



Transition Management: Pathways to Sustainable

Uganda is a co-convenor of the second Global Refugee Forum, 13-15 December 2023.

Learn more: www.unhcr.org/global-refugee-forum-2023

This outcome document summarises the ideas and discussion from the Transition Management: Pathways to Sustainable Burden-Sharing roundtable, including recommendations on pledges that could shape commitments towards refugees and host communities in Uganda for the next four years. The roundtable was held in September 2023 and was co-chaired by the Hon. Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees and the Hon. Minister of State General Duties of Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

The transition roundtable is one of five thematic roundtables that have taken place as part of preparations for the Global Refugee Forum (GRF). The meetings aim to assess the current refugee situation, identify main challenges and opportunities, and outline priority areas for possible new pledges to be made.

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Social Service Delivery for Refugees and Host Communities

Refugee management in Uganda is under the mandate of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM, Department for Refugees) who works closely with UNHCR and other implementing and operating partners to manage the refugee settlements and reception centres in 12 refugee-hosting districts.

The provision of services to refugees and host communities is supported by humanitarian and development partners. This support is mostly off-budget. Partners are required to align their interventions with existing guiding documents, such as the sector response plans and coordinate their activities with the District Local Governments in refugee hosting districts in order to enhance integrated planning. Partners strive to attain the Government's official standards (indicators) in delivery of services, though norms and practices of both Government and partner delivery do not yet meet the standards. Districts are responsible for extending social services for those living in their districts – this includes refugees and host communities.

What is transition management?

While there are still new arrivals, the refugee situation in Uganda is also protracted. The social service facilities established in humanitarian emergencies have been in operation for decades. The level of integrated service delivery surpasses humanitarian approaches and many of the structures are permanent and constitute elements of longer-term solutions. Quality control of service delivery lies with the Government of Uganda. However, despite close coordination efforts, parallel service delivery systems operated by partners still exists. In order to enhance coordination and move towards a government-led, development-oriented system of service delivery, transition management is one of the strategic priorities of Government and partners.

Transition management describes the smooth transfer from parallel system of partner-managed services (facilities, human resources, consumables, and management) for refugees and host communities to a system sustainably managed by the Government with support from partners. This transition has to happen in a phased manner, and on the condition of coordinated and integrated planning between humanitarian, development partners and the Government of Uganda.

Transition of Social Services to Government Management: Opportunities and Challenges with regard to transition

The roundtable participants, representing a range of stakeholders in the refugee response, committed to furthering transition management in Uganda. The group identified the main advantages and requirements of transition management in Uganda:

- ◆ **Strengthening a Government-led multi-stakeholder refugee response:** Government management of service facilities in line with Government's mandate to ensure social service delivery, in a manner which enhances the lead role of Government in the refugee response.
- ◆ **Efficient use of resources:** In times of dwindling resources, coordinated planning and Government management reduces duplications and parallel structures and enhances efficient use of resources.
- ◆ **Implementation of the humanitarian-development nexus:** Transition management strengthens the humanitarian-development nexus and allows different actors to use their comparative advantages.
- ◆ **Need for common understanding of transition:** Transition is often perceived as an uncoordinated exit strategy by international partners. It is important to derive at a common understanding on national and local levels between all stakeholders what constitutes transition. The agreed definition outlined in the previous section is a starting point. Continued and sustained partner support is fundamental to a successful transition management process.
- ◆ **Importance of Coordination:** Coordination between central Government, District Local Governments, funding and implementing partners is central to service delivery and transition management. Interventions of partners need to be aligned to the National Development Plan (NDP) as well as District Development Plans (DDPs). This ensures that interventions are needs-driven and in line with Government standards.
- ◆ **Sustainable Financing:** The operation and maintenance of social service facilities serving refugees and host communities managed by Government requires sustainable financing by international partners. Supporting the Government in its efforts to provide high levels of services is an international responsibility but requires adequate financing models. Lack of funding leads to decreases in service standards.
- ◆ **Need to enhance District Local Governments' (DLG) capacities to manage social services:** DLG will require further capacity to integrate and manage fully the social services. This includes empowering the local authorities to align service delivery to the norms and practices across their district. In addition, this includes assessment and possible rationalisation of facilities where they are not in line with Government requirements.
- ◆ **Risks of decreasing levels of service delivery standards:** In cases where transition or handover happen in a short-term, unplanned manner, and/or with lack of sustainable financing, there is a risk of decrease in the levels of services offered by facilities.
- ◆ **Concrete Planning:** Transition management requires a clear and detailed plan outlined in a transition management strategy. This shall provide a roadmap inclusive of all stakeholders, and detailing resource needs and key milestones in the process. This calls for further engagement of the existing multi-stakeholder task team led by MoPFED that has shaped discussions on transitions (including the preparation of the GRF priority area) so far.

Recommendations for Government and International Partners

The participants in the roundtable discussions identified several recommendations to address the challenges to transition. Government should:

- ◆ Adopt a common definition of transition, re-iterate the Government's commitment to manage social service facilities with support from partner, and develop a strategy for a coordinated and phased transition based on jointly agreed standards.
- ◆ In coordination with partners, define roles and responsibilities of Government and partners in the transition process and service provision in facilities under Government management.
- ◆ Identify options and models for sustainable financing of facilities by international partners that go beyond on-budget support.
- ◆ Identify and plan at the district level for the transition of specific facilities based on joint plans agreed between Government and partners.

- ◆ Improve planning and availability of data. The refugee population needs to be factored into the population statistics used for allocation of resources. In addition, the Government of Uganda should ensure that the Uganda population statistics are updated through the National Census to allow for realistic planning of services in refugee hosting districts.
- ◆ Jointly with partners, develop risk mitigation strategies to ensure service delivery standards.
- ◆ Strengthen Government leadership and coordination and service delivery capacity of DLGs.
- ◆ Increase the coverage of coded schools and health facilities and strengthen the national utilities in the water sector.

The following are the recommendations for donors and international organisations to support transition and Government in the shared responsibility of social service delivery for refugees and host communities. Partners should:

- ◆ Commit to support the Government of Uganda in the transition process and service delivery for refugees and host communities.
- ◆ Support the Government's development of a transition strategy that guides transfer of facility management to Government based on support by partners according to standard criteria.
- ◆ Identify models for sustainable financing and provide multi-year financing covering both development and recurrent expenditures.
- ◆ Align their planning with the National Development Plan and District Development Plan (DDP) and adhere to Government social service delivery standards.
- ◆ Support the implementation capacities of District Local Governments to manage social services.
- ◆ Support community engagement (e.g. with regard to payment of refugees for water services under utility model).

Pledge matching

Pledges and contributions are commitments by States and other stakeholders, including organizations, development actors, cities, parliamentarians, businesses, academics, and refugees themselves, to achieve tangible benefits for refugees and host communities. These commitments can be financial, technical or material contributions in nature.

Partners planning to pledge in support of the Uganda refugee response can refer to the pledge development document or reach out to the following contacts:

- Ms. Helen Bugaari Director, CRRF Secretariat, Office of the Prime Minister: helen.bugaari@opm.go.ug
- Ms. Carol Sparks, Senior External Engagement Coordinator, UNHCR: sparks@unhcr.org

The Government of Uganda invites partners and stakeholders to match its pledges and create better outcomes for refugees and host communities.

Links to further reading

Details on current pledges: globalcompactrefugees.org/pledges-contributions/matching-pledges

Infographic on how to match pledges: globalcompactrefugees.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/Matching_Infographic_v07.pdf