



OUTCOMES OF THE GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM 2023

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Cover Photo:

Noor Azizah, Rohingya refugee leader and member, Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR) Refugee Advisory Group, speaks at the final plenary and Closing Ceremony of the Global Refugee Forum 2023..

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Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, speaks at the opening plenary of the Global Refugee Forum 2023.

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Foreword

The second Global Refugee Forum took place in Geneva in December 2023 against a backdrop of a world in crisis — characterized by conflict, climate emergency, human rights violations, inflation, and other economic pressures — at a time when the very international cooperation required to address these challenges seems to be faltering and failing. In the months leading up to the GRF, many questioned the timing of the world's largest meeting on refugees, asking whether global divisions would hinder the participation, engagement, and pledges in this event.

They did not.

Rather, the international community rallied together at the Forum. Four thousand people, including more than 320 refugees, participated in person, hailing from 168 countries and more than 420 organizations. States, civil society, faith-based actors, sports bodies, the private sector, development actors, academics, cities, and others came together with a shared sense of purpose and commitment to support refugees and stateless persons around the world and the governments and communities hosting them. It was truly, as one delegate said, a new multilateralism at work.

Some USD 2.2 billion were pledged in direct financial contributions, which on its own would have been an outstanding result. But much more than money was promised through 1,750 pledges and commitments of support to further the goals of the Global Compact on Refugees: to ease pressure on hosts; enhance refugee self-reliance; expand third country solutions; and step up work in countries of origin to support conditions for voluntary return. We heard policy pledges by low and middle-income refugee-hosting countries matched by support and financing from donors and other actors. We heard pledges of resettlement and labour mobility pathways that will help save and change lives and show concretely that host communities are not alone in bearing the responsibility for international protection. Development actors demonstrated their commitment to raising the living standards of all and leave no one behind, including through mechanisms like the Global Concessional Financing Facility. The private sector pledged investments for refugees, not only in the spirit of philanthropy, but also because it is the smart thing to do. Legal support, skills training, sports inclusion, and hundreds upon hundreds of other pledges were made across a range of key issues, and some 42 multi-stakeholder pledges brought together all parts of society and their respective expertise to make collectively a real difference to people's lives. As I said during the closing of the GRF, this manifested perhaps the most impressive example of a "whole of society" approach and response that I have seen in my forty years of humanitarian work.

As exciting and impressive as the pledges made at the GRF were, and are, our efforts must now be focused on their implementation to truly change the lives of the displaced and their hosts. I hope that this work will also inspire important upcoming developments and opportunities such as the Summit of the Future. We now have less than two years until the next High-Level Officials Meeting where we will take stock of both pledges and the impacts they have achieved, and I trust that all of us will – together – work with the same shared sense of purpose, commitment, and energy – an energy generated also from positive and substantive refugee participation – demonstrated at the Global Refugee Forum.



Filippo Grandi

UN High Commissioner for Refugees

ACTION. UNITY. IMPACT.

At a glance



+4000 participants,

50% of whom were high-level attendees (Ministerial-level or equivalent).



+320 forcibly displaced and stateless participants

who spoke in 88% of high-level events and accounted for over 1/3 of speakers announcing multi-stakeholder pledges in plenary.



573 speakers

representing governments (32%), forcibly displaced and Stateless people (19%), civil society (19%), development actors (10%) and the private sector (10%).



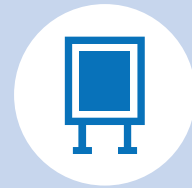
40 high-level events

covering multi-stakeholder pledges, emergencies, and regions.



+40 partners and governments

contributed good practices and progress on pledges for the exhibition.



42 speakers' corner presentations

featuring 53 speakers.



14 refugee mentees

attended as part of the UNHCR's Journalism Mentorship Programme.



80 million views

online GRF content.



More than 60 VIPs from

governments, the private sector, UN agencies, refugees, and Goodwill Ambassadors interacted in the social media zone.



Attendees greet each other outside the plenary room.

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Executive summary

Held every four years, the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) is the world's largest international gathering on forced displacement, mobilising whole-of-society support and engagement towards the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees. The second GRF, held from 13 to 15 December 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland, brought together more than 4,000 participants from 168 States – five at the head-of-State level and 86 at or above ministerial-level – and over 425 other stakeholders and partners from around the world, including more than 320 forcibly displaced and Stateless persons¹. An additional 10,000 participants joined the proceedings virtually from 120 countries – a further demonstration of the Forum's relevance, breadth, and diversity.

The GRF 2023 saw substantive engagement with some 1,750 pledges of financial, technical, material, and policy support submitted – of which some 600 were made by States. The diversity of entities submitting pledges was reflected in the nearly 1,100 pledges made by non-State actors – up by one third compared to the GRF 2019 – demonstrating a truly whole-of-society approach. Based on an initial tally following the GRF, core financial pledges totaling an estimated USD 2.2 billion were made by a wide

¹ Henceforth, “refugees” will be used as a shorthand to refer to all persons with lived experience of forced displacement and Statelessness, in the interest of brevity.

range of States and other stakeholders. Beyond core financial pledges, some nine per cent of pledges contained significant financial components, announced by States, inter-governmental organizations, the private sector, and development actors.

Pledges ranged throughout the spectrum of themes relevant to comprehensive refugee responses, but several areas of focus stand out for their relevance and timeliness, including commitments across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Pledges focused on quality financing, inclusion of refugees and host communities in financing policies and instruments and national development and climate adaptation plans. Others aimed to build self-reliance through strengthening national systems for inclusion in basic services and economic inclusion, land allocation, and turning camps into integrated settlements. Solutions were advanced through pledges on third-country pathways, building peace and addressing root causes, advancing social cohesion, and regional approaches. Key stakeholder groups banded together to mobilise pledges by the UN system, sports actors, faith leaders, NGOs and local actors, refugees, cities and local authorities, academia, and others. Recognizing that an enabling protection environment is fundamental to achieving the GCR objectives, pledges were made to build asylum capacity, provide one million hours of pro bono legal services, to ensure that responses are sensitive to age, gender, and diversity, and address gender-based violence, and to ensure complementarity with the Global Compact on Migration in the context of mixed movements of people.

A central feature of the lead-up to the GRF 2023 was the multi-stakeholder pledging process, where the full spectrum of partners in the GCR rallied together to develop and lead 47 multi-stakeholder pledges that contribute to the agreed key outcomes of the Forum. This novel format enhanced the cooperation between humanitarian, development, and peace actors from the early onset of the pledge mobilization process and paved the way to the development of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timebound) and high-quality pledges with clear and ambitious policy objectives. Among the some 1,750 pledges that were made at the GRF 2023, some 1,300, are contributions to these multi-stakeholder pledges.


The GRF is for, about, and to a large extent convened with forcibly displaced and stateless people. The 320-plus refugee and stateless participants² who joined the 2023 event in person at the Palexpo in Geneva contributed in different capacities: from presenting their priorities through the [Joint Refugee Statement](#) during the high-level opening ceremony; announcing multi-stakeholder pledges to which they contributed; sharing their expertise as speakers in high-level parallel sessions and linked events and showcasing good practices in the Speakers' Corner; to acting as advisors to government and other stakeholder delegations. There was not only a fourfold increase in the number of refugee participants since the first GRF in 2019 (from 70 to over 320) but also more

² The 320-plus displaced and stateless persons participated in a variety of capacities and traveled from a diversity of backgrounds and countries. Of the 108 refugees whose participation was supported by UNHCR with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, some 30% traveled to the GRF from African regions (East and Horn and Great Lakes, Southern and West and Central), 25% from Europe, 18.5% from the Americas region, 14.8% from the Middle East and North Africa, and 12% from Asia and the Pacific.

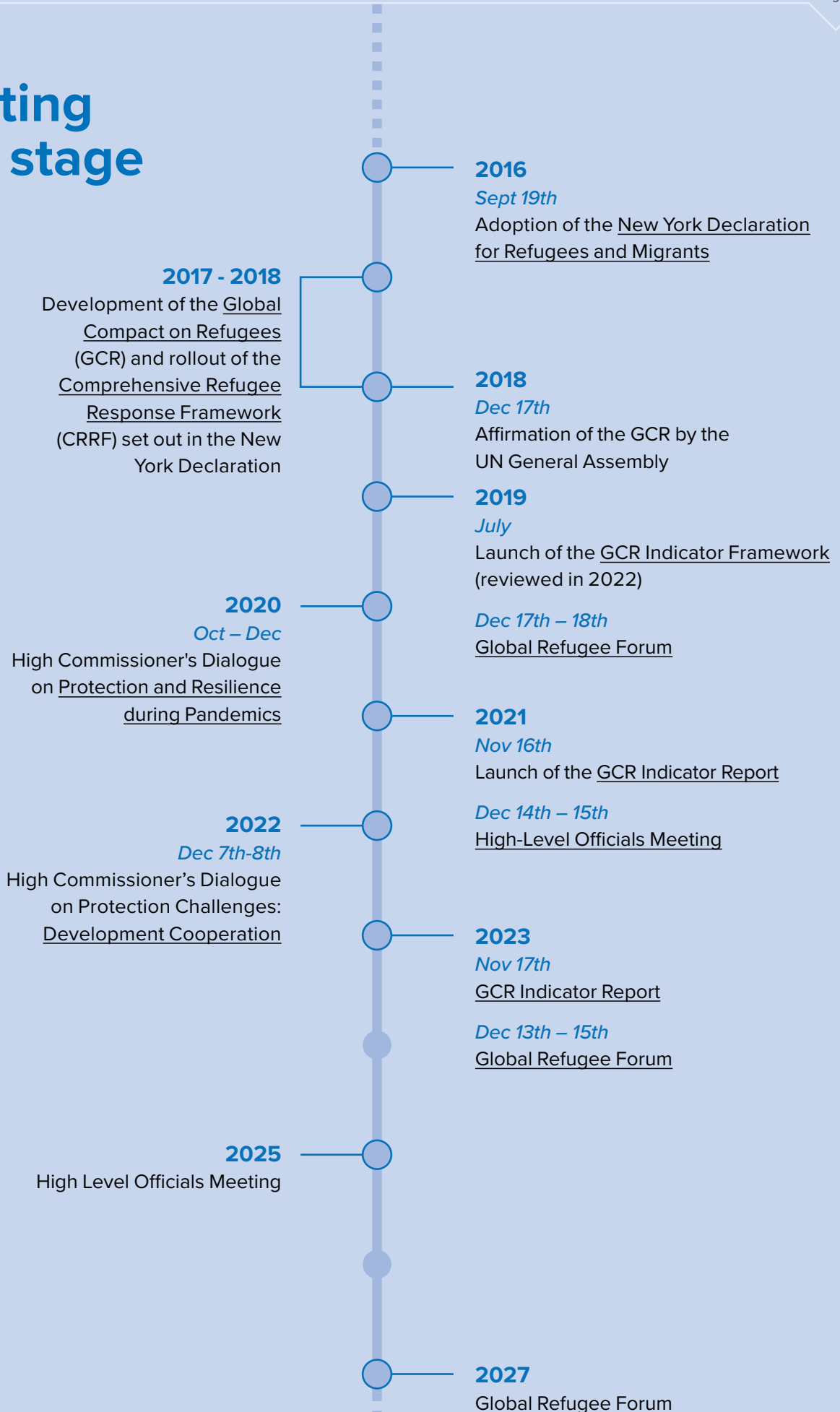
sustained participation throughout the entire GRF process and greater focus on their subject matter expertise, as evidenced by their engagement in multi-stakeholder pledge development and the launch of the Coalition on Meaningful Refugee Participation.

Alongside the high-level plenary, where formal statements were delivered and multi-stakeholder pledges announced, the GRF programme featured a variety of other event formats giving space to the full spectrum of partners and voices contributing to comprehensive refugee responses around the world. Very much at the heart of the GRF, 40 high-level parallel events brought together multi-stakeholder groups to present, discuss, and pledge around a wide range of thematic and regional topics such as peacebuilding, refugee inclusion through sport, innovative solutions, and the regional support platforms. There was also a lively ecosystem of other activities around the Palexpo venue and beyond. [View the GRF 2023 programme.](#)

The governments of the Republic of Colombia, France, Japan, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and the Republic of Uganda as co-convenors, and Switzerland as a co-host of the Forum, together with UNHCR, assumed a special responsibility to steer and bring together the mosaic of stakeholder groups to advance ambitious and transformational outcomes for refugees and host communities. They helped to shape the political vision of the GRF and to mobilise and concentrate international political will on effectuating the GCR to its full potential. Their leadership was also evident in the various multi-stakeholder pledges as they engaged either as co-leads or members of the pledge to bring different stakeholders around the common goals. [Read the Summary of the GRF 2023 by the co-hosts and co-convenors.](#)



Setting the stage



Event highlights

A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER AND PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

The GRF 2023 was characterized by many innovations compared to 2019, but perhaps nothing stood out more than the sheer increase in the diversity of stakeholders engaging in the GCR, as shown through participation at the Forum and the various event modalities, and through pledging. Many of the 15 stakeholder groups³ listed in the Compact – all of which were represented at the GRF – participated in the 47 multi-stakeholder pledges, and also launched or renewed GCR initiatives, including [refugees](#), [sports organizations](#), faith-leaders, and the UN and international organizations, amongst others. This strong mobilization is further evidenced by the more than 1,100 pledges submitted by non-State actors - who increased threefold since 2019. Other stakeholder groups focused on how responses can be more localized by bringing in grassroots organizations, local NGOs, academics with lived experience, Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and cities and municipalities who are often at the frontline of any refugee response. The private sector was even more engaged in the second Forum, including at a regional level, for example through the AMAHORO coalition and the UN Global Compact in Brazil, which mobilized private sector actors to support refugee economic inclusion. The role of parliaments was also featured, with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament pledging to support and advance refugee protection.



Attendees at the Orientation Session for Displaced and Stateless Persons ahead of the GRF.

© UNHCR/Pierre Albouy

PARTICIPATION OF PERSONS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND STATELESSNESS

Over 320 forcibly displaced and stateless people participated in the GRF 2023, including 70 forcibly displaced and stateless experts, the 16 members of UNHCR's Advisory Board of Organizations led by Forcibly Displaced and Stateless Persons, 50 delegations of organisations led by forcibly

³ Governments; refugees and host community representatives; local authorities, cities and other local actors; international organizations within and outside the United Nations system; regional organizations; humanitarian and development actors; international and regional financial institutions; parliaments; civil society organizations; faith-based actors; the private sector; media; academics; sport and cultural organizations

displaced and Stateless people, refugee students, refugee child experts, graduates from the UNHCR Journalism Mentorship Programme for Refugees, members of the Global Youth Advisory Council, Young Champions for Refugees, and refugee artisans. Fourteen States included one or more refugees in their government delegations, many of whom acted as refugee advisors—a major increase from the first GRF in 2019. NGOs, UN agencies, private sector entities, and academic institutions also included refugee participants in their delegations. [For more information, please consult this Report on meaningful participation of forcibly displaced and Stateless persons in GRF 2023 processes.](#)

Highlights: Meaningful refugee participation during the Forum

- ✓ During the GRF opening plenary session, moderated by refugee student leader Ms. Aisha Khurram, Ms. Adhieu Achuil Dhieu, member of the UNHCR Advisory Board, delivered the [Joint Refugee Statement](#) advocating the rights of all displaced and stateless communities and calling for all stakeholders to deliver on their commitments to meaningful participation and localization efforts.
- ✓ For the first time ever, refugee children participated in the GRF and shared their experiences across the GRF programme. In the lead-up to the GRF 2023, 434 refugee children from 11 countries participated in consultations organized by the Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts to identify their recommendations for the GRF included in “[Our Call For Answers: Children’s manifesto to the GRF 2023](#)”.
- ✓ 17 out of 40 multi-stakeholder pledges featured in plenary were announced by forcibly displaced and Stateless people.
- ✓ The VIP Social Media Zone included many forcibly displaced and stateless participants who shared their messages and recommendations with world leaders.
- ✓ 88% of all high-level events featured forcibly displaced and stateless speakers.
- ✓ GRF public screening sessions were organized with and for refugees in several refugee settings, such as in Somalia and Rwanda.
- ✓ 36% of all “speakers’ corner” speakers had lived experience of forced displacement and statelessness.
- ✓ Refugees who are part of UNHCR’s Journalism Mentorship Programme were embedded within the Global Communications Team to help cover the event.
- ✓ 71 new pledge contributions were made to the [multi-stakeholder pledge on Refugee Participation](#), and the Coalition on Meaningful Refugee Participation was launched.



King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein of Jordan speaks at the opening plenary of the Global Refugee Forum 2023.

© UNHCR/Markel Redondo

OPENING CEREMONY

Following opening remarks by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, and Secretary of State of Switzerland, Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener, His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan headlined with a strong keynote address, saying “we cannot turn our backs on refugees, because that is who we are,” and urged those gathered to “make this Forum count.” He was followed by the other GRF 2023 co-convenors, Her Excellency Ms. Francia Elena Márquez Mina, Vice-President of the Republic of Colombia, Her Excellency Ms. Robinah Nabbanja, Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda, Her Excellency Ms. Catherine Colonna, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, France and Her Excellency Ms. Kamikawa Yoko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan. Mr. Philippe Lazzarini, UNRWA Commissioner General, delivered special remarks.

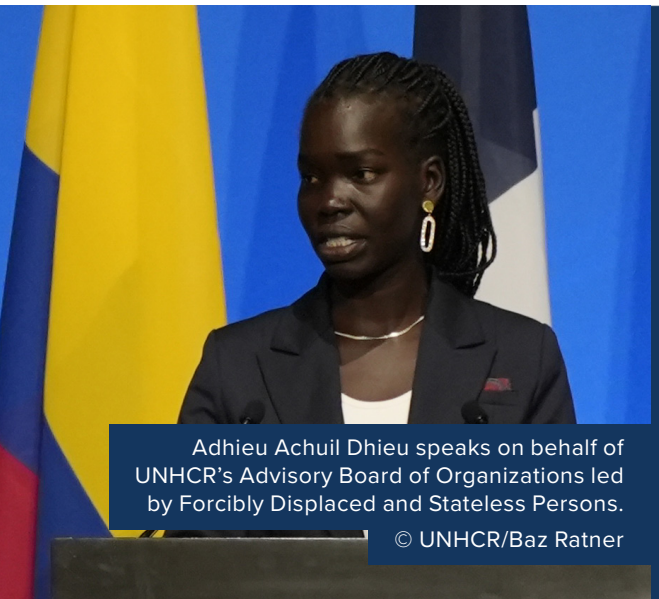
CEREMONY FOR PEACE

The second day of the Forum began with a blessing, as over 30 religious leaders representing the world’s faith traditions joined the High Commissioner in a special inter-religious ceremony, lighting candles with their prayers for universal peace. The ceremony was opened with a moving speech on the need for peace by His All Holiness Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch. Later, a reading in plenary of the Pope’s Statement for the GRF included a blessing for all participants. The multi-religious delegation of leaders endorsed a [joint statement of solidarity](#) with forcibly displaced and Stateless persons, announcing over 40 pledges towards solutions, social cohesion, education, and prevention of statelessness, including USD 30.5 million through Islamic philanthropy.



UN High Commissioner for Refugees and religious leaders attend a candle-lighting ceremony at the Global Refugee Forum 2023.

© UNHCR/Jose Cendon



Adhieu Achuil Dhieu speaks on behalf of UNHCR's Advisory Board of Organizations led by Forcibly Displaced and Stateless Persons.

© UNHCR/Baz Ratner

Broadening the base of support

The GRF 2023 included a plenary session on “Broadening the Base of Support” – also a highlight of the 2019 opening ceremony – featuring two refugees and representatives of host countries, donor countries, development actors, civil society, and the private sector.

Multi-stakeholder pledge announcements

Over the course of the plenary, more than 40 [multi-stakeholder pledges](#) were announced by an impressive roster of partners, including 17 people with lived experience of displacement or statelessness, the private sector, UN agencies, and civil society. Each announcement was a stirring moment demonstrating the true convening power of the Compact, with all pledge contributors in the room standing in a show of unity and support. These multi-stakeholder pledges were developed in the lead-up to the GRF by a range of State- and non-State actors to support the “Key Outcomes for the GRF,” including financing, climate action, inclusion in national systems, economic inclusion, resettlement and complementary pathways, creating conditions for sustainable voluntary return, and building peace.

In a major highlight in the last moments of the Forum, High Commissioner Filippo Grandi announced one final multi-stakeholder pledge, calling upon all GRF participants to stand up and commit together to “do whatever we can, as individuals with a shared humanity, and as institutions, States, or otherwise, to protect, help, include, and ultimately solve their plight and help them return – voluntarily, safely and with dignity – to their homes.” View all the multi-stakeholder pledge announcements in the [GRF 2023 programme](#).



Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), announces the National Health System Inclusion pledge.

© UNHCR/Jose Cendon



Nyanen Malik, refugee youth activist and former teacher, speaks at the High-Level Event on Education: Inclusion and Finance.

© UNHCR/Antoine Tardy

PARALLEL HIGH-LEVEL EVENTS

The GRF featured [40 high-level events](#) highlighting and galvanising support for the key outcomes of the Forum, regional priorities, and the 47 multi-stakeholder pledges. Over 460 speakers from all parts of society – ranging from Heads of State to mayors, CEOs of private companies, teachers, activists, and many others – gathered to speak, listen, and learn from the important roles each play in responding to displacement in ways that advance the objectives of the GCR. The majority (88%) featured forcibly displaced and stateless speakers participating as subject matter or situational experts. Events focused on a range of themes and regional topics and allowed stakeholders the opportunity to announce pledges and share good practices. Two thirds of events featured speakers from three or more different regions, demonstrating the global investment made towards the multi-stakeholder pledges.

Prioritising burden and responsibility sharing

A key focus of pledging at the GRF was to increase support for low- and middle-income host communities. An event on Climate Action saw pledges ranging from commitments by both national and regional bodies to incorporate displacement into their climate adaptation plans and related financial contributions. This was complemented by multi-year commitments by donor countries and the private sector to adaptation projects featured in the Climate Finance event.

At an event on the Global Concessional Financing Facility (GCFF), partners discussed the role and value of this mechanism as an innovative financing instrument for middle-income countries, and they noted that Armenia is now being admitted through a fast-track process. The United States of America and Germany also expressed support for the GCFF's expansion. The speakers and discussions emphasized the need for long-term solutions, national ownership, economic opportunities, and sustainable financing to address refugee crises; as well as the importance of being prepared and flexible in order to navigate the future successfully.

Promoting inclusion and self-reliance

Many of the events at the GRF placed refugee inclusion and self-reliance at the forefront of their agendas. The Employment and Entrepreneurship event saw over 30 speakers from across society announce pledges ranging from skills mapping and training by regional development banks to commitments by States to open immediate labor market access to refugees. The event paired with another on Social Protection to advance the multi-stakeholder pledge on economic inclusion with strong commitments from development actors targeting over 300,000 displaced peoples by 2027. Several events focused on ensuring displaced communities have the resources and tools they need to provide for themselves and live in dignity. The event on Connectivity drew in over USD 2 million in commitments from donor countries towards bringing internet access to refugee communities. At an event on Agriculture and Food Security, host countries made commitments to allocate 40,000 hectares of land for refugees to grow food for themselves and their communities, which were matched by over USD 20 million in commitments to UNHCR and the World Food Programme's joint initiatives.



Participant takes the floor at the High-Level Event on Health and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS).

© UNHCR/Laurent Cipriani

A major theme of these discussions was the importance of bringing refugees into local and national systems to ensure they have better and more sustainable access to basic services and opportunities. Tackling this challenge in terms of housing, an event on Human Settlements drew high-level participation from the East and Horn of Africa region and resulted in complementary commitments to transition from camps to sustainable integrated settlements in host countries. Events on education inclusion and the 15by30 initiative featured concrete commitments by States to open access to national education systems and create pathways to access higher education and skills, and private and multilateral funders matched these efforts with over USD 600 million in support to host countries. At the event on health, mental health, and psycho-social Support (MHPSS) participants celebrated and reflected on the 143 pledges made to enable inclusive national health, nutrition, and MHPSS services, including those made by 23 States. An event on data inclusion centered on including refugees and displaced people in national statistics and was complemented by strong commitments from 22 host countries, particularly in the Americas and the East and Horn of Africa.

Advancing solutions

Solutions to displacement, including through third-country pathways and creating conditions for voluntary return, resonated as a major theme in the GRF programme. Resettlement opportunities and complementary pathways featured prominently as an important avenue to solve individual refugee situations while also demonstrating solidarity with hosting countries. This collective effort manifested in an event on resettlement where countries across the world committed to expanding resettlement quotas for specific populations and host countries, paving the way for over 5,000 resettlement opportunities by 2025 and setting a pathway to success in the [Roadmap 2030](#) resettlement goals. At the event on refugee labour mobility, States and the private sector committed to expanding safe labour pathways through USD 50 million in financing for language and vocational training and commitments to create hundreds of visas for skilled individuals.



High-Level Event on Meaningful Refugee Participation: How Partnerships with Forcibly Displaced and Stateless People Improve Policies and Solutions.

© UNHCR/Olivier Chamard

In the wake of a year filled with prolonged and newly erupting conflicts, creating conditions for voluntary, safe, and dignified return stood out as a major political objective for stakeholders. An event on peacebuilding and conflict prevention convened high-level representatives to present the multi-stakeholder pledge co-led by Colombia, Egypt, Norway, and UNDPPA, highlighting the linkages between solutions to forced displacement and peacebuilding, the importance of participation and inclusion of forcibly displaced people in peacebuilding processes and peace negotiations, and the value of regional approaches. Digging into the root causes of conflict, a session on digital protection brought private sector partners together with humanitarian agencies and the UN Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide for a pioneering discussion on reducing hate speech and misinformation that can often serve as catalysts for violence and displacement. For displaced people who return and begin renewed lives in their countries of origin, an event on housing, land, and property (HLP) saw over 10 States affirm their commitment to ensuring refugees' access to HLP rights, supported by civil society.

**“It is because of this commitment to peace,
that I have been able to return.”**

*Ms. Nyakuma Peter Gatkuoth Riak, Founder & Director,
Together South Sudan and South Sudanese former refugee.*

Protection

Stakeholders at the Forum emphasised that protection must be safeguarded and strengthened while third-country and other solutions are pursued. An event on access to protection brought together a cohort of senior UN officials, national human rights institutions, and States to announce over 20 commitments to strengthen asylum systems, support asylum applicants, and reinforce the legal right to protection. Protection also featured heavily in an event on gender equality and gender-based violence (GBV) where stakeholders pledged to resettle refugee women, improve efforts to end GBV, and mainstream gender equality in all cross-sectoral work on displacement.

Protection of specific populations also saw significant advancement through events focused on refugees' individual needs and capacities. Five States pledged to adapt national policies or plans on reducing statelessness and in support of the nine commitments to join the Global Alliance to End Statelessness. At an event on child rights, young people engaged in an inter-generational dialogue, backed by financial and policy commitments to ensure school enrollment and strengthen social welfare systems. The need for a holistic approach to mixed movements of refugees and migrants was a central theme at an event on GCR-GCM Complementarity, where States and civil society actors pledged over USD 50 million to support a "whole of route" approach.

Partnerships

The events at the Forum showed that burden and responsibility-sharing is not just a task for governments, but for all parts of society. The role of the private sector in broadening the base of support for countries and communities hosting refugees was highlighted in several events, including dedicated sessions on private sector engagement and innovative solutions, which examined initiatives by actors such as the International Finance Corporation and the 85 pledges made by private sector actors. An event dedicated to sport drew a thread between the work of private companies and civil society to expand access to sports as tool for protection, inclusion, and self-reliance as demonstrated by the 100 commitments made to the pledge. At a session on Islamic philanthropy, the importance of bringing in philanthropic donors to support government initiatives was exemplified by the Big Heart Foundation's commitment to provide USD 5 million in support of refugee communities. Likewise, the important role of development actors took center stage at an event on the humanitarian-development-peace Nexus, which saw national and international development actors commit some EUR 270 million towards displacement responses and prevention.

Local actors, both within government and civil society, had a leading voice in conversations about the role of refugees and host communities in responses. An event on advancing localisation saw both host and donor countries pledge to channel 25 per cent of funding towards local actors in collaboration with international NGOs' efforts to reform staffing and financing in favour of refugee-led organisations and host communities. A Solidarity in Cities event hosted local government officials and mayors from around the world to highlight the role of cities in engaging refugees to assist in data collection and local integration efforts and announcing more than 100 pledges to support

forcibly displaced people in urban areas, matched with USD 80 million in financing. At an event on district coordination, representatives from the Americas and East and Central Africa shared their experiences operating at the local and district levels to facilitate the inclusion of refugees and announced commitments related to land access and skills development for refugees and host communities alike.

Ultimately, the objectives of the GCR cannot be met without the meaningful engagement of displaced and stateless people themselves in the development and implementation of pledges. The GRF's programme captured this through events focused on the rights and inclusion of refugees. An event on meaningful refugee participation saw the Global Refugee-led Network (GRN) and Refugees Seeking Equal Access at the Table (R-SEAT) formally announce the launch of the Coalition on Meaningful Refugee Participation with the Netherlands and Australia as State leads. Representatives from five UN agencies joined refugee-led organisations to discuss the UN system's commitment to refugee inclusion at an event on the UN Common Pledge 2.0, symbolising the collective investment in refugee participation across society.



Abdallah Bou Habib, Minister of Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon, and Ayman Safadi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Government of Jordan, at the High-Level Event 'Burden and Responsibility Sharing in the Middle East and North Africa'.

© UNHCR/Anne-Laure Lechat

Regional approaches

Events focused on specific displacement situations and regional support platforms offered a convening space for regional and development actors, States, and other partners to advance the GCR objectives with coordinated regional approaches. Several events focused on major crises, such as the Sudan emergency and the Central African Republic (CAR), which highlighted the need for inclusive responses as peace efforts continue. The latter event was presided over by the Prime Minister of CAR with signatory Governments of the Yaounde Declaration making significant inclusion and peace-oriented commitments following the launch of the CAR Solutions Support Platform in Bangui last year.

An event on displacement challenges in the Middle East and North Africa was also convened, bringing together diverse voices from the region. The high-level panel shed light on emerging and longstanding complexities, encompassing issues such as the

conflict in Gaza, the Syrian situation, challenges posed by climate change, and the growing constraints of reduced humanitarian funding. Reflecting a truly whole-of-society dialogue, several non-State actors also spoke in the session, including Qatar Charity which made two pledges totaling USD 105 million to support 1 million refugees.

Events focused on support platforms showcased regional pledges, as exemplified in the MIRPS event. The European Union (EU) committed durable funding to bolster platforms, such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) platform. An event on the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) Support Platform showcased the continued commitment by the international community to Afghanistan and its people, and to ease the pressures on the major hosting countries with a wide range of announcements of support. For situations without support platforms, donors committed to easing the burden of hosting countries through funding and resettlement. An event on the Rohingya displacement crisis featured over USD 450 million in funding to refugee responses in hosting countries along with commitments to expand resettlement within and outside the region. An event focused on the Ukraine refugee situation highlighted the benefits of a whole-of-society approach to refugee reception and inclusion.

GRF ECOSYSTEM

The GRF 2023 programme also featured an “ecosystem” comprising various installations and events. This included a speakers’ corner, exhibition space, and linked events held in venues across Geneva and beyond. They provided an opportunity for stakeholders to build broader awareness and mobilise support around what they do for refugees and host communities, and critically, provided spaces for less formal interactions and to feature a broad range of voices.

Linked events

Forty-six [linked events](#) around Geneva and beyond offered an opportunity for the general public to engage in the momentum around the Forum. These events amplified the impact and reach of GRF 2023, covering a wide range of themes linked to the Compact, such as education and academia, protection policy and statelessness, advocacy, social inclusion, refugee engagement, climate action, communications, youth participation, sport, and culture. They fostered diverse audiences and provided platforms for in-depth conversations and the sharing of best practices that translate GRF pledges into action. A key space for refugee-led linked events was the “R-Space,” a multipurpose space for representatives of refugee-led organisations and refugee leaders to organize events, workshops, performances, networking opportunities, and other activities from 12 to 15 December, funded by the Open Society Foundations and the Robert Bosch Stiftung.



Refugees and attendees participate in a range of sporting activities during the ‘Sports Without Borders’ Linked event at the Global Refugee Forum 2023.

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Speakers' corner

The [Speakers' Corner](#) showcased good practices through inspirational and impactful talks about a wide range of subjects, innovative initiatives, and experiences. Speakers from humanitarian and development organizations, governments, academia, refugee-led organizations, and UN agencies made lively presentations around a multiplicity of themes. Fifty-three people took the floor, one third of whom had lived experience of forced displacement and statelessness. [See recordings and more on the dedicated webpage.](#)



Mr. Farhad Ataee, Refugee Expert, presents at the GRF 2023 Speakers' Corner.

© UNHCR/Antoine Tardy

Exhibitions

The area in front of the main conference hall was used to welcome delegates and showcase some of UNHCR's work with its many partners over seven decades through videos, photography, and text. It created a space for informal meetings, photo and social media opportunities, and moments of relaxation and reflection.



United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, tours the GRF 2023 exhibition.

© UNHCR/Will Swanson

It contained an exhibition space that gave voice to a breadth of partners to share their contributions towards the GCR objectives through creative and interactive platforms. The exhibition space featured sets of "stats and facts" boxes that, when opened, offered a time-travel experience through UNHCR's history as preserved through records and archives, findings from the GCR Indicator Report, and present-day inspiring and thought-provoking trends. There were introspective and reflective moments through a mirror display noting "you are part of the solution" and an installation of suitcases carrying important messaging about the treacherous journeys of people forced to flee. A Nansen photobooth gave participants a chance to have their portrait taken, individually or in groups, as an innovative approach to advocacy for refugee travel documents. The digital exhibition space provided an opportunity for further multi-stakeholder engagement through content curated to highlight stories, best practices, initiatives, projects, and other resources from around the world. The exhibition showcased over 70 engaging and dynamic videos featuring representatives of refugee-led organizations, governments, the private sector, international and non-governmental organisations and UN agencies, which focused on the fundamental principles of humanity and international solidarity and demonstrated efforts to better protect and assist refugees and support their host countries and communities.



Participants taking photos at the Nansen passport photobooth.

© UNHCR/Pierre Albouy

AT PALEXPO

The Hope Away From Home, MADE51 and exhibition displays were highlights of the “look and feel” of the GRF. MADE51 showcased refugee artisanship, positioning refugees as skilled contributors to the economies of their host communities. The MADE51 “house” featured large-scale installations that brought together the work of displaced artisans around the world. Alongside this, MADE51 facilitated a pop-up shop with refugee-made products from 23 countries. Two refugee artisans were invited to present their experience working on MADE51, participated in the Speakers’ Corner, did live demonstrations of heritage skills, and made bespoke products for GRF participants. This engagement in the exhibition and sales area was supported by five invitees to the GRF from MADE51’s network of social enterprise partners – a MADE51 pledge was also announced.



Forcibly displaced artisans display their skills, craftsmanship and products in the MADE51 House.

© UNHCR/Anne-Laure Lechat

The Hope Away From Home campaign was highlighted with a Wall of Solidarity featuring its promotional video and a digital opportunity to sign the campaign’s petition. After its “reveal” at the Nansen ceremony, the Solidarity Cloak was also displayed in the exhibition space.



Delegates at Palexpo on day two.

© UNHCR/Will Swanson

Pledges at the GRF 2023

GLOBAL OVERVIEW

The substance, regional diversity, and multi-stakeholder nature of the more than 1,750 pledges made at the GRF 2023 are a testament to the significant progress made since 2019 to advance key policy priorities under the four GCR objectives. This includes broadening the base of support for comprehensive refugee responses that goes beyond traditional humanitarianism and are tailored to better meet the needs of refugees and the communities hosting them in a more equitable and sustainable way.

A consortium of donors led by six European States (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Switzerland) pledged to provide high-quality, multi-year funding, and ensuring that at least 30 per cent of their annual humanitarian funding towards UNHCR is unearmarked and at least 50 per cent is flexible. This demonstrates a clear commitment to address the urgent needs of displaced populations globally but also the effectiveness of a collaborative and forward-thinking strategy that enables humanitarian actors to respond promptly and efficiently to the ever-evolving landscape of displacement and crises.

Enhanced development cooperation was also a central feature of the GRF. Under the IDA's Window for Host Communities and Refugees (WHR), the World Bank will continue financing operations (under IDA19, the WHR committed up to USD 2.2 billion), including allocating USD 700 million under IDA (mix of grant and loan benefiting refugees and host communities) to support basic services and small-scale climate resilient infrastructure in Bangladesh. The World Bank also pledged to provide for the inclusion of refugee children in national educational systems (to achieve SDG 4) and to set up a dedicated predictable financial instrument, and governments committed support for the Global Concessional Financing Facility, an innovative financing instrument for middle-income countries.

Beyond commitments by States and international organizations, private sector partners also represented a growing engagement at the second Forum, pledging more than USD 500 million in financial support, investments, and social impact commitments. These range from advocacy to extend assets, products, and services to refugees and refugee-hosting areas, to supporting refugee livelihoods through jobs, mentorship programmes, and skills development initiatives.



2023 PLEDGES OVERVIEW



8 in 10 pledges contribute to at least one of the **multi-stakeholder** pledges.

1 in 4 pledges address economic inclusion and social protection.

158 pledges were made in support of **health inclusion and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support**.

More than **100 cities** and **local governments** pledged to support **refugee integration** in urban areas.

Following the successful 2019 pledge, **116 stakeholders** from the global legal community committed to provide **1,000,000** hours of pro bono legal advice.



50 UN country teams



19 UN agencies

ARE ENGAGED IN THE

UN Common Pledge 2.0

to advance refugee inclusion, provide support for host communities, and promote meaningful participation of refugees in UN planning and decision-making processes.



68 low and middle-income countries made policy pledges.



9% of all pledges include a financial component.



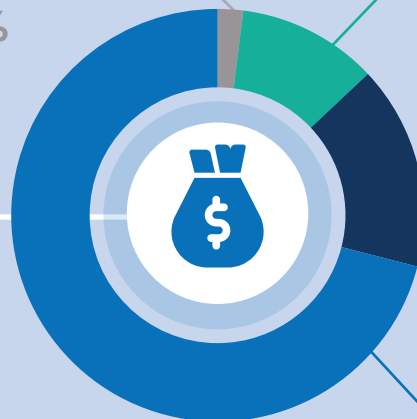
USD 2.2 billion
in core financial contributions were made:

Civil society
2%

IOs
11%

Private sector
16%

National and local governments
71%





Stakeholders announce new pledges on day two of the Global Refugee Forum 2023.

© UNHCR/Will Swanson

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PLEDGES

More than 80 per cent of all pledges announced at the GRF were made in support of at least one of the [47 multi-stakeholder pledges](#) at the core of the event. The multi-stakeholder pledges are co-led by 29 States and 88 non-state actors who collaboratively developed the pledges with support from UNHCR. The pledges represent the collective international efforts towards the Key Outcomes for the GRF 2023 to ensure that refugees benefit from:

- **Better quality financing and systemic inclusion in financing policies and instruments with 30 States and 44 non-State actors** pledging in this area, for example through a pledge by **a range of donors** to ensure improved [quality of funding](#) by making at least 50 per cent of contributions flexible; or the call for immediate climate action to address the damaging impact on climate change through the systematic inclusion of refugees [national adaptation plans](#).
- **More inclusive societies with access to labour markets, social protection, education, and healthcare:** A total of 59 States and 222 non-State actors made pledges in this area, whether to advance economic inclusion, social protection, and agricultural opportunities to improve self-reliance for more than one million refugees and host community members; to support inclusion in national services such as education ([primary, secondary](#), vocational skills, and [tertiary, connected education](#)) and [national health systems](#) or [mental health and psycho-social support \(MHPSS\)](#); or the “human settlements approach” – taking a holistic approach to urban planning and management in refugee-hosting areas.

- **More opportunities for resettlement and complementary pathways:** 32 States and 118 non-State actors pledged to advance third-country solutions and opportunities for millions of refugees through commitments to resettle one million refugees, provide skills-based pathways for 200,000 refugees, and to expand family reunification and community-based sponsorship. A key impediment to third-country solutions remains access to travel documents: To this end, nine States (hosting 2.5 million refugees) will begin issuing machine-readable travel documents, and an additional three States (hosting 2 million refugees) will make improvements to existing documentation systems.
 - **Increasing support for conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity:** 33 States and 63 non-State actors pledged towards addressing the root causes of displacement through pledges on [peacebuilding and conflict prevention](#) and secure access to [housing, land and property](#) in specific countries of origin. Further, an innovative approach to addressing root causes and building social cohesion was presented in the pledge on prevention of [hate speech, misinformation and disinformation](#) led by a number of leading private sector tech companies.
 - **Improved partnerships, protection and localisation to enable the GCR outcomes:** 61 States and 160 non-State actors pledged, with a spectrum of commitments to ensure a rights-based approach and improve refugee protection, advance the humanitarian-development-peace nexus; optimise partnerships and localise responses with partners such as refugees and refugee-led organizations, local civil society organizations, cities, academics, and faith leaders, apply the GCR in specific refugee situations.
- 

Framing multi-stakeholder pledges in support of the GRF key outcomes

<p>GCR Objective 1 <i>Ease pressure on host countries</i></p> <p>Focus: Quality financing and inclusion in financing policies and instruments, including for climate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality humanitarian funding • OECD DAC INCAF Common Position • Inclusion in national climate adaptation plans • Refugee Environmental Protection Fund 	<p>GCR Objective 2 <i>Enhance refugee self-reliance</i></p> <p>Focus: Strengthening systems for inclusion in basic services and economic inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Inclusion & Social Protection • Agriculture • Education (primary, secondary, tertiary and Connected Education) • Health inclusion and Mental Health & Psychosocial Support Systems • Connectivity • Statistical inclusion • Human Settlements 	<p>Enabling measures <i>To strengthen partnerships, localization, protection, and regional application across the four objectives</i></p>
<p>GCR Objective 3 <i>Expand access to third-country solutions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resettlement • Community sponsorship • Family reunification • Skills-based pathways • Machine-readable Travel Documents 	<p>GCR Objective 4 <i>Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety & dignity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention • Housing, Land and Property rights • Hate Speech, Misinformation and Disinformation 	<p>Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNCTs (UN Common pledge) • Sports organisation • NGOs (localisation, self-reliance) • Cities (Call to Local Action) • Academics (localisation) • Refugees (meaningful participation) • HDP nexus
		<p>Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asylum capacity support (ACSG) and legal aid (PILNET) • Mixed movements (safety at sea, alternatives to detention, anti-trafficking) • Violence prevention, gender and children's rights. • Statelessness
		<p>Regional approaches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IGAD (climate, solutions), • Afghanistan (resilience and solutions) • Cartagena +40 • MIRPS (asylum capacity, integration, local governance) • Rohingya situation (resilience, solutions)

The multi-stakeholder approach, as set out in the GCR, recognises that only with the creativity, knowhow, political willingness, and resources from all stakeholders, is it possible to achieve the ambitious goals at the heart of the Compact. Compared to GRF 2019, in the number of non-State actors engaged in pledging tripled—a testament to the success of the Compact in broadening the base of support for comprehensive refugee responses. Half of the multi-stakeholder pledges benefitted from having refugee advisors co-shaping the pledge, and in many cases also to present the pledges in the Forum itself.

Regional summaries

AMERICAS

The Americas region contributed substantially to the success of the GRF, with 352 pledges made from the region, both from States and other stakeholders. Several States made regional and national pledges focusing on solutions and integration. Notably, Canada made 34 pledges, the United States of America 27, and Chile 22.

One hundred and eighty-four pledges were made by 19 governments in the region against access to territory, asylum strengthening, climate action, access to services (health, education, labour, livelihoods), addressing root causes and preventing internal displacement, implementing area-based approaches, statistical inclusion, and statelessness.

Regional cooperation prominently featured at the GRF, with the launch of the Cartagena+40 process, with corresponding pledges from eight States from within the region, eight States making 21 pledges in support of the MIRPS Support Platform. These two regional pledges raise the visibility of the displacement situations in Central America and Mexico, facilitate concrete assistance to host countries to enhance technical cooperation, and mobilise resources that complement national responses to enhance protection and solutions.

Other examples of regional cooperation were demonstrated during the GRF through the Quito Process, the Los Angeles Declaration, the Regional Conferences on Migration, and regional forums like the SICA and MERCOSUR. These regional processes will continue to function as catalysts in the follow-up to the GRF to facilitate pledge implementation and a broadened base of support by development actors, the private sector, international financial institutions, and others.

A notable set of policy pledges in the Americas was linked to existing multi-stakeholder pledges, including by traditional hosting countries such as Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru, and others. The multi-stakeholder pledges most strongly supported from within the region by way of policy commitments by States included economic inclusion and social protection, health, and asylum capacity.

Canada made the pledges with the largest associated financial values at CAD 1.5 billion, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation made the largest financial pledge by a non-State entity from within the region.

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

In the Asia Pacific region, over 150 pledges were made, of which more than 60 came from States committing to enhance protection and solutions for refugees nationally, globally, and in the region.

Notable national pledges that also contribute to the multi-stakeholder pledge on higher education include pledges by the Government of Kazakhstan to introduce a refugee quota for a higher education scholarship programme by 2024 and to include statelessness and refugees in the curriculum of Maqsut Narikbayev University. The Government of Kyrgyzstan also pledged to allow refugees equal access to higher education with the same tuition fees as nationals.

Under the multi-stakeholder pledge on national health system inclusion, the Government of Thailand pledged to develop health coverage schemes that grant refugees and stateless people access to affordable health services. The Government of New Zealand pledged, under the economic inclusion and social protection multi-stakeholder pledge, to support working age adult refugees to connect to sustained and meaningful employment in the national labour market.

Under the multi-stakeholder pledge on gender equality and protection from gender-based violence, the Government of Australia pledged to partner with refugee women-led organisations to support prevention of gender-based violence, response service provision, and women's leadership, participation, and influence in the process. It also pledged USD 235 million until 2025 to meet the basic needs of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and their host communities, as well as for broader humanitarian assistance in Myanmar.

Private sector partners also made concrete and impactful pledges. For example, Sony Group Corporation pledged USD 6 million to strengthen refugee access to health and safe water to support COVID-19 recovery efforts and disease prevention in Bangladesh and the southern Africa region. To support addressing climate-related issues, LONGi Green Energy Technology Co., Ltd, a China-based solar technology company, pledged to deliver impact for climate action, energy equity, and green transformation until 2026 with at least USD 2 million in grants and multiple in-kind solarization and technical solutions initiatives, supporting the climate and human settlement multi-stakeholder pledges. Another long-time private sector partner, Fast Retailing, in addition to its new contribution of USD 6 million to support refugees in need, pledged to continue to make in-kind clothing donations, support self-reliance programmes, and employ refugees in their business.

Under the economic inclusion and social protection multi-stakeholder pledge, the Coast Foundation pledged to provide vocational training to 1 million Rohingya refugees and host communities in Cox's Bazar so that they can produce products and connect to the market, ultimately reducing their dependency on aid.

In addition to the pledges from other stakeholder groups, what stood out particularly in the Asia Pacific region were the collective commitments by the UN Country Teams from various operations under the UN Common Pledge 2.0. These commitments contribute towards other multi-stakeholder pledges on education, health, economic inclusion and social protection, gender, and statelessness.

EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA AND THE GREAT LAKES

Some 100 pledges were submitted from governments and other actors in the EHAGL region. Twenty-three pledges were made by six States from the region (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda) in addition to 76 pledges made by non-State actors. Over twenty pledges were advanced by civil society, and a significant share, 10 pledges to date, from private sectors in the region (Amahoro Coalition, Equity Group Holdings, INKOMOKO, Kenya Extended Producer Responsibility Organisation, Kubik, Safaricom PLC, and Takataka Plastics).

Similar to the GRF in 2019, pledges in 2023 also came from cities, civil society organizations, international organizations, and faith actors. Furthermore, refugee groups, host communities, and diaspora groups made 10 pledges covering climate action, solutions, and inclusion in national agendas/services/programmes, socio-economic inclusion, statistical inclusion, and integrated human settlements.

Notably, Kenya made a significant commitment by introducing the Shirika Plan, an innovative strategy to transform refugee camps into integrated settlements. The plan aims to facilitate the socio-economic inclusion of refugees and host communities, reflecting Kenya's dedication to revolutionizing refugee management within its borders.

Ethiopia, in its pledges at the GRF, focused partly on climate action and human settlements. To address the environmental impact of hosting a large number of refugees, the government committed to provide access to 10,000 hectares of irrigable land through lease arrangements, to plant 100 million multi-purpose seedlings, to engage in environmental rehabilitation activities, and to provide alternative energy sources, including national grid and solar mini-grid connections. Furthermore, they pledged to transform selected refugee camps into sustainable urban settlements by 2027. This transformation involves enhancing shelter quality, improving infrastructure, and expanding public services such as roads, electricity, water, sanitation, health, and education, aligning them with adjacent towns' master plans. Ethiopia also pledged to include 30,000 refugee and host community individuals in national TVET systems and ensure that 70 per cent transition to work by 2027, a pledge matched by Germany.

Uganda's commitment at the GRF centered notably around the creation of economic opportunities for refugees and host communities. The government pledged to generate a minimum of 300,000 viable economic opportunities by 2027 through initiatives like integrating refugees into agricultural value chains, boosting agricultural production, facilitating private sector investment, promoting graduation and market systems development approaches, increasing access to formal and non-formal vocational skills training, and fostering the development of market-relevant skills for employment creation. The focus on economic empowerment underscores its dedication to fostering self-sufficiency and sustainability among refugees and host communities.

Further to inclusion of displaced and Stateless people by significant pledges towards climate/environment, education and jobs/employment, South Sudan also pledged to create enabling conditions for sustainable returns of South Sudanese, enhance peacebuilding, and provide basic services through inclusive re/integration and participation, while removing access to justice barriers for women and other vulnerable groups. Somalia made significant inclusion pledges across climate resilience and empowerment, reintegration, peace building, and disaster risk reduction.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) confirmed its focus on durable solutions and climate action in the region, coordinating with the Member States. A session on the IGAD Support Platform featured a packed room that counted 10 ministers and a number of ambassadors who emphasised the unique and essential role of a regional approach. Similar efforts came from the regional bodies of East African Community (EAC) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR).

Significant engagement was made in support of economic inclusion and social protection, including by the Amahoro Coalition which committed to mobilizing the private sector, catalyzing investments exceeding USD 30 million, and contributing over USD 5 million to create market-based solutions. CIFOR-ICRAF pledged to raise over USD 20 million to implement actions supporting more than 300,000 individuals from refugee and host communities by 2027, focusing on climate resilience, food security, and access to cooking energy. Inkomoko pledged USD 150 million in direct investments in local, private sector enterprises across six countries, with the goal of supporting 90,000 businesses (60% women, 50% youth) and enabling 600,000 people to lift themselves out of poverty by 2027.

Cities and local authorities through the Mayors Network in Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda pledged to reduce barriers to inclusivity and access to city services and promote access to economic self-reliance. Furthermore, civil society is also active in the region – the African Youth Action Network (AYAN), a refugee-led organization, pledged towards e-cooking technologies, waste management strategies, and effective practices through training and supporting entrepreneurs to create green jobs by 2027.

Highlighting the link to emergencies, an event focusing on the Sudan situation reaffirmed the relevance of the GCR and the need for development actors to engage from the very start of a crisis to support early recovery and stabilisation. Every speaker at the event stressed that what Sudan needs above all else, is peace. A dedicated event on human settlements featured the commitments by Kenya and Ethiopia to turn camps into integrated settlements.

EUROPE

In the Europe region, over 600 pledges were made at the second GRF. Fifty per cent of these pledges came from States, with the remainder from diverse stakeholders such as international organizations, NGOs and other civil society groups, cities and municipalities, academics, private sector partners, and faith-based organizations. European countries and the EU made a commendable effort in engaging their development arms consistently in forced displacement, at the policy and programmatic and financial levels.

Under the economic inclusion and social protection multi-stakeholder pledge, the Government of Cyprus pledged to facilitate access of Ukrainian refugees to the labour market by providing specific training for upskilling and reskilling, targeting 22,000 people, and the Government of Moldova pledged to expand inclusion of 100,000 refugees, stateless and other forcibly displaced people into social-economic and protection systems. The Government of Estonia pledged to enable refugees access to the Estonian labour market and to support their employment.

On education, the Government of Türkiye pledged to promote school enrolment and greater protection of children through awareness-raising and social and behaviour change activities for at least 4,425 children and 2,000 families who are under temporary protection. To strengthen the national asylum system, the Government of Georgia pledged to further improve its national legislation on international protection, increasing the efficiency of the procedure through new rules and regulations based on EU standards that are applicable to the Georgian context. Also, the Government of Lithuania pledged to establish a government agency responsible for the reception of asylum seekers to ensure the provision of social services and accommodation.

To address statelessness, a collective joint pledge was made by the governments of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia to make all efforts independently and collectively to resolve all known statelessness cases within their territories, including by granting or confirming citizenship, allowing access to civil documentation, and undertaking legal reforms.

In support of the aspiration for 15 per cent of refugees to be enrolled in tertiary education by 2030, the Government of Denmark pledged to support the DAFI tertiary scholarship programme with DKK 20 million supporting young refugees' education and empowerment. Furthermore, the Kingdom of Netherlands pledged EUR 1 billion to support refugees and host communities, including through the Prospects Partnership in areas including protection, education, WASH, livelihoods, and health. With a particular focus on gender, resilience, and climate change, France committed to contribute EUR 150 million through the Agence Française de Développement to support projects for refugees and host communities.

Significant support was also committed for different regional situations. In support of the Rohingya crisis, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland pledged GBP 7 million in additional funding to support the Rohingya and host communities in Bangladesh and the wider humanitarian crisis in Myanmar, including refugees on the borders of Myanmar. Moreover, the EU pledged to support basic needs assistance as well as durable solutions for displaced Afghans and their host communities with an additional EUR 348.3 million in humanitarian and development funding. All in all, the EU submitted 15 pledges across various themes and situations including Afghanistan, Syria, and the Rohingya, with ongoing and planned programming valued at more than EUR 9 billion.

Furthermore, the Government of Switzerland pledged CHF 300 million each year from 2024 to 2027 to promote the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach to forced displacement to reduce burdens on host/return countries, enhance self-reliance of refugees and build resilience of hosting communities, create conducive environments for safe, dignified, and voluntary return, and address the root causes of forced displacement. Under the peacebuilding and conflict prevention multi-stakeholder pledge, the Government of Norway pledged USD 160 million for the Syria crisis and will continue to support stability and rehabilitation in other regions. The Government of Germany co-led multi-stakeholder pledges on social protection and economic inclusion, education, climate action, mental health and psychosocial support, and gender equality and protection from gender-based violence. Through its 35 pledges, Germany committed substantial support on other areas and demonstrated strong leadership in matching its pledges of support with policy commitments of host countries, including Mauritania, Kenya, and Ethiopia, to enhance social protection, human settlements, and economic inclusion.

From the private sector, the Barça Foundation and FC Barcelona pledged to improve the lives of over 42,000 refugee children and young people through sports. The Jacobs Foundation pledged CHF 50 million focusing on effective development of foundational skills through multi-stakeholder partnerships with the Government of Colombia to ensure inclusive education at national, territorial, and local levels, targeting 2 million children and 132,000 teachers. Robert Bosch Stiftung also committed EUR 500,000 to support the Community Sponsorship Fund in support of the resettlement and complementary pathways, and Grundfos Foundation pledged DKK 10 million to support the efforts of the Government of Ethiopia to improve access to inclusive, equitable, quality education as well as USD 4.7 million to solarise an estimated 100-160 water systems and boreholes that will benefit refugees and host communities in Ethiopia, Mauritania, Rwanda, Sudan, South Sudan, and Zambia.

Pledges from other stakeholder groups, such as academics, faith-based organisations, civil society, cities and municipalities, sports organisations, and others also included significant commitments and contributions. Last Mile Climate pledged to raise USD 100 million in micro-financing for 250,000 households to transition to solar-electric. Education Cannot Wait, pledged USD 500 million. Universities supported refugee access to higher education, sports organizations supported refugee athletes, and local cities committed to further support the refugee integration.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

The Middle East and North Africa region made 64 pledges, both from States and non-State actors, including regional entities such as the League of Arab States, with significant participation of civil society and the private sector. The countries that made the highest number of pledges from the region were Mauritania with eight pledges and Morocco with six. Moreover, Morocco is co-leading the multi-stakeholder pledge on national health system inclusion, and Egypt is co-leading the multi-stakeholder pledge on peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

The governments of the following States submitted a total of 24 pledges in 2023: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia. These pledges focused on education, peacebuilding, health, economic inclusion and social protection, and protection.

Notable policy pledges in the MENA region were advanced, notably by Iraq. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) committed to ensure that the Refugee Education Integration Policy (REIP) will be incrementally implemented for grades five to twelve by 2030, which will benefit refugee children and qualified refugee teachers. Moreover, Qatar Charity represented the private sector in making the largest financial pledge, at USD 105 million, from within the region, which will support in the areas of economic inclusion and education.

Support Platforms

At the inaugural GRF in December 2019, three [support platforms](#) were launched to address displacement situations in South-West Asia (Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan), Central America and Mexico, and the East and Horn of Africa. Prior to the GRF 2023, a fourth platform for the Central African Republic (CAR) situation was initiated. A [lessons learned report](#), commissioned by UNHCR and supported by the EU, titled “Uniting for People Forced to Flee and Their Hosts: Lessons Learned and Future Directions for Support Platforms,” concludes that the support platforms have added considerable value to existing displacement responses. They have evolved into effective mechanisms of international cooperation that convene key players to discuss ways to enhance displacement responses in the four regions concerned. The established networks, working methods, and frameworks greatly facilitated significant pledge development in the lead-up to the GRF. Led by coalitions of governments and other actors, they brought focus to specific situations and approached problems through economic and political lenses, unleashing a kind of “minilateralism.”⁴

4 Ruven Menikdiwela, [A new multilateralism for an old problem](#), Columbia SIPA, March 05, 2024.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Southern Africa made a total of 56 pledges, with 48 per cent originating from five States (Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Mozambique, and Zambia) and the remaining 52 per cent from non-State actors, including 16 pledges from nine UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and others from civil society organisations, including one from a faith-based organisation. These pledges span areas such as law and policy, asylum system strengthening, registration, solutions and inclusion, Statelessness, mixed migration, socio-economic inclusion, and climate action. Additionally, there were 17 global pledges focusing mainly on education across multiple countries in the region.

Noteworthy host country policy commitments were made by Botswana, covering comprehensive measures for displaced and stateless people through identify documents, legislative reforms, and multi-sector interventions. Zambia made progressive and inclusive commitments addressing self-reliance and access to national services, and Mozambique emphasized sustainable solutions, integrated development approaches, social cohesion, and climate preparedness. Expanding its 2019 commitments, the Democratic Republic of the Congo further pledged to support return and reintegration of Congolese refugees while also promoting better inclusion of other nationalities it currently hosts. Zimbabwe reaffirmed its 2019 pledges, focusing on self-reliance, education, sports, legal reforms, and improved asylum systems. Other countries in the region reiterated their commitment to fully implement their pledges from the GRF 2019.

The regional body, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), engaged substantively in the GRF as well. Active participation was also evident from civil society and various non-State actors, such as Africa Unite, the Association for Progressive Communications, and the Legal Resources Centre. The Association for Progressive Communications pledged to prevent harmful impacts of misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech in digital spaces targeting refugees, and for community-centred connectivity initiatives for refugees. The International Association of Refugee and Migration Judges (Africa Chapter) made a comprehensive pledge towards capacity building for range of actors in the region in the areas of asylum capacity and migration law. These are some of the notable examples, among others in the region.

WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

The West and Central Africa region presented 70 pledges during the GRF, with 71 per cent originating from 13 States, namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, the Gambia, and Togo. The remaining 29 per cent of pledges came from non-State actors, predominantly international organizations, and regional bodies such as ECCAS, ECOWAS, and ACHPR, and to some extent by the UN Country Teams (UNCTs). These pledges address law and policy, asylum systems, mixed migration, trafficking, registration and documentation, education, solutions and inclusion in national agendas, statelessness, socio-economic inclusion, and climate action.

Notable host country policy commitments were made in the region. Cameroon pledged the inclusion of refugees in national health coverage, with support from both the government and UNHCR on premiums. The commitment involves strengthening primary and secondary healthcare, improving psychosocial care, monitoring pregnant women, and enhancing health equipment, services, and infrastructure. Chad pledged to integrate 50 per cent of health facilities in camps into the Ministry of Health services by 2027. Burkina Faso pledged to promote mechanisms for living together and consolidating peaceful coexistence (through a national strategy for the prevention and management of community conflicts and an early warning and data collection system).

The region also witnessed the Central African Republic Solutions Support Platform launch in November 2023 to provide action-driven support and create efficient and effective synergies with governments signatory to the Yaounde Declaration of April 2022 (co-chaired by the African Development Bank and UNHCR).

Ghana's government committed to expanding access to education, health, documentation, and enhancing host community absorption capacity in Northern Ghana. Niger pledged to remain dedicated to increasing access to quality, inclusive, and equitable education in a safe and protective framework. Nigeria pledged to include 25 per cent of working-age refugees and host community members in economic development programmes, focusing on skills acquisition, employment promotion, agricultural development, and production; and to allow refugees to pay the same fees as nationals to access university. Burkina Faso is a member of the Peacebuilding multi-stakeholder pledge and committed to adopt a national strategy and action plan to prevent conflict. In addition, it also pledged towards local solutions across sectors (education, energy, employment, food security, health, housing, and social protection).

Capturing the world's attention

In the weeks leading up to the Forum, numerous multimedia stories from all over the world were published, as well as four global press releases. These stories highlighted the impact of pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum 2019 or ahead of the GRF 2023. In December, GRF-related content published on [unhcr.org](https://www.unhcr.org) attracted more than 150,000 page views.

In addition, UNHCR's dedicated microsite hosted resources, schedules, livestreams, and other content which guided participants around all the events and talks relating to the GRF. A dedicated app was created for delegates attending in person, and was used by almost 1,800 people.

At the Forum itself, UNHCR covered key events and moments, pledge announcements, and statements on a rolling blog that ran for the entirety of the event, garnering over 12,300 page views.

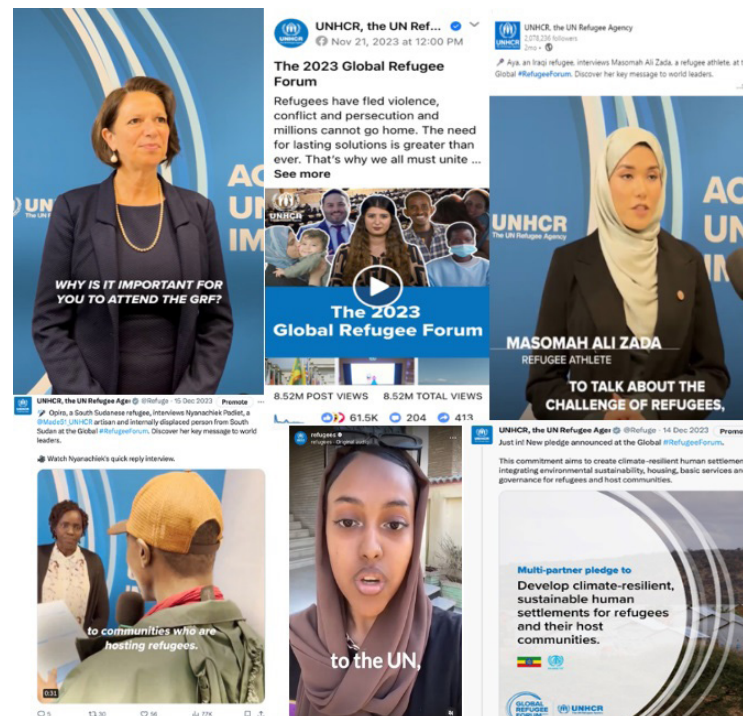
A trio of "highlight reel" videos were produced for each day of the Forum, published on YouTube and disseminated via the GRF newsletter, which was sent out daily during the Forum. From September to December 2023, GRF-related video content accumulated 32.7m views.

SOCIAL MEDIA

An ambitious, multi-booth VIP Social Media Zone welcomed more than 60 VIPs from governments, the private sector, UN agencies, Goodwill Ambassadors, and refugees. Dedicated content formats included: "In Conversation" in-depth interviews between refugee journalists and private sector leaders; an "open mic" featuring messages in 30 seconds; a "quick-reply" featuring fast-paced interviews; an "ask me anything" interview with UNHCR's Deputy High Commissioner, Kelly T. Clements; a football challenge; and even some AI-generated poetry.

UNHCR's global social media channels published over 600 posts mentioning the GRF, which were seen collectively over 80 million times. On external social channels, 263,000 posts mentioned the Forum.

Please see the full GRF social media report [here](#).





Cate Blanchett, UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador and actress, and Ke Huy Quan, Oscar winning actor and former refugee speak at the Global Refugee Forum 2023.

© UNHCR/Markel Redondo

GOODWILL AMBASSADORS

The GRF 2023 opened with a performance of JJ Bola’s poem “Refuge” by actor and UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador (GWA), Cate Blanchett, and actor and former refugee, Ke Huy Quan. Goodwill Ambassador Yusra Mardini made a pledge with her Foundation at the High-Level Event on Sport and represented the multi-stakeholder pledge for protection at sea in plenary.

During the UNHCR Nansen Awards ceremony, Goodwill Ambassador MIYAVI – in addition to his performance – wore a “Solidarity Cape” designed by Espero Atelier, a French-based non-profit dedicated to creating job opportunities for refugees, as part of UNHCR’s “Hope Away from Home” campaign. The ceremony, hosted by Ann Curry, also featured supporters Lous and the Yakuza and Ricky Kej.

A [multi-voice video](#) featuring many of UNHCR’s Goodwill Ambassadors and other high-profile supporters, including refugee advocates, was released to promote the Forum to an international audience and was viewed 437,000 times.

REFUGEE VOICES

Refugees taking part in UNHCR’s Journalism Mentorship Programme participated at the GRF, embedded within the agency’s Global Communications Team, producing a range of social and multimedia content and supporting engagement with journalists covering the event.

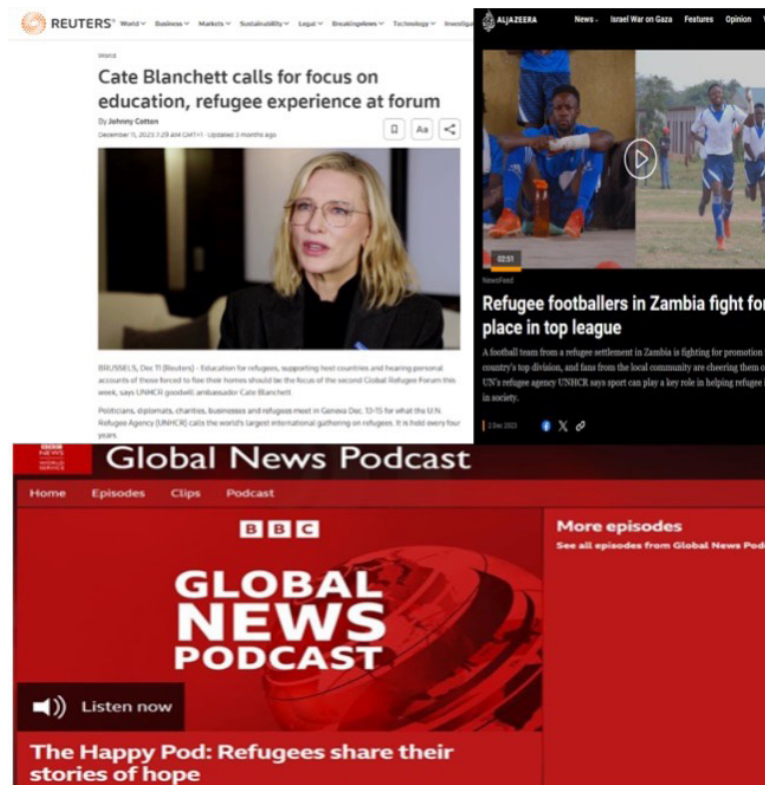
HIGH-VALUE OPINION PIECES AND KEY MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS

The High Commissioner, Filippo Grandi, wrote a powerful op-ed on the motivation and need for the GRF that was published in The Guardian/ObsERVER, TIME magazine, and Corriere della Sera.

The GRF also featured in multiple editions of the BBC's Global News podcast, as well as The Fox News Rundown podcast.

A Reuters interview with GWA Cate Blanchett was broadcast immediately before the GRF. UNHCR also secured a partnership with the Reuters wire feed to promote the Forum to its newsroom clients on the site's front page for four days during the event.

A UNHCR content partnership with Al Jazeera led to multimedia reporting on refugees around the world, including long-form written articles and both short and long-form videos.



The GCR Digital Platform

Ahead of the first GRF, the GCR Digital Platform was launched to “enable the sharing of good practices, notably from an age, gender, disability, and diversity perspective, in the application of the different elements of the global compact” (GCR p. 106). To date, more than 550 good practices from GCR stakeholders have been published, with over 120 in 2023 alone.

The Digital Platform has evolved over the last four years to become a broader resource hub for the GCR, hosting information on pledges, including the new multi-stakeholder pledges, reports and other resources shared by stakeholders, updates on the work of various initiatives, and details of forthcoming events. It now receives on average around 33,000 visits a month and in the past year alone saw 1.1 million views.





Leaders attending the Global Refugee Forum 2023 gather for the day three morning plenary.
© UNHCR/Baz Ratner

Charting the future

Building on the “makings of success” from pledges made at the first GRF in 2019, the second Forum in 2023 reaffirmed the spirit and the commitment to the GCR in many ways – including pledging, with a stronger focus on implementation, working together, and achieving impact both at the policy level and on the ground. Lessons learned from the first four years of GCR implementation have taught us how to formulate pledges more strategically, using the growing evidence base afforded by the GCR Indicator Framework, and how to leverage partnerships to deliver on those commitments through the multi-stakeholder pledging architecture bringing complementary strengths and contributions in support of common policy objectives and ambitious targets.

Together we must sustain the momentum to act strategically and swiftly refocus our attention to the displacement situations where implementation of pledges is most impactful. We can also identify challenges hindering the implementation of other pledges – using the High-Level Officials Meeting in 2025 to take stock of progress, correct course where needed, and work towards even greater results and impact at the next Forum in 2027. A key element in ensuring sustainability is to connect the GCR to key global multilateral mechanisms that touch upon forced displacement-related issues, such as the climate Conference of the Parties (COP), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the High-Level Political Forum, and the Summit of the Future.

Even amid a complex and shifting geopolitical context, the GCR has proven steadfast, helping to anchor stakeholders' engagement around the shared ambition to better respond to the situation of refugees in the world and the countries that host them, and to work across the spectrum of humanitarian, development, and peace action to better prevent, prepare, and respond to displacement situations. The countries hosting the most refugees around the world stepped up in significant and profound ways at the GRF 2023, committing to important policies to improve protection and inclusion for refugees while also supporting local social and economic development – and indeed, supporting them should be the center of gravity in charting the course ahead.

The important mobilisation of political will and commitments towards emerging areas such as climate action, housing, land, and property, combatting hate speech, and building peace will need to be further cultivated as partners redouble their efforts to help foster conditions that are conducive for refugees to voluntarily return home in safety and dignity while also reducing the risk of further displacement.

We saw unprecedented support at the GRF 2023, not only in terms of pledging but in terms of growing and deepening multi-stakeholder engagement as well as commitments to shift the way we work to better deliver on the objectives of the GCR. Donors advanced important policy commitments on funding and financing to enable humanitarian actors to operate more nimbly and flexibly. It will also be important to support policymaking on protection and inclusion and provide opportunities for third-country solutions among donor countries as part of collective commitments to achieve greater burden and responsibility sharing.

WHAT IS THE ROADMAP GOING FORWARD?

The next key milestone will be the High-Level Officials Meeting in December 2025, a collective opportunity to take stock of what is working well in terms of progress towards the GCR objectives, and to draw more focus and attention to areas that may be in need of greater support. In preparation for 2025, it will be key to start with the validation and analysis of pledges made at the GRF across thematic and situational priorities, further concretize pledges to ensure measurability of progress and impact, and develop and implement work plans to implement the pledges with a view to reporting progress by the end of 2025.

UNHCR will facilitate pledge implementation at the country, regional, and global levels together with governments and key stakeholders. It will also continue to support opportunities for channeling engagement and support to host countries and regions that made policy pledges to advance protection, inclusion and solutions. UNHCR will further track progress through pledge reporting, periodic GCR indicator reporting, and strategic communications. In preparing for the High-Level Officials Meeting, UNHCR will facilitate thematic, regional, and country stocktaking to inform the event planning and provide the data and analysis needed for stakeholders to assess progress and refocus their efforts leading up to the GRF 2027.



United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, second left, with forcibly displaced and stateless women at the final plenary of the Global Refugee Forum 2023.

© UNHCR/Will Swanson

There is no doubt that the GRF 2023 does not represent a conclusion – rather it is a new start. It will be critical in the next four years to make progress on existing pledges as well as to continue to mobilize new pledges towards the key outcomes of financing, inclusion, and solutions with a view to demonstrating at the next Forum that real impact has been achieved. Through the multi-stakeholder and partnership approach and spirit of cooperation and sustainability embedded in the GCR, stakeholders can together contribute in their own unique and important ways to achieve meaningful change for refugees.

The closing ceremony of the Forum featured a conversation between the High Commissioner and three forcibly displaced and stateless women leaders: Ms. Noor Azizah, Refugee expert and Co-Founder and Director, Rohingya Maiyafu'inor Collaborative Network; Ms. Najeeba Wazefadost, Chief Executive Director, Asia Pacific Network of Refugees, and UNHCR Advisory Board representative; and Ms. Agnes Lomoro, Refugee advisor to the Government of Canada and to the Global Task Force on Refugee Labour Mobility, and healthcare worker. Moderated by Ms. Hala Haj Taleb, who is part of the UNHCR Journalism Mentorship Programme for Refugees, the conversation focused on their reflections on the GRF and recommendations for the way forward. Responding to the panelists' call for a more "systematic" approach, the High Commissioner committed that UNHCR would actively strive to enhance the systematic engagement in UNHCR's field operations, where meaningful refugee participation is essential.

As exciting and impressive as the pledges are, our efforts must now be focused on their implementation to truly change the lives of the displaced and their hosts.

Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees



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