



PRESS RELEASE

IKEA Foundation donates €38 million to UNHCR for refugees in Africa

The €38 million grant will support the socio-economic wellbeing of refugee families and the communities hosting them in Ethiopia and Burkina Faso.

Addis Ababa, JULY 8, 2015: The UN refugee agency announced today that it has received a grant of €38 million from the IKEA Foundation, its largest private sector partner. The grant for 2015-2017 aims to make refugees and heavily stretched host communities more resilient in Ethiopia and Burkina Faso by supporting self-reliance initiatives, improving basic services and fostering peaceful co-existence.

According to UNHCR's Global Trends Report released last month, nearly 60 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide at the end of 2014 - the highest level on record. The report noted that Ethiopia had become the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa and the fifth largest worldwide.

The IKEA Foundation's commitment of €33 million for the Ethiopia programme will enable UNHCR to lay the foundations for over 200,000 Somali refugees in the five refugee camps in the Dollo Ado region to achieve self-reliance, by increasing and diversifying livelihood opportunities, training, agricultural development, support to small businesses, and promoting access to markets.

In addition, the IKEA Foundation grant will support UNHCR's global efforts to address refugees' energy needs in a sustainable manner. The grant will fund clean and renewable energy sources for household lighting and cooking, as well as environmental rehabilitation programmes in and around the Dollo Ado refugee camps.

This new grant is a follow-up to an initial three-year donation from the IKEA Foundation in 2011, when over 100,000 Somali refugees crossed the border into Ethiopia. The emergency relief provided thanks to that initial grant helped save thousands of lives. The new funding will help UNHCR to transition from emergency assistance to building refugee resilience and self-reliance.

The IKEA Foundation has also committed €5 million to Burkina Faso's Sahel region, which hosts the majority of the over 33,000 Malian refugees in the country. The funding will enable thousands of them to take part in a multi-year project to develop sustainable dairy micro-enterprises that will help them earn an income, participate in their local communities and keep their children in school.

"We are grateful to the IKEA Foundation for their unwavering support to people who have been forced to flee their homes," said UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres. "Thanks to the Foundation's continued backing, hundreds of thousands of refugees in Ethiopia, Burkina Faso and other locations will be able to build better lives for themselves and their children."

Per Heggnes, CEO of the IKEA Foundation added, “We believe that every child deserves a quality education, a sustainable family income and a healthy start in life. That’s why we are supporting UNHCR’s work to bring education and clean energy to refugees living in UNHCR camps and to help refugee families become more self-reliant. We want their children to have better opportunities for the future.”

For further information about these two IKEA Foundation grants, please contact:

Media contacts:

In Geneva: Tapio Vahtola, +41 79 217 3192 | vahtola@unhcr.org
Karin de Gruijl, +41 79 255 9213 | degruijl@unhcr.org

In Ethiopia: Kisut Gebre-Egziabher, +251 911 208 901 | gegziabk@unhcr.org

In Burkina Faso: Paul Absalon, +226 65 50 47 86 | absalon@unhcr.org

About UNHCR

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. The agency is mandated to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country. It also has a mandate to help stateless people. In more than six decades, the agency has helped tens of millions of people restart their lives. Today, a staff of some 9,300 people in more than 127 countries continues to help some 54.9 million people. Learn more at www.unhcr.org and www.facebook.com/UNHCR

About IKEA Foundation

The IKEA Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the Swedish home furnishings company IKEA, aims to improve opportunities for children and youth in some of the world’s poorest communities by funding holistic, long-term programmes that can create substantial, lasting change. The IKEA Foundation works with strong strategic partners applying innovative approaches to achieve large-scale results in four fundamental areas of a child’s life: a place to call home; a healthy start in life; a quality education; and a sustainable family income. Learn more at www.IKEAfoundation.org and www.facebook.com/IKEAfoundation