

Second Formal Preparatory Meeting for the Global Refugee Forum
17 May 2023

NGO Statement on Global Refugee Forum Preparations

Dear Chair,

This statement is delivered by ICVA on behalf of a wide range of NGOs that have been consulted on how the upcoming Global Refugee Forum (GRF) can achieve its strategic goal of addressing the global displacement crisis and the root causes that drive more and more people to flee their homes.

New and ongoing humanitarian and climate crises plague the world. Recommitting to responsibility sharing has never been more crucial as the number of forcibly displaced people rises. Over the past few years, refugee resettlement slots, asylum space, responsibility sharing, non-refoulement, and the Global Compact core values and principles have been eroded by restrictive migratory policies.

At the GRF, leaders and stakeholders must stand with refugees, stateless people, and other displaced people. With proper planning and execution and a strong engagement process, the GRF can rebuild confidence among stakeholders of the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR).

The success of this GRF will ultimately be determined over the next four years. Governments should reflect the spirit of the GRF in their national policies. They should stop pushbacks at land and sea borders, end cooperative agreements that externalize refugee policy. Donors should ensure that host governments and humanitarian agencies and organizations have enough funding to support displaced populations.

Pledging governments must be held accountable for upholding their commitments. This entails capturing detailed information that clearly measures and evaluates its implementation. Appropriate tracking tools should be provided by UNHCR to document progress.

NGOs will also measure success by whether the 2023 GRF raises awareness and improves the lives of displaced people. Increased funding, programming, and policy reforms to protect and integrate forcibly displaced people are needed.

NGOs stress the importance of local civil society organisations, especially in situations where refugees cannot organise. NGOs welcome UNHCR, ICVA, and other NGO networks' regional consultations and urge national consultations to better involve the most affected. The outcomes of these must directly shape the GRF Agenda.

Refugee and other displaced populations' direct, meaningful, and sustained participation will be another GRF success indicator. Half of the world's forcibly displaced are women and girls, while 41% are children. To recognize and address their needs, they and refugees with disabilities must participate.

To include the most underrepresented and those who cannot travel, the GRF programme should allow more digital participation. So these groups, including many refugees, can follow the proceedings, as many events as possible should offer videoconferencing or livestreaming with interpretation.

Finally, GRF's success will be measured by the level of GRF's stakeholders' commitment, investment and accountability in empowering refugees, integrating them into society and making tangible improvements in refugee's lives and wellbeing.