Safeguarding fundamental rights

Somali refugee women gathered in the Women's Wellness Centre, run by the International Medical Corps in Melkadida Refugee Camp in Ethiopia.
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Safeguarding the fundamental rights of all people of concern to UNHCR is the core goal of protection. The world contends with increasing displacement driven by overlapping and compounding factors such as conflict, violence, persecution, natural disasters and climate change, all of which places people of concern in situations where their rights are in jeopardy.

The past 12 months have witnessed a number of important developments, offering pathways to improved protection. The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) provides a framework that aims to address refugee crises in the context of larger global challenges, through fair and predictable responsibility-sharing arrangements that underpin good protection outcomes. Engaging with multiple partners to realize the GCR's key objectives of easing pressure on host countries, enhancing refugee self-reliance, expanding access to third-country solutions and supporting conditions for voluntary return in safety and dignity will guide protection into 2020 and beyond.

The same spirit of collective engagement to provide protection and solutions to people of concern underpinned the High-Level Segment on Statelessness at ExCom in October 2019, which was the half-way point of UNHCR's #IBelong Campaign (2014-2024). States made solid commitments to reinforce their systems to identify, prevent and reduce statelessness through accession and implementation of relevant international instruments, and other partners pledged their support to addressing the challenges of statelessness.

An updated "Policy on Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement", released in September 2019, promotes clarity and predictability in UNHCR's contribution to coordinated humanitarian responses to internal displacement, and the protection of the rights of IDPs in support of the primary responsibility of the State.

UNHCR is also working with States and partners in the roll-out of the Three-Year Strategy (2019-2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways (see *Building Better Futures*) to broaden the availability of resettlement places including through the involvement of new resettling countries, and to expand complementary pathways for admission to third countries, such as community sponsorships or employment and education opportunities.

Notwithstanding advances in international solidarity and national protection frameworks, serious challenges to the right to seek and enjoy asylum and to the principle of non-refoulement remain. Humanitarian access to affected populations in a number of acute crises is still challenging. Assistance to persons at heightened risk is not fully adequate, and conditions for voluntary return and self-reliance are not sufficiently in place.

In 2020, UNHCR will continue supporting States and people of concern to manage, strategically with all relevant stakeholders and through a rights-centred approach, major protection challenges. Among other priorities, age, gender and diversity considerations will reinforce participation and accountability to affected populations. The Asylum Support Capacity Group, established under the GCR, will respond to States' interest to enhance their laws and policy frameworks. The application of the IDP Policy will strengthen UNHCR's capacity for solutions to internal displacement.

The new Policy on "UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement"

In this chapter

- Legal protection frameworks
- Identifying international protection needs and national asylum systems
- Protecting and promoting human rights
- Addressing and responding to mixed movements
- Preventing and ending statelessness
- Registration, documentation and profiling
- Community-based protection
- Child protection, youth engagement and empowerment
- Gender equality
- Persons at heightened risk

⚖ LEGAL PROTECTION FRAMEWORKS

A young girl and her family apply for asylum in San Jose, Costa Rica, after fleeing Nicaragua.

2020 TARGETS

Develop and disseminate legal and policy guidance on current international protection issues, in accordance with international standards.

Engage in global, regional and national legislative action as well as with judicial processes and actors, in support of international refugee law.

Represent UNHCR in strategic partnerships aimed at strengthening legal protection frameworks.

UNHCR will continue to advance, promote and monitor the implementation of protection standards, in line with its mandate—particularly its supervisory responsibility—and in support of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Office will also promote strengthened state compliance and national systems, and integrate law and policy advocacy in all relevant areas of its work.

UNHCR will continue to provide guidance on the right to family life for refugees in the context of family reunification, on cessation of refugee status, and on advancing normative displacement standards in the context of climate change and disasters.

The Office will undertake further research and analysis on risks faced by people displaced in the context of disaster and climate change. UNHCR will also roll out guidance on the onward movement of asylum-seekers and refugees, with an emphasis on avoiding penalization for irregular entry or presence.

UNHCR will assist States seeking to accede to relevant treaties or lift reservations to treaties to which they are a signatory. Where needed, the Office will support States in their legislative and judicial processes and work with legislators, lawyers, judges and courts to provide advice on legislation and policies, intervening as amicus curiae where relevant.

UNHCR will continue to engage with strategic partners, processes and mechanisms at global, regional, national and local levels, particularly in the areas of human rights, migration, and climate change and disaster displacement, the latter being illustrative of the Office's efforts to develop law and policy frameworks that respond to contemporary challenges, and where it can bring its expertise to bear in global policy discussions.

UNHCR will continue to promote policy coherence on climate change and disaster displacement, deepening understanding among partners and key stakeholders of the protection environment in those contexts. It will participate again in the Platform on Disaster Displacement, supporting its 2018-2020 strategy, and engage in the Task Force on Displacement, particularly in preparation for the 26th Conference of the Parties in November 2020, and in support of relevant disaster risk reduction activities.

Platform on Disaster Displacement Strategy 2019-2022.

Protection capacity | The Global Refugee Forum will seek to strengthen 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. This will include enhanced emergency preparedness and responses, more protective legal and policy frameworks, better asylum capacity through the coordinating support of the newly-established Asylum Capacity Support Group, enhanced protection response and strengthening of national institutions, and the promotion of and support to the participation and inclusion of refugees and host communities in all levels of planning and response, as well of refugee-led initiatives.

Climate change and displacement

Hawali's story is only one illustration of how the world's displaced are on the front line of climate change. Of the 20.4 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate at the end of 2018, a third were located in the world's least developed countries, which are often highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

"Forced displacement across borders can stem from the interaction between climate change and disasters with conflict and violence, or it can arise from natural or man-made disasters alone. Either situation can trigger international protection needs."

—Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

IDENTIFYING INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION NEEDS AND NATIONAL ASYLUM SYSTEMS

UNHCR staff at the Rumichaca International Bridge provide information, legal assistance and aid items to Venezuelan refugees and migrants crossing from Colombia into Ecuador, ahead of the implementation of new visa laws.

2020 TARGETS

Ensure access to individual status determination procedures or group-based protection, as applicable to the majority of those seeking protection.

Ensure minimum procedural standards, in accordance with applicable international and regional obligations, to the majority of national asylum or refugee status determination systems.

With nearly four in five refugees living in countries neighbouring their countries of origin, and the number of forcibly displaced continuing to eclipse prior records, there is an acute need for effective national asylum systems and responsibility-sharing mechanisms.

Within the framework of the Global Compact on Refugees, the Asylum Capacity Support Group will provide a forum for States to request or provide support, with the aim of ensuring national asylum systems operate with fairness, efficiency, adaptability and integrity. UNHCR will facilitate exchanges between States, experts and civil society members as they seek to support asylum and refugee status determination (RSD) procedures that adhere to minimum standards and produce swift and fair decisions.

Concurrently, UNHCR will conduct RSD under its mandate when required, provided that status determination yields concrete protection benefits for people of concern. Individual case processing will take place only where it serves a clear and identifiable purpose as part of a broader protection and solutions strategy. In many contexts, group-based approaches are more practical, particularly where asylum-seekers arrive in large numbers due to objectively verifiable circumstances in their country or countries of origin.

Establishing a comprehensive legal framework for RSD, ensuring sufficient staffing levels and setting up supportive infrastructure can be demanding and resource-intensive. Accordingly, UNHCR will facilitate and support States assuming responsibility for RSD, where circumstances permit. That support will be long-term, to ensure the transition is successful and will include quality assurance initiatives, such as those undertaken in the Americas, tailored to each specific context. UNHCR will work with States to set clearly-defined, measurable and time-bound objectives, with detailed plans for implementation, closure and follow up.

High-quality country of origin information and country guidance are vital to improving the efficiency and quality of asylum decision making. UNHCR will provide guidance to States and other partners. UNHCR also aims to launch a revision of Refworld as the primary law and policy database for asylum decision-making, including a global case law database.

UNHCR's revised RSD procedural standards will provide clear, practical guidelines for implementing status determination procedures. The existing aide-memoire and glossary of case processing modalities will continue to guide States in the conduct of effective triage and selection of appropriate case processing modalities, particularly given the sustained and high rate of arrivals in many regions. UNHCR will also support the assembly of standby rosters featuring technical RSD experts and carry out capacity-building initiatives where needed.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees praises Mexico's support for refugees

With more than 48,000 asylum applications filed up to the end of August, Mexico has seen a 231% increase in the number of asylum applications.
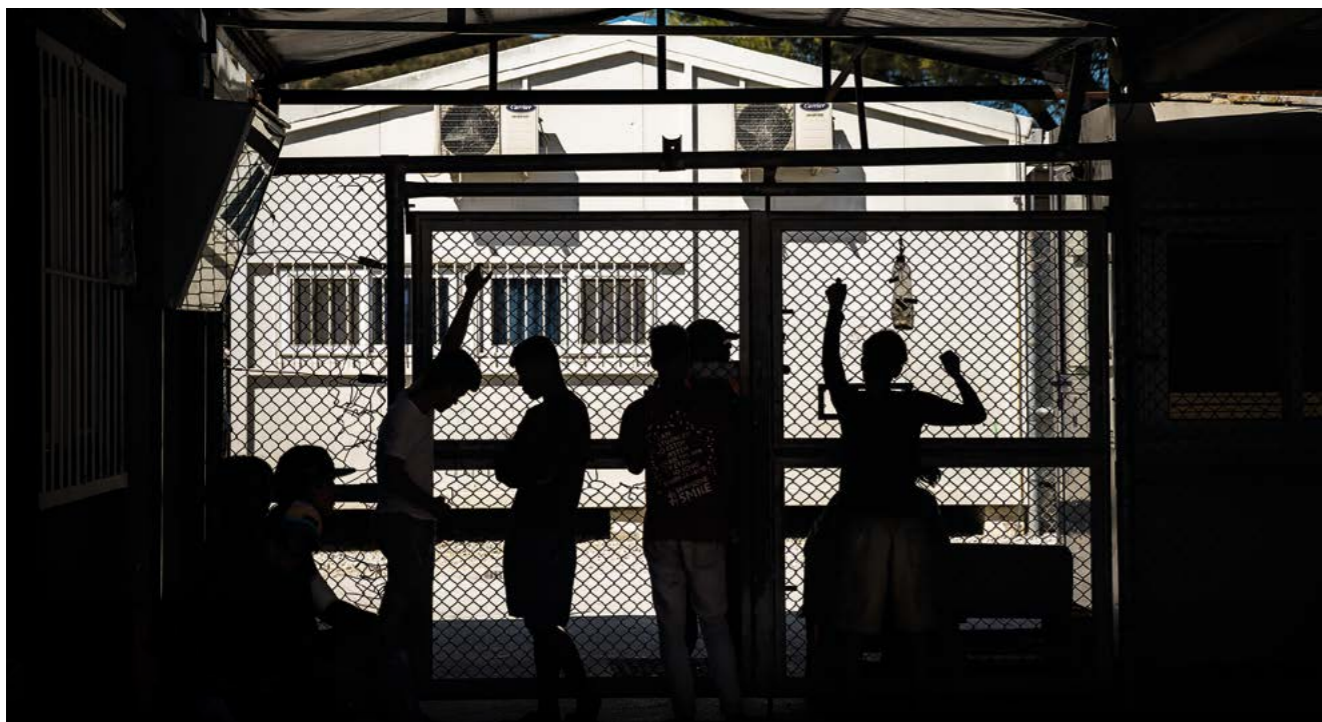
"We dream of having our asylum application approved and getting jobs so we can save money to start our own business again. [...] We don't want to be a burden. We want to contribute to Mexico."

—Carla*, Honduran political activist who applied for asylum in Mexico.

*Names changed for protection reasons.

🏛 PROMOTING AND PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

Unaccompanied boys from Afghanistan and Syria in Section A of the Moria reception center in Greece.

2020 TARGETS

Engage strategically with human rights mechanisms to encourage the respect, protection and promotion of the human rights of people of concern.

Advocate, and build partnerships to ensure, the inclusion of forced displacement and statelessness in international, regional and national human rights frameworks and mechanisms.

Promote and monitor access to liberty and freedom of movement for asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless persons, in accordance with international human rights standards.

Many refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons and others of concern to UNHCR are unable to enjoy basic rights, including physical security and equality before the law. Without adequate documentation, legal advice or resources, they may be unable to seek relief or redress. To this end, UNHCR will engage with the UN human rights system and will actively promote the human rights of people of concern, including in protection and solutions strategies as well as other operational engagements.

UNHCR will seek to ensure that issues related to forced displacement and statelessness are reflected in international and regional human rights frameworks. This will include, among other things, participation in UN task teams and inter-agency initiatives, as well as contributions to thematic processes and initiatives in the context of the Human Rights Council and the work of its Special Procedures mandate holders. The Office will assist operations in country review processes conducted by the UN Treaty Monitoring Bodies, will help

prepare written submission for the Universal Periodic Review process, and present oral statements to the Human Rights Council, UN Treaty Monitoring Bodies, and other human rights fora. UNHCR will continue to collaborate with UN Country Teams, States, NGO human rights networks, OHCHR and other UN agencies, civil society and national human rights institutions.

UNHCR will integrate a human rights-based approach and human rights considerations across different areas of its work, including delivering advice, guidance and training on the human rights of people of concern. For example, UNHCR will work closely in 2020 with the Global Protection Cluster to develop practical guidance on human rights monitoring in field operations, as well as developing training to strengthen capacity on human rights-related issues.

The Office will raise displacement and statelessness issues in the human rights standard setting and review processes, and encourage States and stakeholders to actively promote the respect, protection and promotion of human rights. UNHCR will also enhance the use of human rights

mechanisms to achieve immediate protection outcomes, including the prevention of refoulement. These activities will also assist UNHCR in strengthening protection in contexts where it does not have a presence or a State is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or Statelessness Conventions.

Ending the arbitrary detention of asylum-seekers, refugees, IDPs and stateless persons is one of many human rights issues UNHCR is keen to address worldwide. As it also seeks to reduce and eliminate unlawful restrictions on their freedom of movement, in accordance with international standards, UNHCR will promote freedom of movement, pursue alternatives to detention, and advocate the elimination of child detention. In 2020, UNHCR will continue to engage with UN human rights mechanisms, particularly the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, strengthening advocacy and strategic litigation strategy, co-leading the UN Migration Network Working Group on Alternatives to Detention, and strengthening partnerships with civil society, including the International Detention Coalition and its many active member organizations.

On a trek to safety, Somalis risk all in Libya

Held captive by gun-toting smugglers at a warehouse in southern Libya, newlywed Somali refugee Maryam* was taken from her husband Ahmed* and raped–repeatedly–over several months. Only when she became pregnant was she returned to him.

"They continued to beat me despite my condition, but one day a smuggler pushed me very hard. I fell and I miscarried my baby."

—Maryam*, Somali refugee detained in Libya and evacuated to Niger.

*Names changed for protection reasons.

ADDRESSING AND RESPONDING TO MIXED MOVEMENTS

UNHCR holds a focus group with unaccompanied minors at Shagarab refugee camp during an anti-trafficking campaign in east Sudan.

2020 TARGETS

Identify people in need of international protection, who are travelling in mixed movements, and provide immediate assistance and referrals to appropriate mechanisms and procedures.

Ensure that responses to trafficking in persons include effective safeguards to protect the rights of victims and their access to international protection.

Strengthen partnerships with key States, UN agencies and civil society actors in ways that improve respect for the rights of people in mixed movements.

UNHCR's central objective in its engagement with mixed movements is to ensure that refugees and other people of concern are identified and provided with international protection and, where applicable, have access to solutions. "Mixed movements" are defined as the cross-border movements of people, generally in an irregular manner, who travel alongside each other, using similar routes and means of transport or facilitators, but for different reasons and having different needs. This may include asylum-seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking, unaccompanied or separated children, stateless persons, and migrants.

The routes used by migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless persons are often extremely dangerous and expose them to risks of harm, abuse and exploitation, including trafficking in persons. In line with the Global Compact on Refugees and ongoing UN engagement in prevention, peacebuilding, security and sustainable development, UNHCR will support measures to address the root causes of displacement and reduce the need for people to undertake dangerous journeys in the first place. These measures include developing and strengthening asylum systems in countries and regions of

origin, as well as along movement routes, so that those in need of international protection can gain access to territory and asylum procedures, adequate reception facilities and protection from refoulement.

It is often difficult to determine if a person is a refugee or a migrant when they first arrive at a border or in the territory of a State. UNHCR will continue to work on measures that support the identification of immediate needs of all people, regardless of status, and provide safe and dignified reception followed by referral to appropriate procedures. This approach is consistent with the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants and the provisions of the Global Compact on Refugees, as well as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

UNHCR will develop and reinforce partnerships to promote access to international protection for people under its mandate and the application of all relevant international and regional refugee and human rights instruments to those in mixed movements.

It will continue participating in the Executive Committee of the United Nations Migration Network, contributing to coherent, comprehensive and coordinated implementation of the Global Compact for Migration. It will maintain its strong partnership with key humanitarian and development organizations in the UN system, civil society, academia, UN Member States and private sector actors, as well as participating in key migration fora such as the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

In order to strengthen responses to trafficking in persons, UNHCR will continue to collaborate with States and partners, particularly IOM and UNODC. In 2020, it will co-chair the Global Protection Cluster Anti-Trafficking Task Team, and actively participate in the work of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, as well as of Alliance 8.7—an alliance of stakeholders working towards reaching Sustainable Development Goal 8.7—to eliminate human trafficking, modern slavery and forced labour.

For refugees trapped in Libya, a flight out of danger

An evacuation flight takes 66 vulnerable refugees to Rwanda, where they receive shelter, medical checks and options for a safe future. The group are the first to benefit from a newly announced Emergency Transit Mechanism. The agreement between the Government of Rwanda, UNHCR and the African Union seeks to move refugees most at risk in Libya to the safety of a transit centre in Gashora, a district some 60 kms from Kigali.

"We had a dream of getting out of Libya and now we are finally able to live in peace."

—Zainab, Somali refugee evacuated with her husband and their infant baby girl.

PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO STATELESSNESS

© UNHCR/Chris de Bode

A formerly stateless young woman obtains citizenship and the right to work in Kyrgyzstan.

2020 TARGETS

100,000 stateless persons will acquire nationality, or have it confirmed.

12 States will accede to the 1954 and the 1961 Statelessness Conventions.

20 States will improve their nationality laws, policies and procedures to be more consistent with international standards on the prevention and reduction of statelessness.

10 States will establish or improve statelessness determination procedures.

Global Action Plan to End Statelessness 2014-2024

To mark the mid-point of UNHCR's ten-year #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness by 2024, a High-Level Segment on Statelessness was convened on 7 October 2019 as part of UNHCR's Executive Committee session, where States and others made pledges to address statelessness by 2024. More than 60 States made over 230 commitments to accede to or ratify the UN Statelessness Conventions, facilitate naturalization of stateless persons, prevent statelessness by removing gender discriminatory provisions in nationality laws, ensure universal birth registration, provide protection to stateless persons and enhance or initiate data collection on stateless populations. Resources will be required to support implementation of these pledges.

Despite a steady increase in the number of accessions to the UN Statelessness Conventions, the number of States parties to the 1954 and 1961 Conventions remains short of the 2020 goals of the "Global Action Plan to End Statelessness"–120 and 103 accessions, respectively. In 2020, UNHCR will continue to promote accession to both Statelessness Conventions, with the aim of boosting the number of States party by 12.
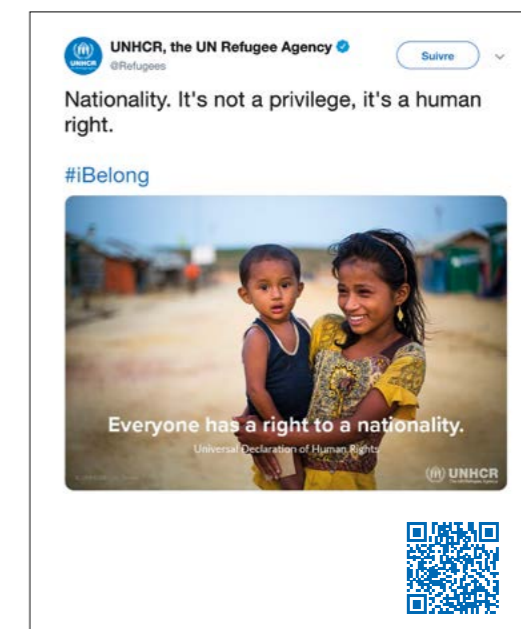
The most sustainable and effective way to prevent and reduce statelessness is by reforming nationality laws, policies and procedures to close gaps that may lead to statelessness. Despite progress, many States do not have safeguards in their nationality law to prevent statelessness at birth. One such safeguard includes granting nationality to children born on the territory who would otherwise be stateless or to children born to nationals abroad.

Discriminatory provisions in a number of States prevent specific groups from acquiring nationality with, for example, 25 States not allowing mothers to confer nationality to their children on an equal basis with fathers. In 2020, UNHCR will continue to provide technical advice to governments, aiming for 20 States to improve their nationality laws, policies and procedures to be more consistent with international standards on the prevention and reduction of statelessness. This target includes the removal of gender discrimination from nationality laws in four States.

While the majority of stateless persons have never left the country where they were born, refugees and asylum-seekers are also at risk of statelessness. Action 6 of the Global Action Plan calls on States to grant protection status to stateless migrants by establishing statelessness determination procedures and facilitating their naturalization. A statelessness determination procedure serves to identify stateless persons among migrant populations to ensure they enjoy the rights to which they are entitled until they acquire a nationality. So far, only a limited number of States have established statelessness determination procedures, with many hosting significant refugee populations lacking such a procedure. In 2020, UNHCR will advocate and provide technical advice to governments for the introduction or improvement of statelessness determination procedures, leading to structural changes in 10 States.

A key challenge in addressing statelessness is the lack of data. Current statistics on stateless persons cover only 78 countries with a total number of 3.7 million stateless persons. The true global number remains unknown. UNHCR will continue to work with others, including UNFPA, the United Nations Statistical Commission and the World Bank to encourage better collection of data nationally, as well as the establishment of a more rigorous global estimate for the number of stateless persons. UNHCR will also support identification and registration exercises and surveys to increase knowledge on the number of stateless persons, their situation and possible solutions. These efforts are expected to lead to improved quantitative and qualitative baseline data for 20 States and statistical data on stateless persons for 10 more countries.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency
@Refugees

Nationality. It's not a privilege, it's a human right.

#iBelong

REGISTATION, DOCUMENTATION AND PROFILING

Biometrically registered Ethiopian refugees in South Sudan wait for a food distribution in Gorom refugee camp.

2020 TARGETS

15 million individual registration records will be available in UNHCR's Population Registration and Identity Management Ecosystem (PRIMES).

10 million individuals will be biometrically enrolled in PRIMES across 75 country operations.

75 UNHCR operations will implement UNHCR's "Policy and Guidance on Registration and Identity Management".

Guidance on Registration and Identify Management

PRIMES is UNHCR's central population registry and corporate registration and case management system. Its primary objective is to furnish refugees and other displaced populations with a legal and digital identity recognized by States and businesses. As of September 2019, 9.6 million people were registered in PRIMES proGres v4 across 67 operations. In 2020, UNHCR will implement and manage PRIMES across 90 of its operations, covering an estimated

15 million individual registration records, with more than 10 million individuals enrolled biometrically including in eight additional country operations. When this is complete, UNHCR will have met its Grand Bargain commitment to bring the total number of operations with biometric systems to 75 by 2020.

In 2020, the PRIMES support structure will be expanded beyond UNHCR Headquarters to include data, identity

management and analysis platforms in its seven regional bureaux. UNHCR will ensure that PRIMES applications are accessible and interoperable with partner systems, and will continue to streamline beneficiary identity management through assistance distribution points. Its aim will be to facilitate secure, safe and appropriate access to data for UNHCR and partners.

Specially trained registration staff will be deployed to emergency situations. Verification exercises and registration activities will be strengthened through a partnership with the Danish Refugee Council on a dedicated roster for registration experts. UNHCR will also conduct a series of webinars for registration and protection staff dedicated to disseminating advice from its "Policy and Guidance on Registration and Identity Management". The Policy will also be included in other corporate training and capacity-development initiatives.

UNHCR will implement its digital identity and inclusion strategy by supporting specific field-level innovations that

contribute to realizing the goals of the Global Compact on Refugees—particularly facilitating self-reliance, connectivity and financial inclusion—as well as developing new global standards and guidance. Information on other people of concern, including stateless persons, IDPs and returnees, will be collected through estimation, enrolment, profiling and surveys. International recommendations for data and statistics on refugees and IDPs, along with guidance materials, will be adopted by the UN members and agencies in March 2020. UNHCR will also collaborate closely with the Joint IDP Profiling Service, and expand its use of the service's skills and capacities for better data on IDPs.

In addition to supporting States with registration and identity management, UNHCR will also provide support in gathering and managing data and information on refugees and IDPs, increasing their capacity to analyze the situations of people of concern and ensure their needs are reflected in national plans.

Registration gives many Rohingya refugees identification for the first time

More than 270,000 stateless refugees from Myanmar provided with identity cards in an ongoing registration drive in Bangladesh.

"We want documents for Rohingyas. This is our document."

—Nasima Aktar, stateless Rohingya who recently received an identity card with her basic biodata, photo and country of origin.

COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION

Rehena Begum (right) talks to Safety Unit Volunteer, Samuda Begum, during a visit to her home in Camp 21, Kutupalong, Bangladesh.

2020 TARGETS

Extent local communities support presence of people of concern (refugees, IDPs, returnees and stateless persons) will be improved in 65 operations.

Percentage of programme priorities identified by the community will be implemented and/or improved in 30 operations.

Percentage of people of concern represented in leadership management structures improved.

Enhance consistency and cross fertilization across regions and population groups and support capacity to advance community-based protection.

UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity Policy

Effective and sustainable responses are only possible when the views, priorities and capacities of women, men, girls and boys of concern—refugees, stateless persons, IDPs, returnees—are used to inform protection programming. UNHCR is strongly committed to maximizing its direct engagement with all communities of concern, through a community-based approach by promoting equal partnerships and placing them at the centre of the decision-making process.

This requires UNHCR and partners to be equipped with the necessary tools and skills across sectors and throughout the operations management cycle. Building on UNHCR's experience in implementing community-based protection, the Office will continue to invest in its field operations through the adaptation and dissemination of practical tools applicable in situations of forced displacement, including internal displacement, and will document and disseminate emerging and

promising practices which facilitate timely identification of community concerns; build on their existing capacities and strengths; ensure inclusive and representative leadership structures; and promote social cohesion. UNHCR will continue to provide guidance and build capacity through the roll out of its community-based protection (CBP) online module, the "Community-based protection" and "Programming for protection" learning programmes, which provide concrete examples from diverse contexts.

In the context of regionalization, and building on the experience and lessons learnt during the roll out of UNHCR's "Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity", UNHCR will increase efforts to identify and disseminate good practices on age, gender and diversity, accountability to affected populations and CBP. It will also ensure common standards among regions and across forced displacement contexts through its enhanced online community of practice and its "Community-based protection in action" series.

UNHCR will continue to demonstrate inter-agency leadership on accountability to affected populations as co-chair of the IASC Results Group 2 on Accountability and Inclusion and as co-signatory of the Grand Bargain's participation revolution workstream.

UNHCR's approach to establishing and maintaining trusted communications channels with affected populations is inherently flexible and grounded within its community-based protection approach. This bottom-up, community-first process allows existing communications capacities to be identified and strengthened. This includes ensuring that UNHCR adapt to, and safely adopt, innovative new communication methodologies reflecting communities' preferred and trusted channels, both on and offline. To do so requires investment in the Office's capacity to understand and mitigate online data protection and privacy risks and to ensure inclusivity in UNHCR's approach to establish and maintain dialogues across a diversity of communities.

Helping families to thrive in the world's largest refugee settlement

Two years after Rohingya refugees fled to Bangladesh, strides are being made in enhancing nutrition, shelter, sanitation, health care and registration, though challenges remain. Through a unique project created by UNHCR and its partner BRAC, women like Sahera are able to plant and harvest their own produce again. The project began in 2018 with 100 farmers and is expanding.

"We're putting refugees at the centre of the response, to deliver services ... and improve infrastructure."

—Oscar Sanchez Pineiro, UNHCR's Senior Field and Sector Coordinator in Cox's Bazar.

CHILD PROTECTION, YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

A young South Sudanese refugee flies a kite in Jewi refugee camp, Ethiopia.

2020 TARGETS

Ensure non-discriminatory access to national child protection and social services for children of concern (refugees, IDPs, returnees and stateless) in 30 countries.

Initiate or complete a best interests process for more than 70% of unaccompanied or separated children.

700 children's committees, groups and other structures will be operational and will facilitate children's participation.

30 youth-led projects from among all children of concern will be supported by UNHCR.

Children make up over half of the world's refugee population and there are 4.8 million refugee youth. Displaced children and youth are particularly vulnerable to separation, violence and exploitation, yet have great potential and capacities for resilience and innovation, if provided with appropriate support and opportunities. UNHCR's approach to child protection and youth participation in 2020 will focus on five strategic priorities.

Strengthening national child protection systems to ensure inclusion and protection of displaced children

UNHCR will work with authorities, other UN organizations and civil society to strengthen the inclusion of displaced and stateless children in national child protection systems and the capacity of these systems to address the specific needs of these children. Priorities include strengthening social services in areas hosting displaced people, boosting the skills and procedures in place to respond to the needs of displaced children, and increasing birth registration for children of concern to prevent statelessness, in light of recent declines in access to birth registration over the last year.

Ensuring appropriate best interests and child-friendly procedures are undertaken for children at risk

An ongoing priority for UNHCR is to ensure that refugee children and other children of concern have access to appropriate and timely best interests procedures. UNHCR and partners will undertake best interests assessments and determinations, where national procedures are insufficient or inaccessible. UNHCR and partners will also work in at least 15 operations to strengthen unaccompanied and separated children's access to appropriate alternative care, particularly family-based care for unaccompanied and separated children. Capacity building will also be undertaken to ensure UNHCR and government asylum systems are child-friendly, including that children's views are given due weight, family unity is prioritized, children and families are provided with timely, accurate information and interviews are conducted by skilled staff in a child-friendly manner.

Supporting communities, families and children to care for and protect children

UNHCR and partners will also support community-based child protection programmes. This includes supporting community members to mobilize, share information and initiate dialogue on key child protection issues, such as child labour or violence in the home. UNHCR will also provide child-friendly information on services to children, families and affected communities that prevent and respond to child protection issues. UNHCR and partners will support parenting programmes that help caregivers deal with their own stress, care for and protect their children, and use positive discipline methods. The priority will be to support forcibly-displaced children, families and communities' own efforts and initiatives to protect children.

Youth engagement and empowerment

Meaningful participation of youth in decision making processes, youth-sensitive programming, and the provision of youth-specific services are all key priorities of the Global Compact on Refugees.

UNHCR will work to support youth-led initiatives, engage youth in coexistence and peace-building activities, promote youth development, provide youth-sensitive education, livelihoods, sports and recreational opportunities, and strengthen capacity building, in line with the implementation of UNHCR's "Core Actions for Refugee Youth". UNHCR will also work to strengthen youth inclusion in accountability mechanisms and in broader consultation and networking opportunities. UNHCR will support a range of initiatives to strengthen youth leadership and action, including through youth-led projects, Youth Initiative Fund projects, the Global Youth Advisory Council, capacity building for youth, and inclusion of youth in country-level protection initiatives.

UNHCR's Core Actions for Refugee Youth

Strengthening coordination, knowledge, information management and data on child protection and youth

UNHCR's approach will support knowledge, data generation and dissemination, including sharing lessons learnt, good practices and tools for effective child protection programming. UNHCR will also strengthen information management capacity for child protection (including case management, and child protection data and analysis) as well as multi-sectoral youth-sensitive programming. There is currently no streamlined way to capture youth-disaggregated data across humanitarian agencies. To address this challenge, UNHCR will work with partners to strengthen the collection and use of accurate information to understand the needs of young people by advocating for increased investments in data; streamlining data collection and analysis; and reviewing data collection methodologies, including though participatory methods.

GENDER EQUALITY

A Congolese woman works on farmland as part of Evariste Mfaume's peace villages and agricultural empowerment project.

2020 TARGETS

Improve the participation of women in leadership and management structures in 54 refugee operations and in 4 situations where UNHCR is operationally involved with internally displaced people.

Conduct gender equality learning programme to increase and strengthen UNHCR's gender equality-related capacity.

Disseminate operational support to strengthen gender equality mainstreaming.

UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity Policy

Gender equality is fundamental to the wellbeing and rights of all people of concern and is relevant to every aspect of UNHCR's work. In 2020, the Office will continue to advance gender equality across its work. It will advance the rights and improve the protection of women and girls through the continued implementation of five commitments to women and girls, which are part of UNHCR's "Age, Gender and Diversity Policy":

- Women and girls participate equally and meaningfully in decision-making and leadership structures.

- Women and girls are provided with individual registration and documentation.

- Women and girls have equal access to, and control over, management and provision of food, core relief items and cash-based interventions.

- Women and girls have equal access to economic opportunities, decent work and quality education and health services.

- Women and girls have access to comprehensive SGBV prevention and response services.

In order to ensure a response that actively advances gender equality and women's empowerment, UNHCR will continue to support its staff to effectively mainstream gender across its operational work and programming in refugee, IDP, returnee, states and mixed contexts, as well as implement targeted actions that advance gender equality and women's rights. In this regard, UNHCR will conduct its gender equality learning programme in regions where this has not yet been rolled out. The programme aims to strengthen technical gender equality capacity among staff. It will focus on gender focal points and their capacity to function as gender equality resources and advocates within operations.

Furthermore, a newly-developed gender equality toolkit with user-friendly guidance on how to integrate gender equality in the work and activities of UNHCR will be disseminated, including among UNHCR-led protection, shelter and CCCM clusters. It will support staff in mainstreaming gender equality throughout the Office's operation management cycle and coordination leadership in refugee and IDP contexts, integrating gender in emergency responses, designing gender responsive cash-based interventions and advancing women's participation in leadership and decision-making structures.

Work will also continue to expand the use of the IASC gender with age marker—a technical tool that looks at the extent to which programmes respond effectively to gender and age differences among

people of concern—across the agency, including by UNHCR-led clusters during the humanitarian programme cycle processes. Increased use of the marker will help to ensure that gender equality is explicitly articulated in operational plans and programmes, as well as inter-agency processes.

UNHCR's work on gender equality and women's empowerment is most effective when it happens consistently across all the sectors in which UNHCR works. With that in mind, there will be a focus on promoting cross-sector collaboration and identification of strategic entry points, for example around girls' access to quality education, prevention work around SGBV, protection of IDP and returnee women's housing, land and property rights in shelter programming, and promotion of women's participation and leadership in governance structures established in IDP camps and sites.

At a global level, UNHCR will continue to promote and advocate gender equality in humanitarian action by building on initiatives such as gender audits of the global processes around the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Refugee Forum. UNHCR will focus on ensuring the active involvement and leadership of refugee women and their organizations in such processes. UNHCR will also continue to seek out and engage in strategic partnerships around gender equality and humanitarian response.

IASC gender with age marker

PERSONS AT HEIGHTENED RISK

Older persons find friendship in a UNHCR-supported centre in Aleppo, Syria.

Protecting persons with disabilities and older persons

2020 TARGETS

Finalize and circulate guidance on identifying refugees with disabilities at registration, with accompanying training material.

Organize 3 regional or subregional-level workshops bringing together UNHCR and local or regional organizations of persons with disabilities, including refugees and IDPs with disabilities.

Revise and disseminate guidance on working with older persons in forced displacement.

Failure to identify refugees with disabilities at registration undermines their equal access to protection, assistance and solutions, as well as limits UNHCR's capacity to effectively monitor their inclusion in all aspects of programming. In order to address these challenges, a key focus for UNHCR in 2020 will be to build the capacity of UNHCR staff and partners to identify persons with disabilities, including through use of the Washington Group question sets on disability in continuous registration processes.

Another priority for UNHCR in 2020 will be to develop its partnerships with organizations of persons with disabilities, in order to reinforce participation and strengthen engagement between displaced and host populations of persons with disabilities. To facilitate dialogue and a space to identify opportunities for partnership, UNHCR will hold three regional or subregional-level workshops that bring together staff, partners and organizations of persons with disabilities.

It is recognized that older persons experience specific risks during forced displacement and are often excluded from opportunities to exercise their leadership and apply their skills and capabilities. However, UNHCR's understanding of the factors contributing to older people's vulnerability —and the participation barriers they face—is currently limited. During 2020, UNHCR will focus on addressing that knowledge gap about older people in forced displacement and raising awareness among its staff and partners on the importance of age-sensitive programming.

UNHCR will seek to improve access for all to protection, assistance and solutions, including persons with disabilities and older persons. These efforts will contribute to greater visibility of persons with disabilities and older persons in programming, strengthening their engagement as actors in response to forced displacement.

Protecting LGBTI people in forced displacement

2020 TARGETS

Build the capacity of UNHCR and partner staff to work with and support LGBTI people of concern.

Reinforce partnerships to protect LGBTI people in forced displacement. determination systems.

Persecution and discrimination experienced by LGBTI persons is a trigger for their flight in search of safety and security. LGBTI persons are frequently subject to continued harm while in forced displacement—including sexual and gender-based violence, a lack of police protection, refoulement, exclusion from access to basic services, lack of services addressing their specific needs, arbitrary detention and exclusion.

UNHCR is focusing its efforts in 2020 to better understand the many challenges faced by LGBTI individuals in forced displacement, identify innovative solutions to address those challenges, build the capacity of its staff and partners to offer support, and establish partnerships at global, regional and local levels, including with local actors, civil society and LGBTI organizations.

To achieve this, UNHCR is planning consultations in various regions in 2020 and will organize a roundtable that will bring together experts from states, NGOs, academic institutions and international organizations to present the finding of the consultations, discuss the challenges faced by LGBTI persons in forced displacement today, and identify priority actions needed. These identified actions will direct UNHCR's and partners work throughout 2020 and the following years.

Supporting LGBTI inclusive protection in Ecuador

In Quito and Esmeraldas, Ecuador, a UNHCR project, supported by UNHCR's Innovation Fund, and designed to improve protection and integration for LGBTI people of concern, is underway. The challenges for the community include discrimination in many aspects of their lives (social, medical, livelihoods), and the heightened need for access to safe spaces in contexts of forced displacement. Through a collaboration with *Taller Comunicación Mujer* and *Fundación Lunita Lunera,* participatory exercises that map social and integration spaces will form the basis for information products to be distributed to LGBTI people of concern. Incorporated into the design are feedback mechanisms that will allow the product to be updated in communication with the community network.