

Group of Friends - Human Settlement

The Global Refugee Forum 2023

ToR

Overall purpose

The **Human Settlement** thematic area promotes a sustainable and integrated approach to environmental and climate action mainstreaming, shelter and housing, access to basic services (water, sanitation, and hygiene), renewable energy, governance and improved urban planning and management for more resilient settlements for refugees and their hosting communities.

The shift from the **Energy and Infrastructure** thematic area in December 2019 to **Human Settlements** is made in response to the past experiences and lessons gathered over the years on how refugee response and assistance in both urban and rural areas could be improved to maximize synergies along the humanitarian-development-peace continuum and in response to global developmental shifts such as urbanization.

In the recent years, escalating scale, duration and frequency of crises has led to unprecedented levels of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced and stateless people who require vital protection and assistance. The lack of sufficient resources, inadequate policies and extended periods of displacement pose massive challenges in addressing their needs. Some 18% (15.3 million) of Persons of Concern (POC) currently reside in camps or camp-like situations worldwide, including over 60% of all UNHCR assisted refugees in Africa and over 35% of those assisted in Asia.

At the same time, urbanization is a defining global phenomenon. Over half of the world's population (55%) live in urban areas and this is estimated to grow to two-thirds by 2050. In parallel, there has been an increase in the proportion of displaced people living in cities, with over 60% of refugees and two-thirds of internally displaced persons (IDPs) now estimated to be living in urban environments. This poses unique and urgent challenges which need to be met with new, innovative, and sustainable responses that go beyond sector-technical and siloed solutions.

A strong focus will also be on mainstreaming environmental and climate action – 70% of refugees and 80% of internally displaced people originate from countries on the front lines of the climate crises, and millions of refugees, displaced and stateless people live in climate “hotspots” lacking the resources to adapt to or mitigate increasingly inhospitable environments. Strengthened anticipatory action, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and preparedness before shocks occurs and sustainable solutions need to be sought for people displaced in urban areas and in remote rural camps. Coordinated efforts for joint mobilization of humanitarian and development partners can contribute efforts to build resilience and provide solutions.

The Global Refugee Forum (GRF) 2023 provides an opportunity to build on progress made by stakeholders on pledges submitted since the first Forum in December 2019. Participants will have the opportunity to announce new pledges and share good practices that inform and inspire further burden- and responsibility sharing, while taking stock of progress made, persistent challenges, and opportunities for course correction.

The Human Settlement group of friends is an effort to bring together and mobilize states, individuals, private sectors, NGOs and international organizations to raise visibility and ensure coordinated efforts to produce high quality, joint pledges and contributions that promote Climate Resilient and Sustainable Human Settlements. The Group will further leverage the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023 as a key reflection and advocacy moment to advance the environmental and climate action, shelter and housing, access to basic services, renewable energy, governance and improved urban planning and management.

Objectives

The group will seek to achieve the following:

- **Promote** a common understanding of the Human Settlements concept, its focus areas and the transition to sustainability and climate resilience.
- **Focus** and identify priority activities, countries/regions, and entities/states to optimize time and resources to address thematic sectors of Human Settlement (environmental and climate action mainstreaming, shelter and housing, access to basic services (water, sanitation, and hygiene), renewable energy, governance and improved urban planning and management.)
- **Coordinate** and collaborate with other GRF Initiatives and Groups of Friends to share ideas, information, and priorities to magnify impact on refuge lives.
- **Develop** pledging ideas and generate support through advocacy and visibility efforts, either directly or through identifying champion host and donor states.
- **Mobilize** support for high-impact pledges that are transformative, supported by multiple stakeholders, and financeable.

The group will work in the spirit of the following agency and global frameworks:

- UNHCR [Strategic Framework for Climate Action](#) and the [Operational Strategy for Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability](#)
- [Sustainable Development Goal 6 on Clean Water and Sanitation](#), to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- [Sustainable Development Goal 7 on Affordable and Clean energy](#), to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
- [Sustainable Development Goal 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities](#), to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable and ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services.

Proposed Activities

1. Track status of implementation of existing pledges, identify pledges that can be upgraded, adapted, or scaled for the GRF 2023 pledging process.
2. Identify barriers to implementation of existing pledges to support existing pledging entities and learn lessons which can be actively considered for the GRF 2023 process. Encourage lessons learned and good practice to be shared on the GCR platform.
3. Develop framework and priorities to guide the development of pledges and formulate/engineer Mega Pledges¹ in a way that meets the High Level GRF Outcomes.
4. Utilize an inclusive multistakeholder collaborative process including through engagement with refugees; to develop ambitious, impactful, transformational, and trackable pledges.
5. Promote visibility of the Human settlement thematic area and the critical importance of this cross-cutting initiative **through the identification and support of multistakeholder initiatives for spotlight sessions/side events on the margins of the GRF 2023** conference in December as well as **through targeted activities (presentations, discussions, briefings etc.)** aimed at interested entities (private sector, Member states, National and International NGOs, Academia, Refugee Led Organizations, UN Agencies, Governments, etc.).
6. Establish coordination and collaboration mechanisms to ensure ideas, information and priorities are shared and exchanged with relevant GRF initiatives and other Groups of Friends.

Communications and proposed events

The road map and the establishment of the Human Settlement Group of Friends will be communicated through the formal and informal preparatory meetings leading up to the GRF in December 2023. There are two more preparatory meetings in June and September 2023 that we will target our advocacy efforts.

The purpose of the group will be made public on the UNHCR GRF webpage as Human Settlement. The Clean Energy Challenge will become a part of this group of friends, allowing for integrated technical approaches.

The group of friends will also be promoted in the UN Water conference (March 2023), the OCHA – UNEP Environment and Emergencies Forum (March 2023), the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (July 2023), the 2023 SDG Summit (September 2023), and COP 28 (December 2023).

Through the efforts of its networks, the Group of Friends will develop an ambitious advocacy and mobilization target to ensure there is significant support and traction for its pledge ideas and commitments.

¹ Mega-pledges are transformative, high impact, organized around a common theme, multi-year, and high quality

Participating stakeholders

There are two main levels of engagement and participation in this Group of Friends:

1. As part of the Human Settlement Group of Friends

The Human Settlement Group of Friends is open to interested UN Agencies, National, International NGOs, Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Member States, Academia and Research bodies, Think Tanks, International Financial Institutions, involved in improving the living conditions of refugees and other affected population. However, to ensure the space for active participation, membership is limited to one member per entity/organization by invitation.

Given the broad interest in engaging with the Group of Friends the following criteria was established for the identification and selection of members/entities:

- Expressed interest in the Human Settlement Workstream and/or its focus areas.
- Able to provide dedicated (senior level) representative able to participate in Group of Friends activities and meetings (either in person or remotely).
- Implementing/operating within one of the identified thematic areas of focus.
- Capacity to undertake responsibilities assigned to support the function of the Group of Friends.
- Able to provide either technical support, technical resources, and/or links to relevant networks.
- Able to provide staff time, resources and leadership to support the Groups' objectives, including leading thematic subgroups in the spirit of responsibility and burden sharing as espoused in the GCR.

2. As an interested member in the Human Settlement Thematic Area

A second level of participation of interested entities has also been established for entities that may or may not already be involved in activities related to Human Settlements but are interested in being kept abreast of processes and which may be interested to participate in the pledging process.

These members can express their interest for a thematic area through the GRF website.

These entities will not normally attend Group of Friends meetings unless they are invited. They will receive updates and communication by email, can provide feedback by email, and can join presentations by interested groups they might belong to (UN Agencies, National, International NGOs, Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Member States, Academia and Research bodies, Think Tanks, International Financial Institutions).

This Group of Friends is led by:
UNHCR and UN Habitat

Other partners within the Group of Friends include:

BMZ/GIZ, Cities Alliance, Deltares, DSS Water, Global Platform for Action (GPA), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), UNICEF, Norwegian refugee Council (NRC) – TBC, World Bank – TBC, Member State – TBC, Host state – TBC Refugees - TBC

Workplan

- Bi-Monthly Group meetings
- Ad hoc Group/subgroup meetings (as required)
- Meetings with small groups/individual organizations to support pledge development
- Presentations and briefings to enhance interest, visibility and understanding of Human Settlements and their thematic focus areas
- The group is timebound and its primary focus will be to support the GRF Pledging conference in December 2023. The group’s format, focus and existence will be reviewed at the end of the year.

CLIMATE RESILIENT SUSTAINABLE HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

