

## Global Refugee Forum Progress Review 2025 – Collective NGO Statement

### ORAL VERSION

Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, colleagues,

This statement has been drafted in consultation with a diverse range of NGOs globally, including RLOs.

Every time we gather, we do so with a shared ambition. Yet today, as we review progress on international protection and assess pledge implementation, we note a clear regression. The commitments of 2019 and 2023 demand renewed, immediate and transformative action.

The spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees is being challenged by anti-refugee rhetoric, restrictive policies, and a shrinking asylum space. The drastic funding cuts this year continue to have life-threatening consequences and have pushed humanitarian operations to their furthest limits.

Yet, civil society continues to defend international law and protect refugee rights, often as the last line of defence.

**We can tell you, today, that we're seeing devastating protection backslides.** In several contexts, gender-based violence cases have more than doubled in some areas; refugee incentive workers and NGO staff — teachers, health staff, protection monitors — have been laid off, gutting essential services, and negative coping mechanisms are soaring: child marriage, negative coping strategies, and unsafe return born of desperation. **A surge of funding for humanitarian operations globally is urgent.**

We have seen the **collapse of resettlement and complementary pathways** and warn that the 2030 Roadmap ambition is in freefall, with several States slashing their ceilings to historic lows, despite the near record-high needs projected in 2026. **Excellencies, friends, how can we leverage the momentum of this meeting to urgently increase those spaces?**

**Meanwhile, advances towards self-reliance and economic inclusion are falling short.** Cuts to food assistance, livelihoods and education – too often without meaningful consultation – are driving higher levels of child labour, school dropout, trafficking, and mental distress. This is not a path towards self-reliance and has proven, at times, fatal. **Funding and legal reforms enabling economic inclusion, must be a priority.**

Embedding meaningful participation into policy is the goal of the newly launched Independent Declaration on the Right to Participate for Persons with Experience of Forced Displacement or Statelessness, **and we encourage endorsement from the wide range of actors here today.**

**We must move beyond championing locally-led and refugee-led responses towards resourcing them, recognising the complementary support of international actors,** including global NGOs and UN agencies. Yet, broadly, bureaucratic barriers, under-funding, and exclusion from decision-making persists.

Finally, we call on all stakeholders to uphold the **1951 Refugee Convention and its Protocol.** This, along with other regional protection instruments, remains the cornerstone of refugee protection.

**Distinguished delegates, to conclude;** the Global Compact on Refugees is a framework rooted in solidarity, responsibility-sharing, and inclusion. NGOs reaffirm our commitment to support all actors build on the collective energy, expertise and ambition we are seeing around us this week.

I thank you.