

13 July 2018

Dear Colleagues,

With some 68.5 million people around the world who have been forced from their homes due to conflict and persecution, the majority of whom are children, it is time to further strengthen the collaboration between UNHCR and UNICEF.

The [New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](#), and the comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF) that it sets out, present an important opportunity to look at our ways of working and to redouble our efforts on behalf of refugee and returnee children, and children in host communities.

The New York Declaration underscores international refugee protection standards, including those set out in the 1951 Refugee Convention, and emphasizes the rights of all refugee and migrant children, regardless of their status, in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Furthermore, it acknowledges the specific vulnerabilities and needs of children and acknowledges that every child has the same right to be protected, to keep learning and to receive the care and services she/he needs to reach her/his full potential. It also emphasizes the need for strengthened support in areas such as health care, education and psychosocial services, as well as in providing birth registration, which is critical to preventing statelessness.

As States put into action the commitments laid out in the New York Declaration, it is important that we provide the necessary support to help realize the intent in these important initiatives. This means working with governments to strengthen linkages between humanitarian response and development programmes, and to ensure that refugee children and their families gain access to national education and social services and that national development plans include refugees and support to host communities – thereby fostering self-reliance and local development. This is consistent with the pledge to “leave no one behind”, as contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and reiterated in the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit.

Our strong field presence, extensive networks and community of partners, and our complementary protection and assistance mandates, provide for a strong partnership to tackle these challenges. UNICEF’s presence in countries of origin, transit and destination, and its dual development and humanitarian mandate allow the organization to tackle the complex challenges of migration and forced displacement. While UNHCR has close relations with refugee authorities in countries of asylum, transit, return and resettlement, UNICEF’s established relationships with line ministries, and local partners are instrumental to support the inclusion of refugee, returnee, and stateless children in national protection systems, development plans; and facilitate their access to education, health and social services.

Against this background of shared and complementary strengths, we have agreed to the following initial measures: 1) to optimize our collaboration through the secondment of a UNICEF colleague to the CRRF Task Team in UNHCR; and 2) to identify opportunities for joint and complementary programming in rolling out the CRRF, including through a series of webinars open to all colleagues from both organizations and through local and regional meetings.

These efforts will build on the long-established partnership between UNHCR and UNICEF, guided by our global memorandum of understanding (1996), joint letter on strengthened cooperation (2011) and letter of understanding on field-level collaboration (2015).

We encourage our managers in the field to support this process and to report back to us with indicative plans for cooperation at the earliest opportunity. The following colleagues in UNHCR and UNICEF are the focal points for this process and are available to provide any information and support guidance needed:

Mr. Daniel Endres, Director of Resilience and Solutions (endres@unhcr.org)

Mr. Sikander Khan, Director, Geneva Office of Emergency Programmes (sikhan@unicef.org)

Finally, we would like to express our firm commitment to this partnership and encourage our colleagues to work together so we can seize this opportunity, and looking ahead to the adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees, make a real difference in the lives of refugee, returnee and stateless children.

Yours sincerely,



Henrietta H. Fore
Executive Director, UNICEF



Filippo Grandi
UN High Commissioner for Refugees

All UNHCR Staff at Headquarters and in the field
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