

## 2019 Global Refugee Forum

### Background Note for the Second Preparatory Meeting

#### Introduction

The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) states that a periodic ministerial-level Forum will be convened for all United Nations Member States, together with relevant stakeholders, to announce concrete pledges and contributions towards the objectives of the GCR, and to consider opportunities, challenges, and ways in which burden- and responsibility-sharing can be enhanced. It further states that “Forums would, in principle, take place in Geneva to facilitate the participation of all States.”<sup>1</sup> This Note sets out the organizational arrangements and the draft structure for the first Global Refugee Forum.

#### Organizational arrangements

The first Global Refugee Forum will take place on 17 and 18 December 2019 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. On 16 December 2019, rooms are additionally reserved at the Palais des Nations for side events and meetings in the lead-up to the Forum.

Invitations will be sent to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs for all United Nations member and non-member observer States, the Heads of the relevant International and Non-Governmental Organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. Governments and other stakeholders are encouraged at the national and regional levels to conduct inclusive consultations on the identification of good practices and development of pledges and contributions. UNHCR is available to support them, as needed.

The GCR specifies that the Forum will be co-hosted and co-convened by one or more States, with an invitation to the United Nations Secretary-General. The Secretary-General of the United Nations is expected to attend.

Three levels of engagement are envisaged above and beyond participation at the Forum: co-hosting, co-convening, and co-sponsoring.

#### ***Co-hosting arrangements***

The co-hosting State, together with UNHCR, will invite States and other relevant stakeholders to the Forum, and will support preparations for related events in Geneva.

#### ***Co-convening arrangements***

It is envisaged that the Forum will be co-convened by one or more States, together with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. UNHCR has approached a small number of States to serve as co-conveners and to attend the Forum at the Head of Government/Head of State level.

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<sup>1</sup> Global Compact on Refugees, para. 17.

The co-convenors will:

- Raise awareness, communicate key messages, and mobilize broad support for the Forum.
- Participate in the opening plenary of the Forum, together with Switzerland as the co-host, the United Nations Secretary-General, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
- Encourage other States and relevant stakeholders to:
  - engage in the Forum preparations, including national and regional-level consultations
  - participate at the ministerial level in the Forum
  - share good practices
  - make contributions towards the objectives of the GCR

### ***Co-sponsoring arrangements***

UNHCR has extended an open invitation to all States and other stakeholders to serve as co-sponsors for the Forum, focusing their energy and expertise on creating alliances of support for specific topics or refugee situations and mobilizing contributions in these areas. UNHCR will play a facilitating role to ensure coordinated engagement in the lead-up to the Forum. A balanced representation of all regions within the groups of co-sponsoring States will be sought.

Based upon their respective capacities, co-sponsors can be engaged in different ways. They can:

- Lead by example through:
  - demonstrating good practices and significant contributions that they have made, particularly since 2016 when the process for developing the GCR was initiated; and/or
  - making significant contributions<sup>2</sup> towards the objectives of the GCR<sup>3</sup>
- Encourage other States and other stakeholders to:
  - participate at a high level in the Forum
  - share good practices and make contributions, particularly in the areas of focus<sup>4</sup>
- Share good practices in their responses to refugee situations that encourage others to lend their support
- Play a role in shaping the programme of the Forum, for example through encouraging impactful contributions that can be showcased, and supporting the organization of panels, side events, or exhibitions related to the area that they are co-sponsoring.

States and other stakeholders are encouraged to confirm their co-sponsorship of one or more of the areas of focus for the first Forum before the **end of June 2019**. The first meetings of the co-sponsorship groups for each area will be held in early July 2019. If States and other stakeholders are unable to confirm by this date, they are encouraged to advise UNHCR of the areas that they are considering for co-sponsorship. They will be invited to the first meetings of the co-sponsorship groups in an observer capacity.

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<sup>2</sup> E.g. financial support, material support, technical expertise, programmes for resettlement and/or complementary pathways, or other actions, such as policy development.

<sup>3</sup> The objectives of the GCR are to: i) ease pressures on host countries; ii) enhance refugee self-reliance; iii) expand access to third country solutions; and iv) support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity (GCR, para. 7).

<sup>4</sup> The areas of focus for the first Forum include: arrangements for burden and responsibility sharing, education, jobs and livelihoods, energy and infrastructure, solutions, and protection capacity.

### ***Link between the Forum and the Standing Committee/Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme***

The GCR was affirmed by the United Nations General Assembly and specifies that the Global Refugee Forum will be convened for all United Nations member States and relevant stakeholders. The Forum and its preparatory process are therefore not limited to ExCom member States and observers. It is, however, important to retain a link to the Executive Committee, given that it is UNHCR's governing body and consists of Member States with a wide geographical representation that have a demonstrated interest in and devotion to the resolution of refugee issues. Following discussions with members of the Executive Committee (ExCom) Bureau, the Permanent Representatives of the States representing each of the four regions in UNHCR's ExCom Bureau would:

- Provide advice to UNHCR on the development of the first Forum
- Assist UNHCR in arranging briefings on key aspects of the Forum, as needed
- Co-chair, together with UNHCR, the preparatory meetings for the Forum.

Updates on preparations for the Forum will be provided to the September Standing Committee meeting of the Executive Committee in 2019.

### **Structure of the Forum**

The Forum aims to achieve:

- Impactful joint and individual pledges and contributions<sup>5</sup> towards the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugee (GCR)
- The sharing of good practices<sup>6</sup> to inspire future contributions
- The engagement of new partners and stakeholders in refugee responses

The Forum is expected to involve some 300 delegations of States and other relevant stakeholders. An innovative format with sessions that provide space for the substantive engagement of States and a wide range of stakeholders is foreseen.

The format will seek to reflect:

- The prominent role of participating Heads of State/Heads of Government, Ministers, and other high-level participants, including the co-hosts, co-convenors, and co-sponsors, in mobilizing support and contributions towards the objectives of the GCR
- The centrality of burden and responsibility sharing to support refugee inclusion in host countries and solutions in countries of origin
- The multi-stakeholder approach to broaden the base of support, including humanitarian and development actors, financial institutions, United Nations organizations, international and regional organizations, local authorities, cities, parliaments, civil society organizations, faith-

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<sup>5</sup> A compilation of the pledges and contributions will be produced in digital and hard copy formats.

<sup>6</sup> A compilation of good practices will be made available on the Forum website and the GCR digital portal.

based actors, the private sector, academics, sports organizations, and refugees (including women, persons with disabilities, and youth)<sup>7</sup>

States and other stakeholders are encouraged to share their pledges and contributions and good practices with UNHCR **well in advance of the Forum**. This will enable the organisers to include them in the visual presentations of the contributions and good practices for the Forum. It will also enable the organisers to consider how best to reflect them in the high-level sessions and side events.

If contributions and good practices are shared immediately before or during the dates of the Forum, they will be reflected in the written summary of outcomes. However, due to the short timeframe, it may be more challenging to include them in the visual presentations and planning for the relevant events.

The high-level sessions and side events will:

- Use dynamic and innovative formats such as Davos-style dialogues, fishbowl roundtables, Ted talks, and interactive panels
- Include representatives from host countries, donors, other stakeholders, and refugees as speakers
- Showcase selected impactful, multi-stakeholder pledges and contributions
- Showcase good practices related to the specific areas of focus in different refugee situations
- Provide opportunities for States and other stakeholder to make statements from the floor

The co-sponsorship groups will play a role in supporting the design and conceptualization of each of these sessions.

During the Forum, **pledges and contributions** will be publicized in the following ways:

- The titles of the contributions will be projected on screens during the sessions and will be organized according to area of focus and by stakeholder.
- Those relevant to the specific area of focus in the session can be highlighted by speakers in the high-level sessions, as a part of statements made from the floor, or during side events.
- They will be consolidated and available for viewing online during and after the Forum.
- They will be compiled into summary document following the Forum.
- They can be broadcast during interviews with the media.
- They can be announced through video recordings, which can be publicized during the Forum.

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<sup>7</sup> In accordance with paragraph 106 of the Global Compact on Refugees, “States and relevant stakeholders will facilitate meaningful participation of refugees, including women, persons with disabilities, and youth, in Global Refugee Forums, ensuring the inclusion of their perspectives on progress.” UNHCR is working closely with partners to engage refugees in preparations for the Forum, including through supporting refugee-led groups and networks to participate in the formal preparatory meetings in Geneva and to convene regional summits, supporting outreach to diaspora groups through regional and global consultations, including refugees within the co-sponsorship groups for the Forum, and involving refugees as speakers during the high-level sessions and side events at the Forum.

During the Forum, **good practices** can be publicized in the following ways:

- Those relevant to the specific area of focus in the session can be cited by speakers in the high-level sessions, as a part of statements made from the floor, or during side events.
- They will be consolidated and available for viewing online on the Forum website. They will also be included in the GCR digital portal once it is fully operational.
- Selected good practices can be shared in exhibits set up during the Forum.

Special arrangements for Ministers and other high-level dignitaries include the following:

- **Statements** made during high-level sessions and/or side events
- **Ministerial lunch** on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December (to be confirmed)
- **Commemorative photo** of Ministers and high-level dignitaries
- **Bilateral meeting spaces** at the Palais des Nations (organized by the delegations)
- **Media interviews**, press briefings, or press releases (organized by the delegations)

Guidance will be issued in July on the procedures for proposing a side event or exhibit, and requesting space for bilateral meetings and press interviews.

An informal briefing will be held in early September to discuss, inter alia, updates on anticipated pledges and contributions, follow-up on pledges and contributions, specific arrangements set out in the GCR (such as the three-year strategy on resettlement and complementary pathways and the global academic network), and guidance on the preparation of statements and engagement in the Forum.



**UNHCR**

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

**DRAFT schedule for the 2019 Global Refugee Forum**

Monday, 16 December						
Palais des Nations	10:00 – 20:00	Side events and round table discussions organized by co-sponsors, other States, and stakeholders				
		Related events in the City of Geneva (tbd)				
		Event on private sector engagement				
Tuesday, 17 December						
Palais des Nations	09:00 – 09:30	Commemorative photo of Ministers and other high-level participants with UNSG and HC	Interviews with the media		Photo exhibition	
	09:30 – 13:00	<b>Opening plenary on responsibility sharing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Welcome remarks by the High Commissioner and co-hosting State</li> <li>- Video</li> <li>- Statement by the United Nations Secretary-General</li> <li>- Statements by the Co-Convenors</li> <li>- Moderated dialogue with States, development actors, and other stakeholders on the humanitarian-development nexus</li> </ul>			Marketplace	
	13:00 – 14:30	Ministerial lunch hosted by Switzerland and other high-level guests	Lunch break Networking Bilateral meetings	Side Events	Press conference (13:00-13:30)	Photo exhibition
	14:30 – 17:30:	High-level session on solutions	High-level session on comprehensive responses	High-level session on education		Marketplace
	17:30 – 18:30	Plenary dialogue with refugee co-sponsors				Press interviews
	18:45 – 20:00	Reception and performance by refugee musicians				Bilateral meetings

<b>Wednesday, 17 December</b>					
<b>Palais des Nations</b>	<b>10:00 – 11:00</b>	<b>Plenary event on building inclusive societies</b>			
	<b>11:00 – 13:00</b>	<b>High-level session on addressing root causes</b>	<b>High-level session on protection capacity</b>		Photo exhibition
	<b>13:00 – 15:00</b>	<b>Lunch break</b>	<b>Co-creation spaces</b>	<b>Side Events, including for the academic network</b>	Marketplace Press interviews
	<b>15:00 – 17:00</b>	<b>High-level session on jobs and livelihoods</b>	<b>High-level session on energy and infrastructure</b>		Bilateral meetings
	<b>17:00 – 18:00</b>	<b>Closing plenary</b>			