



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

**Launch of the Education 2030 Framework for Action
UNESCO General Conference, 38th Session
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Statement by Volker Türk, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection

UNHCR is privileged to have been a co-convenor of the World Education Forum 2015. I am pleased to join you here today to endorse the Education 2030 Framework for Action, launching an ambitious agenda to meet Sustainable Development Goal 4.

As you know, we are currently responding to a global displacement crisis of unprecedented proportions, with some 60 million persons forcibly displaced world-wide. More than one-third are refugees and asylum-seekers, and two-thirds are internally displaced.

We have witnessed the manifestations of this crisis all over the world – most recently in the dangerous movements across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe, but also in the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea as well as the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea.

These movements are largely undertaken by young people seeking safety and the means to a more secure future, particularly through access to education. Over half of all refugees are under the age of 18. Yet only one in two refugee children of primary school age, and one in four of secondary school age, are enrolled in school, and just one per cent of all refugees are enrolled in higher education.

The consequences of forced displacement of children are serious, far-reaching, and costly – for both individual children affected and their communities. Not investing sufficiently in young refugees has dramatic, long-term consequences. If we do not protect them from violence, exploitation, and abuse; if we leave them without education or skills; then the recovery and development of their countries risk being delayed by many years.

As we begin planning at global, regional, and national levels to meet Sustainable Development Goal 4 in the next weeks and months, I would like to recall our collective commitment, embodied in the Incheon Declaration and the Framework for Action, to ensure education for refugees, IDPs, and children and youth who are out of school because of conflict and crisis.

We encourage Ministers of Education to include refugee children and youth in Education Sector Plans and programmes. This is critical to ensuring that they participate in education, gain skills, and receive certification. Educated refugees provide leadership in displacement situations and in rebuilding communities recovering from conflict. Through education refugees can become agents of social transformation. The future security of individuals and of our societies is inextricably connected to the transferrable skills, knowledge, and capacities that are developed through education.

Better access to education for refugee children and youth is a global imperative. We have a collective responsibility to ensure education plans take into account the needs of some of the most vulnerable children and youth in the world – refugees, internally displaced children, stateless children, and children whose right to education has been compromised by war and insecurity. The education of these children will help ensure a more secure future for us all.