

A Statement By The Advisory Board Of Organizations Led By Forcibly Displaced And Stateless People at the 4th Preparatory Meeting for the HLOM

Your Excellencies, Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Kaumi Wakil. I am from Borno State, Nigeria, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Grassroot Initiative for Strengthening Community Resilience, an NGO led by former Internally Displaced Persons.

I present this statement on behalf of the Advisory Board of organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons. We recognize that shaping a truly inclusive and sustainable humanitarian future requires focus on three key areas:

1. Safe and dignified return

Forcibly displaced people seek not only to return home but to regain identity, dignity, and belonging. Yet safe, voluntary, and dignified returns remain difficult due to insecurity, destroyed homes, and limited basic services. Premature returns risk secondary displacement and greater vulnerability.

We urge governments, UNHCR, and partners to enable voluntary, informed, and sustainable returns by restoring essential services and prioritizing social cohesion and livelihoods and involving displaced persons in shaping their return strategies. But return will not be viable for all, making it vital to strengthen fair and inclusive asylum systems and expand complementary pathways and other durable solutions.

Moreover, addressing and preventing root causes of displacement through peacebuilding, livelihood support, and disaster risk reduction is more humane and cost-effective than responding afterward.

2. Meaningful participation and localization

Effective and sustainable humanitarian action requires the meaningful, not tokenistic participation of displaced and stateless people and the organizations they lead. Yet many refugee leaders face barriers such as restrictive travel documents, limited resources, language challenges, and complex procedures, preventing them from participating in global fora and influencing decisions.

We call on all partners to systematically remove these barriers. Meaningful participation and localization also mean recognizing refugee-, IDP-, and stateless-led organizations as service providers, crisis responders, and equal partners. This requires consistent funding, technical support, and real decision-making power throughout planning and implementation, enabling them to shape policy, service delivery, and monitoring.

To advance effective, sustainable responses and fulfill the UN 2030 Agenda and Grand Bargain we urge all stakeholders to support the multistakeholder pledges on meaningful refugee participation and localization.

3. Addressing Data Fragmentation

Finally, we must fix the underlying problem of data fragmentation and parallel reporting, which slows decision-making and marginalizes local actors. We urge the championing of inclusive, interoperable data ecosystems and unified reporting frameworks to ensure transparency, accountability, and equitable, evidence-based decision-making worldwide.

In conclusion, the Advisory Board expresses deep appreciation for the tireless efforts of field teams, local partners, and host communities. As we prepare for the Global Refugee Forum Progress Review Meeting, we reaffirm our shared responsibility to be transformative. The people we serve are not passive recipients of aid, they are partners in rebuilding their lives and communities. Our role is to ensure their voices are central to all humanitarian planning and action.

Thank you.