

**Eighty-eighth meeting of the Standing Committee  
13-14 September 2023**

**Agenda item 4**

**Oral update on the Global Refugee Forum**

**Introduction**

The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), affirmed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2018, is a framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing recognizing that a sustainable solution to refugee situations cannot be achieved without international cooperation. It constitutes a unique opportunity to transform the way the world responds to refugee situations, benefiting both refugees and the communities that host them. It provides a blueprint for governments, international organizations, and other stakeholders to ensure that host communities get the support they need and that refugees can lead productive lives. It envisions more predictable and sustainable support to ease pressures on countries hosting refugees; opportunities for refugees to become self-reliant; expanded access to third-country solutions, such as resettlement and other pathways; and support for conditions in countries of origin so that they may be able to return in safety and dignity.

The GCR sets out a series of global, national and regional arrangements to advance its objectives. A central arrangement at the global level is the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) where States and other actors come together at the ministerial level and above every four years to pledge financial support, technical expertise, and policy changes, and to share good practices. These contributions are key to transforming the aspirations of the Compact into positive change in the lives of refugees and host communities.

The first GRF took place in December 2019, co-hosted by Switzerland and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and co-convened by Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Germany, Pakistan and Türkiye, together with UNHCR. It resulted in significant pledges of support and sustained engagement from governments, 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, as well as refugees and host community representatives. It represented a milestone in building solidarity with the world's refugees and the countries and communities that host them.

The second GRF will take place between 13 and 15 December 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland, with advance events on 12 December. The GRF 2023 will be co-hosted by Switzerland and UNHCR, and co-convened by Colombia, France, Japan, Jordan, the Niger and Uganda, together with UNHCR. It will provide an opportunity to build on and highlight the progress made by Governments and other stakeholders towards the implementation of pledges and initiatives made since 2019. It will also provide space for participants to take stock of progress, including through the GCR indicator report for 2023, and to announce new pledges, share learning to inform and inspire further burden and responsibility sharing and facilitate comprehensive responses.

**Preparatory process**

Three formal preparatory meetings have been convened over the course of 2023 to provide an opportunity for governments and other stakeholders to provide feedback on the expected key outcomes, development of related pledges, and programme for the GRF. In addition, informal briefings have been taking place throughout the year to provide further opportunities for updates on multi-stakeholder pledges under development. The next informal briefings are planned for 18 October from 15:00-17:00 hours CEST (virtual) and 17 November from 15:00-18:00 hours CEST (in-person in Geneva, Switzerland). On 17 November, the GCR indicator report for 2023 will be launched in Geneva, Switzerland from 10:00 to 12:00 hours CEST.

## Expected outcomes

Priorities for the GRF 2023 include the full implementation of pledges announced since 2019 and the development of new pledges, in line with the [key outcomes](#) expected for the GRF 2023. UNHCR, together with States and relevant stakeholders, including refugees, identified expected key outcomes drawn from the recommendations of the High-Level Officials Meeting in 2021. These outcomes include financing, climate action, support for policies in host countries, economic inclusion, resettlement and family reunification, complementary pathways, voluntary sustainable return and reintegration, and measures to address root causes, prevent conflict and build peace. The enabling measures required to attain these outcomes include strengthened protection and solutions environments; humanitarian, development and peace approaches; expanded and strengthened partnerships; meaningful participation of displaced and stateless persons; and data availability and quality.

Pledges are envisioned as the vehicle for achieving these outcomes and may include financial, material and technical assistance; resettlement places and complementary pathways for admission to third countries; and other actions by States in support of the GCR objectives, such as inclusive policy commitments, efforts to join or develop initiatives, and monitoring and research. Pledges may be made individually or in support of a multi-stakeholder pledge through the [GRF pledges dashboard](#).

UNHCR has been working with current GCR initiatives to develop [multistakeholder](#) pledges to help achieve the expected key outcomes. Multistakeholder pledges are joint pledges with large-scale reach that work towards an ambitious common goal. UNHCR is calling for these pledges to be transformational, putting in place long-term arrangements that advance burden and responsibility sharing, and drawing from a clearly defined resource base, donorship or financial instruments linked to its implementation. Multi-stakeholder pledges are co-led by governments and other stakeholders, and involve refugees with expertise in their development. Interested parties wishing to join as co-leaders and make specific contributions in support of these multi-stakeholder pledges may find information about how to get involved on the [webpages](#) for each pledge or by contacting [hqgcr@unhcr.org](mailto:hqgcr@unhcr.org).

Current multi-stakeholder pledges under development in support of the key outcomes are linked to development, climate action, economic inclusion and social protection, education, health, human settlements, solutions, and resettlement and complementary pathways. Pledges in support of enabling measures are linked to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus; protection; localization; age, gender and diversity; and partnerships. Some pledges are under development to support the key outcomes in specific refugee situations, including the Afghanistan and Rohingya situations. New pledges will be publicized on the webpage when confirmed.

At the conclusion of the GRF 2023, the co-hosts and co-convenors will present a high-level summary of the key achievements of the Forum. In the first quarter of 2024, UNHCR will produce an outcome document for the GRF containing an analysis of pledges and initiatives that were announced, good practices shared and progress made in realizing the ambitions set out in the GCR.

## Format and provisional programme

The GRF plenary session will be held from 13 to 15 December 2023 at Palexpo in Geneva, Switzerland. The opening will take place on 13 December with high-level representation from the co-hosts and co-convenors, together with the United Nations Secretary-General. Discussion in plenary will allow for governments and other stakeholders, time permitting, to make interventions and announce pledges, in accordance with protocol.

The plenary will be interspersed with "GCR in Action" moments, during which multi-stakeholder pledges that contribute to the GRF 2023 key outcomes will be announced. These pledging moments will highlight impactful and transformative pledges, while offering an opportunity to demonstrate the multi-stakeholder and partnership approach envisioned in the GCR.

The GRF 2023 will feature three days of parallel high-level events at Palexpo which are being developed in consultation with representatives of the GCR initiatives and partners involved in the multi-stakeholder pledges. These high-level events are intended to spotlight multi-stakeholder pledges, contributions, lessons learned and good practices in support of the GCR objectives and expected key outcomes of the GRF. A range of dynamic formats will

be used for the events, which will feature a diverse array of speakers from different stakeholder groups, including forcibly displaced and stateless persons. These events will take place on 12 December, prior to the start of the GRF, as well as at select times during the Forum, from 13 to 15 December.

The final GRF 2023 programme will include all events taking place at the GRF venue (Palexpo) and offsite, including exhibitions, talks, linked events for GRF participants and public events that will showcase contributions to the GCR. Details of such events will be shared in an updated version of the programme on the [GRF webpage](#) closer to the Forum.

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