



Summary of the 4th Informal Briefing on the Global Refugee Forum

Room V, Palais des Nations

Friday, 11 October 2019

13:30 – 15:00 hours

I. Introduction

1. On 11 October, UNHCR convened an informal briefing on the margins of the 70th session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme (7-11 October 2019) to update States and other stakeholders on both the preparations for the Forum and the work of the co-sponsorship groups.
2. This summary does not necessarily represent the views of individual participants or UNHCR, but reflects broadly the discussion.

II. Preparations for the Global Refugee Forum

3. Mr. Daniel Endres, Director of the Global Refugee Forum, noted that it is important to keep the purpose of the Forum at the forefront of our minds: translating the principles of the Global Compact on Refugees into concrete action. While this will be only the beginning of a much longer and sustained effort over time, this first Forum provides a unique moment for all stakeholders to orient themselves towards solutions at all phases of displacement and already take action.
4. UNHCR shared the expected high-level outcomes for the first Global Refugee Forum. These include broadening the base of support for comprehensive refugee responses; inclusive national policies in host countries; launching Support Platforms; additional funding and the effective and efficient use of resources; as well as access to education, sustainable and green energy, private sector engagement, resettlement, solutions, the Asylum Capacity Support Group, and the Global Academic Network.
5. UNHCR thanked all those States and stakeholders who have been engaged in the co-sponsorship groups to help realize these goals. Developing commitments may be achieved within the context of the groups where possible or through working bilaterally. Regardless of the how these contributions are developed, the key is that concrete action will be the result of this tremendous engagement. UNHCR hopes for good representation of both donor and host countries as well as other stakeholders, such as the private sector, in these groups.
6. At the country level, continued engagement across government ministries and with other stakeholders and donors to mobilize contributions is encouraged. The co-sponsorship groups, as well as the 14th of November preparatory meeting, will be opportunities to share information and thinking about the contributions that States and other stakeholders are developing. This provides an entry point for others to also join in and support.
7. Nearly 300 submissions were received for spotlight sessions, exhibits, and the speakers' corner. Around a quarter of these proposals will be possible to accommodate, and UNHCR is working to identify where proposers may wish to join efforts, to enable as many actors as possible to engage.

8. High-level representation is essential to sending a strong political message of support. Both the 17th and 18th of December involve high-level sessions, and UNHCR would encourage Ministers, where possible, to engage throughout.
9. As momentum builds in the lead up to the GRF, the UNHCR Global Communications team is developing communications packages that will be made available to the co-sponsors online to support co-sponsorship communications and amplify consistent messaging around good practices in each GRF area of focus. Co-sponsoring States and stakeholders are encouraged to share the contact details of their dedicated communications staff, if not yet done, so that they can access the communication packages.
10. Ms. Perveen Ali, Head of the Global Refugee Forum Coordination Team, updated participants on the [programme of the Forum](#), which will soon reflect the spotlight sessions and other activities planned for 16 to 18 December, as well as the nine high-level dialogues on 17 and 18 December. The dialogues will be facilitated by a prominent personality and will typically involve 3-4 individuals in a 30-minute Davos-style conversation. In the interest of the limited available time, and in consideration of the expected 400 delegations that will be participating, statements should be brief, focused on the pledge or contribution they are announcing, and tailored to the specific theme of the dialogue to the extent possible. All modalities available can be used to showcase good practices and make contributions.
11. It is important to make sure that the good practices that States and stakeholders plan to share are recorded for the longer term. Therefore, States and stakeholders are encouraged to submit good practices for the digital portal. Information about submitting good practices is available [online](#). There is no deadline for submissions for the digital portal, and it is hoped that good practices will be submitted well beyond the first Forum.
12. Pledges and contributions should be submitted **as early as possible**. Those received before 30 November can be visualised at the Forum. Those received after that date will be included in the outcome document for the Forum. There will also be a pledging booth at the Forum for those who wish to submit their pledges and contributions during the three days of the Forum. Guidance for submitting pledges and contributions either online or through a template is available on the [website](#).
13. Ms Ellen Hansen, Head of Governance, briefed the participants about modalities of participation at the Forum. Delegations will not be limited in size, but there will be a limited number of seats allocated to each delegation. States and stakeholders will be notified about this number based upon the expected participation and available seating at a later stage. The procedures for the speakers' list for the plenary sessions will also be communicated closer to the date. There will not be a speakers list for the parallel sessions on the morning of 18 December. There will be a speakers list for all of the plenary sessions. For the parallel sessions, UNHCR will take note of those who wish to speak and will attempt to accommodate as many as possible within the time constraints of the Forum.

III. Briefing on Co-Sponsorships

14. The UNHCR focal points for each co-sponsorship group updated the participants on the progress and discussions in the groups and the pledges and key asks developed. The detailed presentation of the updates in each group is available [here](#).

15. For **burden and responsibility-sharing**, Mr Daniel Endres, Director of the Global Refugee Forum, updated on the key pledging opportunities, including a common pledge to include refugees and host communities systematically in development funding policy and national development plans, as well as funding and effective use of resources, regional approaches, data, and addressing root causes.
16. For the group on **solutions**, a common understanding of all the dimensions of solutions and the need to create linkages between consultations happening at global, regional and national levels were emphasized. Refugee situations of South Sudan, Afghanistan and Somalia are currently being discussed within the group, and meaningful pledges towards these situations are encouraged. The next steps will be to mobilise beyond co-sponsors and strengthen the linkages with national efforts, through costed plans and ideas for integration. The group also has proposals for third country solutions that need support through concrete pledges.
17. The co-sponsorship group on **education** is very diverse in terms of participation. The objective of the group is to increase access for refugees to early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary education and ensuring education in emergency responses. A Global Framework for Refugee Education is being finalized, including a guidance framework for pledging in the area of education. Next steps include the support of pledges development, including joint pledges and monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and also implementing the communications plan and leveraging new partners to address unmet needs.
18. The group on **energy and infrastructure** is reviewing work in a long-term trajectory. The Global Refugee Forum is an important milestone to address this area, and the fruits of this work will emerge over the next years. The high-level dialogue will focus on the energy theme and mitigating and adapting to climate change. The dialogue will look at the relationship between climate change and forced displacement. The group has three pillars: Energy provision (SDG 7 on affordable and sustainable energy for refugees); essential services (energy, connectivity, environment, health, WASH, Shelter); and inclusion (in national structures and services). Opportunities for pledges and contributions lie in providing direct or thematic/programmatic support to these sub-themes, as well as high-level contributions (non-financial), shifting policies to open windows in support of providing energy, data, knowledge and expertise for refugees and host communities. The group also started the “clean energy challenge” to power 80 per cent of refugee settlements with renewable energy by 2030, and ensure that 80 per cent of refugees have access to sustainable solutions for clean cooking and lighting/electrification by 2030. Direct support to this challenge is possible.
19. The group in the jobs and livelihoods area of focus currently focuses on pledging themes and discussions progressed from global to country-level with pledges sought at both levels. The group works towards the key outcomes of economic inclusion, job creation, local economic growth, enhanced protection, and preparations for solutions through a series of sub-themes and cross-cutting areas. Development actors as well as the private sector can provide additional support towards the outcomes. Opportunities are showcasing good practices, policy improvements that require support and investment, and developing existing platforms.
20. The co-sponsorship group on protection capacity started discussions with defining what protection capacity entails and agreed on a mission statement: Strong institutions and capacities that can enable and enhance refugee protection and the

well-being of host communities with support from a range of actors. Areas for pledging include enhanced emergency preparedness and response; legal and policy frameworks; better asylum capacity; enhanced protection response and strong national institutions; as well as participation and inclusion of refugees and host communities. Next steps include communicating and advocating for pledges, compiling good practices, and mainstreaming age, gender, disabilities, and diversity across the Forum.

IV. Discussion

21. The **Global Refugee-led Network (GRN)** noted that a sustainable refugee response requires meaningful refugee engagement. While the GRF process to date has demonstrated a shift towards refugee participation in policy discussions, barriers still exist, and more progress needs to be made to make this inclusion meaningful. GRN noted that co-sponsorship discussions are Geneva-centric, virtual participation could be improved, and the absence of refugees in other refugee policymaking processes is a barrier for meaningful engagement. GRN encouraged UNHCR to ensure at least one refugee panellist on high-level dialogues during the GRF and increase virtual participation. GRN recommended further to establish an Executive Committee refugee observer seat to represent refugee interests as well as UNHCR regional bureau refugee advisors.
22. **Finland** highlighted the importance of inclusion and mainstreaming of disability issues within the GRF, and the need to provide concrete guidance in human rights and development policies for ensuring comprehensive refugee responses. Finland mentioned the excellent work of the Group of Friends to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to mainstream disabilities in humanitarian matters. Finland referred to the [Guidance on disability pledging](#) and emphasized that the Guidance is the result of regional webinar consultations carried out in MENA, Europe, Latin America, and the Asia-Pacific regions. Finland called to mainstream disability inclusion in all co-sponsorship groups and take disability into consideration in a cross-cutting way, as refugees with disabilities are among the most vulnerable persons. Finland will finance a disability adviser at UNHCR for two years and is currently considering ways to contribute to the GRF.
23. **UN Women** encouraged the GRF to keep importance of gender equality and protection of human rights of all women and girls and called on the GRF multiple stakeholders to be champions on gender-based approach – by ensuring meaningful participation of women and girls and mainstreaming their human rights in crisis response. UN Women prepared an Aide memoire on pledges and call on States to mainstream women and girls in all their pledges as well as in co-sponsorship groups.
24. The **Global Youth Advisory Council (GYAC)** indicated that there are active members of co-sponsorship groups on education and protection. GYAC encouraged [pledges for youth](#), including enhancing youth sensitivity, mainstreaming youth in emergency actions, engaging and empowering young people.
25. **Germany** emphasised that the GRF is a unique opportunity to tackle refugee responses. Germany is engaged is mobilising as many as possible. Germany thanked UNHCR for sharing the high-level outcomes as a way to give others guidance on how to contribute meaningfully to the GRF. Germany called on the Burden and Responsibility co-sponsorship group to reach out to other groups in all thematic areas.

26. **Save the Children** placed emphasis on the Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compact to promote a child-sensitive implementation of the compact. Save the Children called on all GRF stakeholders to become champions for child rights in pledges and GRF priority themes. Save the Children flagged its [child-focused pledging guidance](#), including examples of child-focused pledges based on participatory needs assessments by Save the Children operations on the ground. This includes some important considerations, such as ensuring the best interest of the child - in laws and practices - and how to include children in relevant policy-making, protection care service, civil registration, and pledges to keep families together.
27. The **University of New South Wales (UNSW)** reported on the Gender Audit documenting preparatory meetings of the Forum, with a focus on women and girls, with the baseline to review progress from an age, gender and diversity (AGD) perspective (see UNSW – Gender Audits at <https://www.unhcr.org/resources-5cc1a4e94.html>). UNSW encouraged a crosscutting, meaningful and impactful participation of refugee women. UNSW presented key protection barriers and recommendations for pledges in each focus areas and called on all co-sponsors to develop pledges to ensure mainstreaming of women and girls.
28. The **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** expressed support to the GRF and indicated that it attends the group on Energy and Infrastructure with a particular view to refugee connectivity and mobile telephone networks. ITU announced that the Secretary General will participate in the Forum.
29. The **Women Refugee Council (WRC)** encouraged AGD sensitive pledges and noted the [guidance](#) available under “Cross-cutting resources” on the GRF website.