



A GLOBAL NGO NETWORK
FOR PRINCIPLED AND EFFECTIVE
HUMANITARIAN ACTION

GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM 2023

Outcomes for the Asia-Pacific Region

Summary Report by:

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April 2024

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Introduction

Between 13-15 December 2023, over 4,200 stakeholders convened in Geneva for the 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF). As part of GRF process, over 1600 pledges were submitted by governments, civil society, international organizations, academia, and private companies from across the globe.

Amongst this number are pledges towards host governments and forcibly displaced persons in the Asia-Pacific region. It is these pledges, alongside pledges made by states in the region, that form the basis of this report and research.

This report provides a short summary of data gathered to map pledges related to the Asia-Pacific region made between 1 January 2023 and 15 February 2024.

Specifically, this includes:

- Pledges made to support forcibly displaced Afghans and host states.
- Pledges made to support forcibly displaced Rohingya and host states.
- Pledges made to support other host states in the region.
- Pledges that could lead to solutions for forcibly displaced populations in the region.
- Pledges made by states in the region (including to states outside of the region).
- Domestic policy pledges made by government to support refugees in their country.
- Global resettlement pledges.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Keya Saha-Chaudhury and Asma Saleem at ICVA's Asia Pacific office for their guidance on this project through its various iterations. Thank you for the opportunity to complete this research.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this document are of the author and not ICVA. The information is based on the secondary data available at the time.

Summary of Key Findings

Overall, across both Afghanistan and the Rohingya multistakeholder pledges, and across broader pledges for the Asia-Pacific Region, ‘third country solutions’ and ‘improving conditions in country of origin’ remain under-pledged objectives of the GRF. This was particularly salient for the Afghanistan multistakeholder pledge with just three states/state entities, Australia, Germany and the European Union making resettlement or complementary pathways pledges for Afghan refugees. Pledges towards third country solutions such as these include pledges by states to ‘prioritise’ applications for a specific population group or outline a commitment to resettlement. General resettlement pledges may offer a solution for a small number of refugees in the region.

The analysis found that despite the large number of pledges made to support host states in the region, these were not distributed proportionally across host states. While over sixty pledges outline support for Bangladesh, host to over one million forcibly displaced Rohingya, just 7 pledges outlined dedicated support for Iran, host to a displaced population of 4.5 million.¹

Most pledges towards Rohingya hosting states focus on resilience strengthening and self-reliance, including support for livelihoods, skills development and education. In terms of pledging entity type, most pledges supporting Rohingya refugees were submitted by non-state actors such as non-government organisations (NGOs), United Nations (UN) agencies and academic institutions. This pattern is emblematic of pledges made across the region, with the majority submitted by non-state actors.

A total of seven states made pledges towards resettlement for forcibly displaced persons in the Asia-Pacific region with over half of these from states outside the region. Complementary pathways such as community sponsorship were a common theme across pledges towards third country solutions. Emerging areas for durable solutions such as labor mobility and higher education complementary pathways may offer solutions to refugees in the region, although further research is needed to understand whether these pathways also offer permanent resettlement. Pledges on promoting machine readable travel documentation by Australia and New Zealand and NGOs can also improve access to complementary pathways refugees in the region.

A recurrent theme across pledges made globally and within the Asia-Pacific is ending statelessness, with a number of states in the region and NGOs pledging to join the Global Alliance Against Statelessness. Meaningful participation of refugees is also a common theme in pledges made by third country states in the region to support domestic refugee policy.

Potential opportunities for advocacy moving forward include the many commitments put forward by states, particularly towards third country solutions such as complementary pathways and resettlement. Other key opportunities for advocacy include improving civil registration and alternatives to detention and ending statelessness. Commitments towards national systems strengthening particularly in the areas of health and education, are essential for burden sharing in the region, and remain an ongoing area of further work.

¹ Resolve Multistakeholder Pledge, 2023, UNHCR: [2023 Multi-Stakeholder Pledge for the Afghanistan Situation - ReSolve: for Resilience and Solutions](#) and: [Expanded Solutions and Enhanced Resilience A Multistakeholder Pledge for Rohingya Refugees 2023](#)

Background

The aim of the Global Refugee Forum is to support the implementation of the objectives set out in the Global Compact for Refugees (see below). These are the overarching themes of the analysis, against which pledges are assessed and opportunities for further action are identified. The objectives set out in the Global Compact for Refugees are:

- Ease pressure on host countries,
- Enhance refugee self-reliance,
- Increase access to third-country solutions and;
- Improve conditions in countries of origin.

The aim of the research was to map, analyse and identify gaps in pledges related to the Asia-Pacific submitted during the GRF 2023 reporting period. This report provides a summary of these findings. The data collection has involved analysis of over 300 pledges of the more than 1600 pledges submitted from 1 January 2023 to 15 February 2024. This data has been arranged into tables in an excel file, a breakdown of which can be accessed at Appendix C.

This research involved an analysis of two major multistakeholder pledges:

- Multistakeholder pledge for the Afghanistan situation: Resolve: for resilience and solutions
- Multistakeholder pledge for Rohingya Refugees: Enhanced Resilience, Expanded Solutions

Outside of the multistakeholder pledges, a number of entities pledged support for displaced Afghans and Rohingya, or support to host countries. These pledges have been included in this analysis and the corresponding tables. In the excel file, pledges on the Afghanistan situation can be found in Table 2 and pledges for the Rohingya refugees and host states can be found at Table 4. A summary of pledges mapped against the ‘pledge ideas’ set out in the multistakeholder documents can be found in Table 1 (Afghanistan multistakeholder pledge) and Table 3 (Rohingya multistakeholder pledge).²

The aim of the research was to also to gather data on other pledges associated with the Asia-Pacific region. These pledges are described in the below categories and are in Table 5 in the excel file:

- Pledges (by any entity) made to support other host states in the region.
- Pledges that could lead to durable solutions or support for forcibly displaced populations in the region.
- Pledges made by states in the region (including to states outside of the region). The aim of this category is to gain an overview of which states within the region made pledges at GRF and the areas and population groups these pledges focus on.
- Domestic policy pledges made by governments to support refugees in their state. This includes third countries such as Australia, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea. This also includes domestic policy pledges made by host countries such as Thailand and Papua New Guinea.

² See appendix in the multistakeholder pledge documents which outlines ‘pledge ideas’ to ensure pledging entities contribute towards achieving pledge outcomes.

Finally, the research aims to identify and set out key opportunities ICVA members may wish to prioritise moving forward from the GRF. Opportunities have been identified where momentum has built around a particular area of assistance or where gaps appear between multistakeholder pledge ‘ideas’ outlined in pledge documents and commitments made in pledges.

Methodology

The following research objectives were used to frame the methodology for gathering data and conducting analysis.

Map pledges made to support forcibly displaced Afghans and Rohingya and host states (Tables 1-4).

To identify relevant pledges a desktop analysis was carried out which involved consolidating all pledges made under the ‘Rohingya Refugees - Expanded resilience, Enhanced solutions and Afghanistan situation ‘Resolve - for Resilience and Solutions’ multistakeholder pledges through the Global Compact for Refugees Dashboard. A broader investigation of all pledges with the key words ‘Afghanistan, Afghans, Rohingya, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iran and Myanmar,’ followed to ensure relevant pledges outside of the multistakeholder pledge could be captured.

This data was qualitatively analysed against relevant markers including submitting entity, type of entity, receiving host state, theme area of assistance (i.e. WASH, climate, livelihoods), nature of assistance (i.e. capacity building, financial), number of beneficiaries and focus groups (i.e. people with disabilities, women and children). See Appendix B for full list of markers. Pledges were also categorised by pledging entity (states, United Nations (UN) agencies, non-government organizations, private sector companies and other) and colour coded to allow for visual categorisation of pledges.

Pledges were assessed against the ‘pledge ideas’ set out in the Rohingya Refugees Expanded resilience, Enhanced solutions and the Resolve - for Resilience and Solutions multistakeholder pledges, comparing where pledge ideas/asks have been met and where gaps or opportunities arise. Pledge asks invariably aim to achieve the objectives set out in the Global Compact for Refugees (easing pressure on host states, enhancing refugee resilience).

Through their differences, the four funds chosen for this study offer several good practices. It is important to note that the impact of these practices has not been formally evaluated. These practices were drawn from a combination of literature reviews and interviews conducted, relying on the insights and experiences of humanitarian professionals. While some of these practices may be highly relevant in their specific contexts, their impact might vary when applied in different settings.

Broader Asia-Pacific Pledges (Table 5)

Desktop research of pledges made towards other host states in the region involved a similar process, without the comparison against multistakeholder pledge asks. Key states in this category are the Philippines, Malaysia and India. These pledges were mapped against the indicators outlined above. In an

attempt to ensure Table 5 captures a holistic picture of pledges related to the Asia-Pacific region (outside of Afghanistan and Rohingya pledges), the following categories were mapped:

- Pledges made to support host states in the region (excluding Iran, Pakistan and Bangladesh).
- Pledges made by governments in the region (even if the receiving entity is outside the region).
- Pledges made to support refugees in third countries or host countries by the government of the host/third country. These are referred to as ‘domestic’ pledges in the ‘thematic area of assistance’ table column.
- Pledges that could support access to sustainable solutions for forcibly displaced persons in the region (i.e. resettlement, complementary pathways).

Global resettlement pledges (Table 6)

Pledges made as part of multistakeholder pledges towards resettlement have been mapped against ‘third country’ in Table 6.

Opportunities for advocacy

Opportunities for advocacy and further work have been drawn from a comparison of where gaps exist (i.e. between pledge asks and commitments made) and also an analysis of what pledges have been made, taking into account the need for burden-sharing, durable solutions and enhancing self-reliance. These are referred to throughout the report.

Policy positions of Asia-Pacific states put forward in statements (Appendix A)

Statements made by Governments in the region during the GRF are included in Appendix A.

Limitations:

- Discrepancies in pledge data and the report may be present due to a number of factors including:
- Pledges with little/incorrect information or detail regarding intended pledge outcomes.
- Captures ‘a moment in time’: pledges submitted between 1 January 2023 and 15 February 2024.
- Pledges have not been ‘validated’ so instances of ‘double-ups’ or incomplete information are present in the UNHCR online dashboard and consequently in data collected.
- Further follow up with UNHCR and pledging entities is yet to take place.
- The dashboard will continue to be updated stakeholders should double check pledge information through the dashboard to ensure accuracy.

Afghanistan Situation: Multistakeholder Pledge Overview

Pledges outlining support for displaced Afghans focus on multisectoral, area-based interventions in education, health, community infrastructure, and livelihoods, with a special focus on women and girls. Most pledges submitted include support for host communities alongside forcibly displaced Afghans.

Background

Around 8.2 million Afghans are forcibly displaced living in the region, with 5.2 million of displaced Afghans living in Iran and Pakistan.³ Within Afghanistan, 28.3 million people remain in need of humanitarian assistance.⁴ The Afghanistan situation multi-stakeholder pledge, 'Resolve: for resilience and solutions' has been developed by members of the Core Group of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) Support Platform and other interested stakeholders and partners.⁵ The Support Platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR Support Platform) was launched at the first Global Refugee Forum in 2019 to bring partners together and collaborate on multi-year humanitarian and development responses in line with the operational priorities of the SSAR.⁶

Pledge Ideas

The multi-stakeholder pledge sets out a range of suggested 'pledge ideas'⁷ for submitting entities to contribute to solutions and enhance the resilience of Afghans in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. The overarching priorities of the pledge ideas are (in line with SSAR):

- Voluntary returns (creating conditions conducive to voluntary return through community-based investments in areas of return.)
- Sustainable reintegration (building refugee human capital, enhancing access to education and portable skills linked to livelihood opportunities in Afghanistan in order to facilitate return and reintegration).
- Support for host countries (Preserving protection and asylum space in host countries through enhanced support for refugee-hosting communities and expanded options for resettlement and complementary pathways in third countries.)

³Resolve Multistakeholder Pledge, 2023, UNHCR: [2023 Multi-Stakeholder Pledge for the Afghanistan Situation - ReSolve: for Resilience and Solutions](#)

⁴Resolve Multistakeholder Pledge, 2023, UNHCR: [2023 Multi-Stakeholder Pledge for the Afghanistan Situation - ReSolve: for Resilience and Solutions](#)

⁵Resolve Multistakeholder Pledge, 2023, UNHCR: [2023 Multi-Stakeholder Pledge for the Afghanistan Situation - ReSolve: for Resilience and Solutions](#)

⁶Resolve Multistakeholder Pledge, 2023, UNHCR: [2023 Multi-Stakeholder Pledge for the Afghanistan Situation - ReSolve: for Resilience and Solutions](#)

⁷See the Appendix in the Resolve Multistakeholder Pledge document which outlines 'pledge ideas' to ensure the pledging entities can contribute towards achieving pledge outcomes: Resolve Multistakeholder Pledge, 2023, UNHCR: [2023 Multi-Stakeholder Pledge for the Afghanistan Situation - ReSolve: for Resilience and Solutions](#)

Findings

The Afghanistan multi-stakeholder pledge received 13 pledges in total. In addition to these, 26 pledges in support of host countries or displaced Afghans were also submitted at the GRF, bringing pledges for Afghans and Afghanistan to a total of 39. These have been included in Table 2.

The majority of pledges submitted in support of Afghans and host countries are made by non-state actors including just under half (19) pledges submitted by NGOs. States submitted a total of 14 pledges. The majority of pledges outline support directly for Afghanistan (23 pledges) followed by Pakistan (15 pledges) and 7 pledges made supporting Iran. Note: some pledging states have not specified recipient host countries and therefore these have not been included in these tallies.

Afghanistan Situation: Afghanistan

The Afghanistan multistakeholder pledge outlines pledges ideas across three categories; education, health and livelihoods. These include education infrastructure, online education and scholarships for tertiary education; health infrastructure and midwife training centres and; support civil society, microfinance and cold storage facilities.⁸ The majority of pledges submitted during the pledge intake period focused on basic needs such as education and healthcare. A large proportion of pledges towards education also specifically outline support for women and girls.

Multistakeholder 'idea' pledge category	Multistakeholder pledge outcomes
Education	<p>There are over 10 pledges towards education including pledges towards scholarships and online education programs, particularly for Afghan women.</p> <p>Other pledges towards education include support for primary education.</p>
Health	<p>There are a small number of pledges towards healthcare including pledges towards mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and general health services.</p> <p>The multistakeholder pledge idea for 'midwife training' remains unmet, however the other health-related pledge idea set out in the multistakeholder pledge has been met by UNCT Afghanistan (infrastructure for access to health services).</p>
Livelihoods	<p>Similarly to health and education, there are a small number of pledges that include support towards livelihoods including skills development and training services.</p> <p>While the 'livelihoods' pledge ideas put forward within this pledge category (supporting civic society, microfinance initiatives and cold storage facilities) appear unmet, pledges put forward towards livelihoods are general in nature so there may be potential for these 'pledge ideas' to be met during the implementation of pledges made.</p>

⁸ Resolve Multistakeholder Pledge, 2023, UNHCR: [2023 Multi-Stakeholder Pledge for the Afghanistan Situation - ReSolve: for Resilience and Solutions](#)

Afghanistan Situation: Iran

Iran is the second largest refugee hosting country in the world. 4.5 million Afghans currently live in Iran.⁹ Despite this, support for Iran or displaced Afghans in Iran amounted to seven pledges at the GRF in 2023. To continue its support to forcibly displaced persons, the Afghanistan multistakeholder pledge outlined ‘pledge ideas’ towards healthcare (inclusive health policies), education (inclusive education policies), livelihoods (skills development) and resettlement for Iran.¹⁰ Each of these ‘pledge ideas’ received a small number of pledges except for resettlement – resettlement pledges do not specify the ‘host country’ but rather the displaced population, in this instance, Afghan refugees.

Multistakeholder ‘idea’ pledge category	Multistakeholder pledge outcomes
Education	<p>There are a very small number of pledges towards education. The main focus of these pledges are primary education services for children, particularly those not currently in school.</p> <p>HAMI, the only NGO that pledged support for Iran at the GRF, pledged to work with local and international partners to facilitate the return of 15,000 students to the education system.</p>
Health	<p>Health pledges include general healthcare services as well as MHPSS.</p> <p>HAMI pledged to support 12,000 women and children access healthcare in Iran.</p>
Livelihoods	<p>There are two pledges outlining support towards livelihoods for forcibly displaced persons in Iran. These are aimed towards improving employment outcomes.</p>
Resettlement	<p>Similar to Pakistan, Iran did not receive any ‘direct’ pledges towards resettlement of Afghan refugees from third countries. However, a number of states made general pledges to resettle Afghan refugees, including Australia, Germany, and the European Union.</p>

⁹ Resolve Multistakeholder Pledge, 2023, UNHCR: [2023 Multi-Stakeholder Pledge for the Afghanistan Situation - ReSolve: for Resilience and Solutions](#)

¹⁰ Resolve Multistakeholder Pledge, 2023, UNHCR: [2023 Multi-Stakeholder Pledge for the Afghanistan Situation - ReSolve: for Resilience and Solutions](#)

Afghanistan Situation: Pakistan

Pakistan is host to 3.7 million forcibly displaced Afghans.¹¹ A total of 15 pledges were submitted outlining support for Pakistan, with the majority of these submitted by states. Australia and Japan are the only two states in the Asia-Pacific that have submitted pledges directly in support of Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan did not submit any pledges at GRF 2023. However, Pakistan did make a statement calling for the international community to create conditions conducive to return or work to create feasible third country resettlement options and durable solutions. Despite these calls, just one pledge (Government of Japan) aims to directly improve return conditions.

The majority of pledges for Pakistan are towards education, livelihoods and healthcare. There are no resettlement pledges directly made by third countries with Pakistan however pledges by the European Union, Australia and Germany on Afghan resettlement may offer a path forward.

Multistakeholder 'idea' pledge category	Multistakeholder pledge outcomes
Creating conditions conducive to voluntary repatriation	Government of Japan is the sole pledging entity that submitted a pledge towards improving return conditions in Afghanistan however pledges indicating general support for the region may provide an opportunity for increased support to Afghanistan
Sustainable reintegration - building refugee human capital	There are 6 pledges towards livelihoods and education with education pledges focusing on basic primary education for children.
Sustainable reintegration - building refugee human capital	There are 6 pledges towards livelihoods and education with education pledges focusing on basic primary education for children.
Support for host country	Pledges focus on healthcare services, including gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) for Afghans in Pakistan. There are few pledges towards protection support, data collection, registration or resettlement opportunities despite these being key 'pledge ideas' in the multistakeholder pledge.

¹¹ Resolve Multistakeholder Pledge, 2023, UNHCR: [2023 Multi-Stakeholder Pledge for the Afghanistan Situation - ReSolve: for Resilience and Solutions](#)

Afghanistan Situation: Gaps and Opportunities

Areas for follow up - Afghanistan

- Increase resettlement and complementary pathways, particularly for women and Afghans at risk.
- Creating conditions conducive to voluntary return. While a few pledges indicate long-term development assistance (Denmark, UNDP) the outcome of voluntary repatriation is specified only in one pledge. There may be potential for this outcome to eventuate where pledges outline a view to meet basic needs in the short term and enhance longer term resilience in the future.
- Continued focus on women and girls' education through online platforms. Skills development for women, particularly midwife training.

Areas for follow up - Pakistan

- Expand resettlement and complementary pathway opportunities.
- Provide technical support on data collection, registration and documentation.
- Support For the national protection and refugee management framework.
- Support inclusion of refugees on the National Socio-Economic Registry Financial and technical support for clean and sustainable energy.
- Long term support to Afghanistan, particularly to promote economic development and livelihoods to create conditions conducive to return.

Areas for follow up - Iran

- Support access to basic services such as education and healthcare as Iran seeks to include refugees in national systems, including infrastructure.
- Support professional skills development for displaced populations to enhance self- reliance and improve opportunities for labor mobility pathways or voluntary repatriation.
- Increase support from the private sector, NGOs and other actors across all development areas including education, health and livelihoods to assist reduce the burden on Iran's public services and improve resilience in the host community and amongst displaced Afghans.
- Increase third country resettlement and complementary pathway solutions.

Rohingya Situation: Bangladesh

There are over 1 million forcibly displaced Rohingya living in the Asia-Pacific region, with the majority hosted by Bangladesh.¹² Other host states include Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and India. The Rohingya Refugees - Enhanced Resilience, Expanded Solutions multistakeholder pledge has two broad aims - to create durable solutions including resettlement or voluntary return and to draw support that will contribute to self-reliance.

At GRF 2023, over 40 pledges were submitted as part of the Rohingya Refugees - Expanded Resilience, Enhanced Solutions multi-stakeholder pledge. A further 20 pledges have been submitted in support of supporting the Rohingya and host communities. The majority of these are pledges by non-state actors, with states and NGOs pledging 27 pledges and 25 pledges respectively. The remaining pledges were made by UN agencies, the private sector or other actors.

Of the 27 pledges that came from states (including pledges under the multistakeholder pledge and those that specifically address Rohingya/host state needs, only 5 were made by states in the region (submitted by Australia, Thailand, Japan and the Republic of Korea).

The majority of pledges focus on supporting refugees and host communities in Bangladesh. A small number of pledges (6) have been made towards Myanmar. These involve humanitarian assistance and improving conditions for return, particularly in Rakhine state. Other pledges submitted include pledges made to reduce the burden on Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia as host countries for displaced Rohingya. The Rohingya Refugees multistakeholder pledge does not specify pledge asks but sets out two priority areas (sustainable solutions and resilience).¹³

¹² Expanded Solutions and Enhanced Resilience Multistakeholder Pledge, 2023, UNHCR: https://www.unhcr.org/asia/sites/asia/files/2023-09/expanded_solutions_and_enhanced_resilience_a_multistakeholder_pledge_for_rohingya_refugees.pdf

¹³ https://www.unhcr.org/asia/sites/asia/files/2023-09/expanded_solutions_and_enhanced_resilience_a_multistakeholder_pledge_for_rohingya_refugees.pdf

Multistakeholder 'idea' pledge category	Multistakeholder pledge outcomes
Sustainable solutions	<p>There are a number of pledges advocating for safe, dignified and voluntary returns of displaced Rohingya to Myanmar, but few pledges outline taking active support on this issue given the current circumstances. There are very few pledges that indicate support towards improving return conditions.</p> <p>Three states (Australia, United States and Canada) have submitted pledges committing to resettling Rohingya refugees/increasing intake however no figures are attached to these pledges.</p>
Resilience	<p>The majority of pledges include support for livelihoods, education and skill development.</p> <p>A number of pledges towards livelihoods are focused on improving climate resilience and adaptation (i.e. through agricultural, bamboo farming).</p> <p>Education focused pledges range from advocacy-based pledges such as those calling for secondary students to be included in the national education system to financial or programming support for the delivery of education services in the Cox's Bazar camps.</p> <p>Healthcare pledges range from basic health services to describe programming for neonatal, maternal and children healthcare.</p>

Rohingya Situation: Other Host States

As part of the Enhanced Resilience, Expanded Solutions pledge some entities have pledged support to the below host states/country of origin; Thailand, Indonesia, India and Myanmar.

Myanmar

A small number of pledges (6) outline support for Myanmar - all submitted by states (as opposed to NGOs or UN agencies). These involve humanitarian and development assistance and improving conditions for return, particularly in Rakhine state. The United Kingdom has also pledged advocacy for right of safe and voluntary return of Rohingya refugees and justice for atrocities committed against the Rohingya by the military junta.

Indonesia

All but one of the 6 pledges outlining support for displaced Rohingya in Indonesia are pledged by UNCT Indonesia (the other is pledged by Jesuit Refugee Service Worldwide). The UNCT pledges focus on advocating for including refugees in economic participation and secondary schooling and supporting the government on education and health access and commitments towards statelessness. Note: there is one additional pledge outlining educational support for displaced persons in Indonesia (this pledge is not included in the Rohingya multistakeholder pledge).
The Indonesian Government did not submit any pledges as part of GRF 2023.

Thailand

The Government of Thailand has submitted one pledge under the *Enhanced Resilience, Expanded Solutions* multistakeholder pledge (assistance for Myanmar) and has also submitted number of separate pledges focused on domestic policy committing to Alternatives to Detention, strengthening Thailand's National Screening Mechanism, improved access to education and removing Thailand's reservation to Article 22 of the Convention on the Rights of the Childs. UNCT Thailand has also pledged to work with the Thai Government on enhancing the National Screening mechanism, Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) and access to national systems (health and education). NGO pledges outline support for increasing access to education for refugees including through scholarships, online courses and English language training.

Malaysia

There is one pledge outlining support for displaced Rohingya in Malaysia. The focus of this support is educational and protection services for the Rohingya. It is important to note there are number of other pledges made by NGOs outlining support for displaced persons Malaysia. The majority of these pledges include providing education services to forcibly displaced persons through online learning or scholarships. The Malaysian Government did not submit any pledges as part of GRF 2023.

Asia – Pacific Pledges: Findings

During the reporting period, around 30 pledges towards resettlement and complementary pathways were submitted by states or towards displaced refugees in the region. These pledges were submitted either as individual pledges or as one of five ‘Resettlement and Complementary Pathways’ multistakeholder pledges.

For the research project accompanying this report, pledges towards resettlement and complementary pathways in the Asia-Pacific region include:

- Asia-Pacific states pledging resettlement
- States pledging resettlement to displaced populations in the region (i.e. Rohingya, Afghan or North Korean refugees)
- Non-state actors pledging to support resettlement efforts by states or engaging in advocacy on resettlement

The following states made resettlement or complementary pathways related pledges for refugees in the Asia-Pacific region: Australia, Canada, the European Union, France, Germany, Japan, Korea and the United States of America. The range of tangible commitments in these pledges varies from a specific number of resettlement places (i.e. commitment to resettlement 16,500 Afghan nationals by Australia) to the Japanese Government’s pledge of ‘complementary protection’ for refugees who don’t meet one of the ‘five grounds’ in the Refugee Convention but otherwise fulfil requirements. If pledges specify resettlement places or ‘prioritisation’ for a particular forcibly displaced group (Afghans/Rohingya) there is typically no figure provided in the pledge (with the exception of Australia).

State pledges towards community sponsorship places for either Afghan or Rohingya refugees in the region were made by Australia, Germany and Canada. Australia pledged to increase community sponsored and other complementary places to 10,000 per year over time (in addition to core humanitarian intake). A small number of NGOs also pledged advocacy or their support for community sponsorship programs within the region. A number of civil society organizations in the Asia Pacific region have also submitted pledges as part of the new Global Community Sponsorship CSO Network.

The ‘Skills-Based Complementary Pathways’ multistakeholder pledge aims to remove barriers to enable refugees to use existing migration pathways and explore potential opportunities for labor mobility and education complementary pathways. While a number of pledges are made across both outcomes in the Asia-Pacific, Australia is the only state in the region to put forward pledges towards both labor mobility and higher education pathways. Australia pledged to implement the recently extended a ‘Skilled Refugee Labor Agreement Pilot’ which will deliver 500 primary visas by June 2025. The Australian Government has also pledged to scope the potential development of a refugee student settlement pathway. NGOs pledging on higher education pathways in the region include the Australian based Refugee Education Special Interest Group and Pathways Japan.

Asia – Pacific Pledges: Findings

Travel documents

Globally 19 pledges were submitted to the multistakeholder pledge on Refugee Travel Documents - The 21st Nansen Passport, with Australia and New Zealand from the region pledging to 'champion the enhanced global issuance and acceptance of machine-readable refugee travel documents' along with sharing expertise and technical capability with states in the region.

Domestic policy pledges by states in the region

Domestic policy pledges include those submitted by governments aimed at improving the lives of refugees or forcibly displaced persons within the country (this includes host and third countries). The following governments submitted pledges aimed at shaping or changing domestic policy: Australia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Japan, Papua New Guinea, Thailand and the Philippines. These pledges range from commitments toward better inclusion of refugees in health systems (New Zealand), refugee participation in policy making (Australia) to naturalisation of displaced West Papuans in Papua New Guinea. To find domestic policy pledges (by all entities) in the Asia Pacific type 'domestic' into the 'theme of assistance' column in Table 5.

Other host states in Asia-Pacific

A number of states in the region host forcibly displaced persons, including Nepal, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and the Philippines. A small number of pledges have been made to these states and/or forcibly displaced persons by UN agencies (e.g. UNCT Nepal), NGOs and the private sector. No pledges were submitted by states for these host states or the forcibly displaced populations currently living there.

Safe, dignified and voluntary returns

There are very few pledges towards supporting voluntary returns for forcibly displaced persons in the Asia-Pacific region, with just 5 pledges within this pledge category. The pledges mostly focus on advocacy on safe, voluntary and dignified returns opposed to practical support for repatriation. The United Kingdom is the only state to include advocacy 'voluntary, safe and dignified returns' as a part of their pledge. The other pledging entity within this category are NGOs/UN with the Strategic Executive Group in Bangladesh pledging to support the Government of Bangladesh to facilitate safe, dignified and voluntary returns.

Asia – Pacific Pledges: Findings

Cross-cutting Theme: Ending Statelessness

- There are two main multistakeholder pledges address statelessness at the GRF: ‘Ending Statelessness Multistakeholder Pledge,’ and ‘Advancing localisation in displacement and statelessness responses’.
- Many pledges not included in these multistakeholder pledges also involve commitments towards documentation, identification, legal verification and in many cases also contribute to addressing statelessness although this is not explicitly mentioned.
- The ‘Ending Statelessness’ multistakeholder pledge received over 80 pledges globally during the reporting period, though less than 10 of these were submitted by pledging entities within the Asia-Pacific region.
- One of the ways for stakeholders to contribute to the ‘Ending Statelessness Pledge’ is to join the new UNHCR-led ‘Global Alliance to End Statelessness.’
- A number of NGOs working in the Asia-Pacific region have pledged to join the Alliance as well as Australia and Thailand.
- Other examples of pledges towards statelessness in the region include:
 - Research on ‘Understanding statelessness in Australian law and policy’ (Peter McCullin Centre on Statelessness).
 - Statelessness hub to be created by Nationality for All.
 - Pledges to support the regional network on statelessness: ‘Statelessness and Dignified Citizenship Coalition (SDCC) Asia Pacific’.
 - Within the Asia-Pacific region, Thailand, Philippines and Australia each make pledges towards ending or taking steps to resolve statelessness.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to map and analyse pledges related to the Asia-Pacific submitted as part of the 2023 Global Refugee Forum. The majority of pledges towards the Asia-Pacific (towards both states and displaced persons) fulfil two of the four objectives of the Global Compact for Refugees: enhancing refugee self-and reducing the pressure on host countries. Few pledges are made towards third country solutions, another objective of the Global Compact. A similarly low number of pledges have been made towards improving conditions in origin countries within the Asia-Pacific. This trend is also evident in Afghanistan and Rohingya refugee related pledges.

While some states have made pledges towards third country solutions further work is needed to ascertain the specific details, such as number of refugees to be resettled in these commitments. While ‘complementary pathways’ such as labor mobility and higher education appear to offer a path forward, more work needs to be done to understand the permanency of these commitments.

One of the key themes emerging from the research includes a widespread effort by states, UN bodies and civil society to end statelessness. Organizations and states have signed on to a new ‘Global Alliance to End Statelessness’ as well as pledging commitments to improve civic registration, documentation and employ alternatives to detention in asylum application processing.

Although a less referenced theme across Asia-Pacific related pledges, a number of third country states and organizations supporting resettlement processes have explicitly stated meaningful refugee participation as a core commitment of their pledges. This also includes commitments to refugee leadership and advisory positions in third country decision making on refugee-related policy.

Overall, the ambition set out in pledges at the GRF suggests a number of avenues for further work to ensure forcibly displaced persons in the region have access to durable solutions and host countries are provided with adequate support to reduce the strain on domestic resources and host communities.

Appendices

Appendix A – GRF statements by Asia-Pacific states

Appendix B – Mapping categories: thematic areas of assistance, type of assistance and target group

Appendix C – Summary of tables

Appendix D – Bibliography

Appendix A - GRF Statements by Asia Pacific States

Table 1: Statements made by states in the region at the Global Refugee Forum¹⁴

States	Priority policy positions	Financial/material commitments
Afghanistan	<p>Afghanistan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls on Pakistan to immediately cease collective expulsion and forced deportations until the human rights situation in Afghanistan allows for safe and dignified returns. • Calls on the Islamic republic of Iran Afghanistan not to follow the same policy. • Calls for holistic assessment of resettlement endeavours and to take into consideration ethnic and political sensitivities surrounding resettlement of returnees. 	
Indonesia	<p>Indonesia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will not hesitate to take firm action against these criminal networks, including by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ strengthening law enforcement measures - also need international support. • Calls on state parties to Refugee Convention must abide by their international obligations. • Commits to strengthen working within Bali Process. 	
Iran	<p>Iran:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes that all Afghan children of school age are eligible, equal to their Iranian peers, to attend primary and secondary school regardless of their documentation status. • Notes that sanctions prevent humanitarian agencies providing aid to refugees in Iran. 	
Japan	<p>Japan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks to adopt a long-term approach to providing assistance. 	New contribution to Education Cannot Wait. The Japanese Institute of Cultural Affairs will launch a new program to provide study opportunities in Japan for

¹⁴ During the GRF delegates were invited to make statements and speeches during plenary from December 13-15. Asia-Pacific states that speeches/statements at GRF are included in the above table. Note some states opted to not provide a statement.

		the forcibly displaced from other countries and regions.
Malaysia	<p>Malaysia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls on the signatory countries to deliver on their commitment as stated during the previous GCR conference related to burden-sharing concerning the welfare and management of Rohingya refugees in this region. • Calls on a more robust and transparent resettlement schemes of Rohingya refugees into third countries - welcomes efforts towards education/skills development to increase likelihood of third country resettlement. 	
Nepal	<p>Nepal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaffirm commitment to GCR in full. 	
New Zealand	<p>New Zealand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support on protection and solutions to AP states. • Support on machine readable travel documentation. • Domestically - better inclusion in healthcare. • Domestically – improving education, employment and self-sufficiency outcomes for refugees. 	
Pakistan	<p>Pakistan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls for third country resettlement and durable solutions. 	<p>Pakistan has recently launched a third tranche of 4500 education scholarships for Afghans including refugees. Pakistan provides 100 percent medical facilities to Afghan refugees while 95 percent of secondary and tertiary health support to Afghan nationals visiting Pakistan.</p>
Philippines	<p>Philippines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commits to ending statelessness, improving domestic policies and laws for refugee access. 	<p>Philippines provides education to Rohingya students; socio-economic inclusion; access to social services and is providing a 50 per cent increase on voluntary contribution for UNHCR.</p>

Thailand	<p>Thailand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes lasting solution to Myanmar situation must be Myanmar-led and Myanmar owned. • withdraws Thailand’s reservation to Article 22 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. • Commits to cooperation with other states to find durable solutions. 	<p>Thailand has launched new National Screening Mechanism for displaced persons to work towards addressing statelessness. Thailand is working on improving access to basic services (health, education).</p>
Vietnam	<p>Vietnam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commits to taking a shared regional approach to migration flows in the region with Bali Process members. 	

Appendix B – Mapping Categories: Thematic Areas of Assistance, Type of Assistance and Target Groups

Thematic Areas of Assistance

- Advocacy
- Alternatives to detention (ATD)
- Asylum system strengthening
- Awareness raising
- Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS)
- Climate
- Climate adaptation
- Climate displacement
- Community services
- Community sponsorship
- Complementary pathways
- Conservation
- Critical infrastructure
- Development
- Disaster preparedness
- Disaster risk reduction (DRR)
- Documentation
- Domestic
- Durable solutions
- Economic development
- Education
- Emergency response
- Employment
- Faith sensitive programming
- Family reunification
- Food security
- Gender discrimination
- Gender-based violence
- Health
- Higher education
- HPD nexus
- Humanitarian
- Inclusion
- Infrastructure
- International law
- Justice
- Labour mobility
- Legal assistance
- Livelihoods
- Localisation
- MHPSS
- National systems
- Naturalisation
- Peacebuilding
- Policy
- Protection
- Refugee participation
- Refugee status recognition
- Resettlement
- Safe, dignified and voluntary returns
- Scholarships
- Sector coordination
- Skills development/training
- Social cohesion
- Social protection
- Sports
- Sexual and reproductive health
- Statelessness
- Strengthening national systems
- Technology
- Trafficking
- Travel documentation
- Urban development
- WASH
- Women Peace and Security (WPS)

Type of Assistance

- Advocacy
- Capability building
- Capacity support
- Cash
- Certification
- Communications
- Documentation
- Financial
- Formal education
- Gift-in-kind donations
- Knowledge sharing
- Material assistance
- Meaningful participation
- Mentoring
- Pilot programs
- Programming Research
- Resettlement Scholarships
- Sector coordination
- Sector coordination
- Service delivery
- Skills transfer
- Social support
- Systems strengthening
- Technical support

Target population groups

Some pledges focus all or partly on target population groups. These are included in the table below.

Focus groups
Children
Children with special needs
Girls
People with disabilities
People with learning difficulties
People of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristic
Women

Appendix C – Summary of Tables

Below is a summary of tables found in the excel spreadsheet accompanying this report.

Table title	Table number
Afghanistan multistakeholder pledge gaps	Table 1.1 - Table 1.3
Afghanistan multistakeholder pledges by receiving entity	Table 2
Rohingya multistakeholder pledge gaps	Table 3
Rohingya multistakeholder pledge by receiving entity	Table 4
Asia-Pacific related pledges	Table 5
Resettlement Pledges and Complementary Pathways	Table 6

Appendix D – Bibliography

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Global Compact for Refugees, 2023, UNHCR: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/global-compact-refugees-booklet>

Iran Country File Operational Data Portal, UNHCR: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/irn>

Bangladesh Country File Operational Data Portal, UNHCR: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/bgd>



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