

NGO Statement on Global Refugee Forum Preparations

This statement is delivered on behalf of a wide range of NGOs. As we approach the GRF, we commend UNHCR for its efforts in ensuring that the GRF can deliver impactful and quality pledges. We believe that, beyond pledges, success lies in our capacity to harness collaborative and inclusive commitments to address the increasingly complex and shifting nature of displacement and achieve durable solutions.

As NGOs, we wish to provide some recommendations to enable a collective and holistic approach to the GRF, recognising all thematic areas as critical to developing quality pledges and showcasing good practices.

First, UNHCR should strengthen coordination and communication on opportunities with all members of global initiatives, with clear deadlines and standardized procedures to engage NGO partners. For instance, many of us who are part of GCR initiatives and are eager to contribute to side events are struggling to understand the process and opportunities for involvement. Without coordination, our capacity to support local partners to engage is reduced, impacting efforts to provide opportunities for direct refugee participation.

Second, we recognize that the process of pledge matching is an essential tool to secure the complementarity of pledges. However, we understand that this process is centred on States. While we understand the current approach, we would be keen to understand how NGOs can engage in the process to match NGO-led commitments to corresponding multistakeholder pledges.

Third, national and regional ownership of the pledge development process is critical. As such, we call upon UNHCR and governments leading the pledge development process to open space for the meaningful participation of NGOs and refugee-led organizations as an integral part of the development of national pledges in the spirit of collective action and accountability. More clarity on how national and regional-level pledges intersect with global multistakeholder pledges is needed.

Fourth, we call on pledging entities developing multi-stakeholder pledges to make inclusive commitments that tackle age, gender, and other forms of diversity including disability. We cannot afford once again to exclude marginalised groups from commitments that could potentially change their lives and deliver on the commitments of the GCR.

Finally, we congratulate UNHCR for its efforts to ensure that refugees themselves are represented in every step of the GRF process. We recognize there was significant progress made since the last GRF.

However, we remain concerned with the measures to ensure diversity in the representation of specific groups. We strongly recommend UNHCR to consider flexible and innovative forms of participation to allow persons with disabilities, children, older persons, and others to engage in the event. We call on UNHCR to particularly support the meaningful participation of children through virtual tools, the creation of child-friendly spaces and their participation in panels.

On this basis, we would also like to highlight the need to ensure accessibility of the venue and information for those with disabilities.

To conclude, we wish to reiterate the points made in the last preparatory meeting on the importance of accountability to the success of the GRF. Only collectively, with diverse perspectives recognized, will we fully achieve the objectives of the GCR.

Thank you.