency draws attention to the distinct situation of Palestine refugees and its unique role on the ground in bridging the humanitarian-development divide. The Agency uses its infrastructure, systems and institutional footprint to deliver humanitarian programmes in times of emergency, adapting its human development services to meet the needs of those affected by crisis. The Agency's use of host country curricula in its 710 schools ensures that refugee students can continue their studies in national institutions and contribution to building human capital, while investments in livelihoods initiatives, primarily in the form of technical and vocational training and microfinance, allow Palestine refugees to be productive members of their communities.

Since its establishment, UNRWA has continued to work in close partnership with host authorities and UN agencies, funds and programmes, as part of the international community's response to providing essential services to Palestine refugees. UNRWA supports all efforts to improve the situation of Palestine refugees.

United Nations Volunteers (UNV)

Over 2019-2020, UNV and UNHCR jointly established a *Refugee UN Volunteer Special Initiative for UNHCR (RUNV SI)* which was made available to all UNHCR operations in July 2020, following a successful pilot phase. This Special Initiative allows refugees to take up a remunerated UN Volunteer deployment for assignments that require specific skills and knowledge otherwise not available in the host country. In addition, the initiative offers a pathway to professional

employment to high-skilled refugees over the age of 22; builds their competencies and skills; and enables them to become active agents of change. The initiative is transforming how refugees are perceived in their communities and beyond and enables refugees to shape their own lives by generating income and reducing their dependence on humanitarian assistance.



Malick Ilyas, a refugee UN Volunteer in Burkina Faso.

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World Health Organization (WHO)

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, WHO issued several guidance documents on COVID-19 in relation to refugees and in consultation with UNHCR. WHO and UNHCR also jointly developed the *GAP Humanitarian Intervention Guide*, and are supporting its roll-out to assist refugees by building the capacity of more than 30 humanitarian NGOs. WHO is now working with UNHCR, UNFPA and UNICEF

to develop a *Minimum Service Package for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for refugees, displaced people and other humanitarian settings*. Finally, the COVAX program has included refugees as a disadvantaged group and has made provisions for vaccines to be used for refugee populations.

World Food Programme (WFP)

In 2020, WFP and UNHCR established the *Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub* – a pilot initiative to enhance joint analysis, joint programming, and joint targeting to achieve more sustainable outcomes for refugee populations. The Hub is currently providing technical support to nine countries. The support provided is end-to-end in Rwanda and Cameroon; and modular in Algeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Jordan, Mauritania, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia. The development and implementation of

country strategies and activities is done in close collaboration with governments and partners on the ground. The Hub intends to inform global joint efforts to harmonize approaches, while supporting the implementation of these efforts at the country level – including through joint analysis and programming; innovative technologies; and inter-operability of systems. The hub also plans to build the evidence base to support advocacy and fundraising on refugees' needs and the transition to self-reliance.

THE ROAD TO 2023

ASSESSING PROGRESS AND
ACCELERATING DELIVERY
ON THE UN COMMON PLEDGES
IN ADVANCE OF THE NEXT
GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM

November 2021