

NGO Statement on Africa

Dear Chair,

This statement is delivered on behalf of a wide range of NGOs.

The brutal and multi-faceted spectres of drought, catastrophic hunger levels, conflict, coups, climate breakdown and COVID-19 continue to impact Africa. Yet, many countries respect their international obligations to protect those forcibly displaced.

An ongoing lack of responsibility-sharing worldwide and increasing inequalities are amongst the greatest challenges faced in finding durable solutions, despite the CRRF and GCR promises.

As the COVAX Facility began in humanitarian settings, some countries included refugees and asylum seekers in national health plans such as Angola, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Sudan, Rwanda, and Uganda. But vaccinations are still a hugely underfunded challenge and not yet sufficiently inclusive of stateless communities. Additional funding on vaccine delivery costs is crucial for COVAX's effectiveness, especially in displacement crises.

Devastating livelihoods and income losses for displaced and stateless populations is a defining feature of the pandemic. Essential social services are hit hard particularly women-focused health services such as family planning and maternal health.

Woefully underfunded humanitarian responses led to reductions of food assistance for refugees in Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania. Consequently, negative coping mechanisms rose, disproportionately impacting women and children. The shadow GBV pandemic including ongoing gender-discriminatory frameworks, especially in Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, Togo, Liberia, and Eswatini and massive reductions in access to education has tested international protection.

NGOs also witnessed an alarming increase of humanitarian aid not being granted the safe, unfettered access necessary to deliver.

NGOs, therefore, raise the following recommendations:

- 1) Escalate vaccine equity in line with UNHCR and NGOs advocacy for global vaccine equity, particularly the "people's vaccine" call.
- 2) Improve information sharing about vaccination. Along with PoC and local organisations, UNHCR should invest in accessible vaccine information in relevant languages and formats.
- 3) All displaced people, including stateless persons must be included in state and international relief efforts.
- 4) End statelessness, including through reforming gender-discriminatory nationality laws and establishing legal safeguards. UNHCR advocacy is especially critical in situations of increased GBV.

- 5) Fully fund the HRPs and RRP.
- 6) Donors and UN Agencies must advocate strongly for safe and unfettered access to deliver aid including ensuring clear, timely humanitarian exemptions to UN or unilateral sanctions and funding innovative methods to deliver aid.
- 7) Donors and UN Agencies must advocate strongly for the alleviation of bureaucratic impediments and actualise Grand Bargain commitments by increasing quality and flexible funding to local and national NGOs, including women- and refugee-led organizations.
- 8) Recognise more widely PoC-led organizations' work in supporting their communities and ensure conducive conditions to legal statuses enabling them to receive support.
- 9) Complying with their obligations, states must refuse measures that erode the international protection system such as *refoulement*, detention or restrictions on durable solutions.
- 10) All actors must increase accountability to affected populations and include voices of women and girls, speakers of marginalized languages, and people with disabilities.

Turning to specific updates:

In the East, Horn & Great Lakes

Early 2022 projections indicate acute risks of food insecurity and child malnourishment in the sub-region, which hosts 67% of Africa's refugees. Chronically underfunded HRPs lead to devastating cuts in food baskets and other aid provisions.

In **Somalia**, drought, livestock, and income losses, combined with water and food shortages have forcibly displaced populations.

In **South Sudan**, the transitional government must agree to tabled plans. Refugees and IDPs are wary of the peace talks' slow progress and lack confidence to return, while floods further deteriorated return options. Protection concerns for women and girls also increased as GBV worsened with the pandemic and weak governance.

In **Ethiopia**, despite diplomatic efforts, no sustainable solution is in sight in the northern conflict. The re-emergence of drought has raised the stakes for humanitarian NGOs and UN Agencies attempting to coordinate a massive and underfunded response. Heightened insecurity hinders humanitarian access and aid delivery, particularly in Tigray, Afar, and Amhara with higher levels of displacement projected for 2022.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, the protracted displacement crisis in the east grows along with food insecurity and regular disease outbreaks. NGOs joined UNHCR outrage caused by recent violent deadly attacks on IDP camps in Ituri province and call for improved security measures. With NGO staff kidnappings and administrative impediments, greater commitments from authorities are needed to facilitate and protect the aid response and accountability to affected populations.

In West and Central Africa

In **Central Sahel**, armed groups, weak governance, and resource scarcity increasingly fuelled intercommunal violence and generated 2.5 million displaced.

Insecurity and climate change affected farming, trade, and transhumance, disrupting livelihoods, and decreasing food production. Donors must not disengage and should immediately mitigate the effects of widespread food shortages and engage with ECOWAS.

The complex challenges of climate change, intercommunal clashes, and violence perpetrated by armed groups still affect the **Lake Chad Basin**. More funding and support must be secured so NGOs and partners can implement an effective response to growing, intersecting crises.

In **Nigeria**, IDPs and refugees remain under pressure to return to unsafe areas in Borno State, exposed to serious protection, health risks and imminent famine. Any relocation must be voluntary, happening only when conditions for durable solutions and access to essential services are ensured.

The recent creation of the Presidential Committee on the Repatriation, Returns and Resettlement of displaced persons is welcome and must focus on creating durable solutions with effective two-way communication comprising humanitarian information, data collection and feedback mechanisms in multiple languages. Safe and unfettered humanitarian access in Borno State is vital especially to IDPs sites.

In the **Central African Republic**, financial commitments must be maintained and increased as the needs persist with repeated conflict outbreaks, widespread displacement, low levels of birth registration, discriminatory application of nationality laws, food insecurity, and limited access to basic services and economic opportunities. Insecurity and landmines severely limit humanitarian access.

Further details are available at icvanetwork.org

Thank you