*Participants at the Global Compact on Refugees Roundtable Discussion in Abuja, Nigeria. © UNHCR/Gabriel Adeyemo*

# Global Compact on Refugees in Nigeria

March 2023

The **Global Compact on Refugees** aims to improve the international response to new and existing refugee situations.

**It's four global objectives are to:**

**Ease pressures on host countries**

**Enhance refugee self-reliance**

**Expand access to third-country solutions**

**Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity**

## GCR Roadmap Implementation progress & GRF preparations

The implementation of the Nigeria GCR Roadmap is advancing steadily ahead of the Global Refugee Forum (GRF), scheduled to take place in Geneva from 13-15 December 2023, with side events occurring on 12 December 2023.

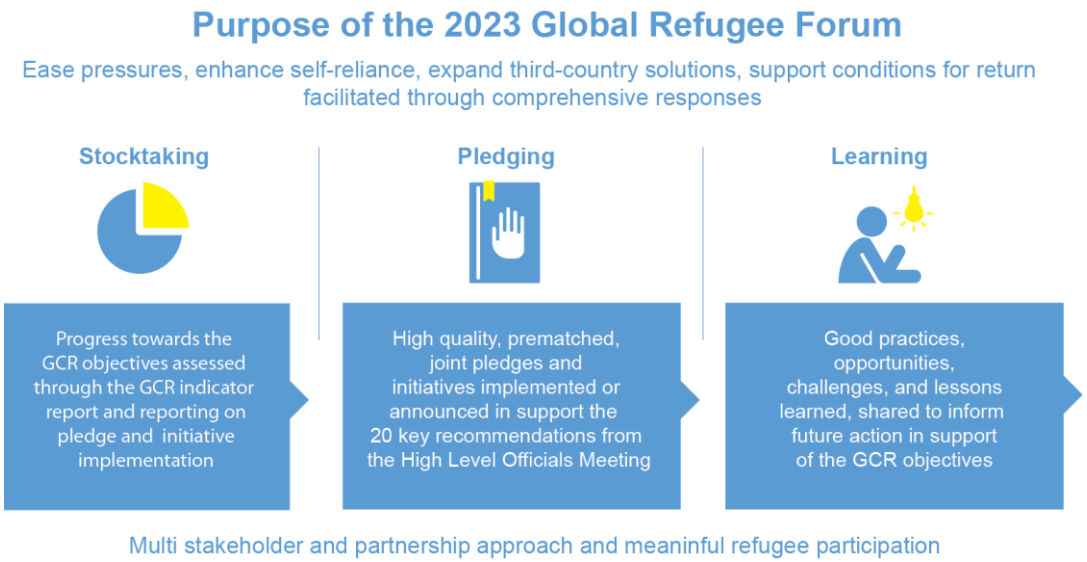
A Roundtable Discussion on the GCR in Nigeria was co-chaired in Abuja on 9th December 2022 by the Honourable Federal Commissioner of the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI), the UNHCR Representative, and the First Secretary of the Embassy of Switzerland reflecting Switzerland's global co-host role in the Global Refugee Forum. This event served to strengthen government ownership and increase awareness of Nigeria's GCR Roadmap among key Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), as well as development partners. Participants explored critical collective actions for advancing the GCR Roadmap at the federal and state levels.

Recommendations from the roundtable discussion focused on enhancing engagement and financial support from development partners in Nigeria's GCR inclusion agenda and initiating dialogue to encourage pledge matching for the 2023 GRF. Over 20 Nigerian MDAs attended the event, including representatives from refugee-hosting states like Cross River, Benue, and Taraba, as well as development partners such as the European Union, United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, Canada, Norway, United Nations Development Programme, International Organization for Migration, and the World Food Programme.

Recent achievements towards fulfilling Nigeria's 2019 GRF pledges include:

- Recognition and declaration of Abuja, Lagos, and Calabar as Refugee Friendly cities.
- Commitment by the refugee-hosting states of Benue, Taraba, and Cross River to enrol all school-age children in primary schools by 2023. Fee waivers for refugees have been implemented in these three states, although the out-of-school population among refugee children remains high.
- Approval by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) in 2022 for the adoption of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Maintaining the Civilian and Humanitarian Character of Asylum in the Cameroonian refugees' response in Nigeria. The country is establishing containment centres for combatants and ex-combatants found among refugees, adhering to international best practices.

- Expansion of NCFRMI's protection operation in collaboration with UNHCR, opening new field offices in addition to existing ones, particularly in the border areas of Taraba, Benue, and Cross River States, where the reception and registration of Cameroonian refugees and asylum seekers continue.
- On 15 February 2023, His Excellency President Muhammadu Buhari signed into law the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons Act Bill, passed by the National Assembly in 2022.
- On 16 September 2022, Nigeria granted citizenship status to 286 foreigners, having passed the allegiance and loyalty eligibility test for the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Four (4) among them were refugees.
- ECOWAS has produced an Action Plan for the GCR, validated by member states in October 2022, in which Nigeria took part.




## Spotlight on Refugee-hosting States: Taraba

Taraba State, located in the north eastern region of Nigeria, is home to approximately 20,000 registered Cameroonian refugees, primarily women and children (73%) and many individuals with special needs (18%). These refugees reside in over 30 communities across the six local government areas of Takum, Ussa, Kurmi, Bali, Sardauna, and Gashaka. The challenging terrain characterising most of these communities in Taraba State makes it difficult for UNHCR and its partners to conduct registration activities regularly.

The host communities have generously shared their limited resources with the refugees, including housing, food, and social amenities. In line with Nigeria's GCR commitments, the State Government has taken intentional steps to protect refugees and help them access government services, such as free primary education for refugee children. *"These are our brothers in need, and we must help them. The situation they find themselves in can happen to anyone. Some refugees own shops and have access to loans to grow their businesses, contributing to the economic development of both refugees and host communities,"* says His majesty, Nkum Kaka K.M. Adda, King of Mambila.

The Taraba State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) employs a multi-sectoral approach to mobilise resources from various government agencies, faith-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, and the international community to improve assistance to refugees. Following a request from UNHCR and SEMA, the Chairperson of the Kurmi local government area has allocated 250,000 square meters of agricultural land to support the agricultural activities of refugees and host communities. To formalise this arrangement, UNHCR will conduct a land survey and documentation in partnership with SEMA. Cultural leaders in several other locations have also pledged to offer land, and these commitments are being pursued to completion. Access to agricultural land remains a significant challenge for refugees in all locations.

## Spotlight on Refugee-hosting States: Benue

Over 10,000 Cameroonian refugees in Benue State, which is in the middle belt region of Nigeria, live harmoniously with locals. In most cases, both communities have similarities in culture and languages and participate in common social, cultural, and sporting events. Refugees over the age of 14 receive identity cards issued by the NCFRMI and UNHCR to aid freedom of movement and access to basic social services, including banking.

*Cameroonian refugee receives ID card provided by the Nigerian government and UNHCR in the Ikyogen refugee settlement, Benue State, to aid freedom of movement and access to basic social services. © UNHCR/Lucy Agiende.*

National services, particularly in health and education, are available and accessible to refugees in Benue State, with some restrictions in remote locations, particularly along the border with Cameroon. In all the communities, refugees have reported access to services at par with nationals, with minimal discrimination.

The government approved school fee waivers for all refugee children in earmarked primary and secondary schools in the Ikyogen refugee settlement, and land for establishing a refugee settlement and farming in the Kwande local government area to help refugees live with dignity and improve their means of livelihood and food security.

## Empowering Refugees and Host Communities through Education

The national policy on education supports the inclusion of refugee children in national education systems, in line with the Global Compact on Refugees and UNHCR's global education strategy. Refugee children are enrolled in government and private schools at pre-primary, primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, allowing them to pursue their education under the same admission and teaching criteria as nationals.

Before the arrival of refugees to Ogoja, Cross River State, St Peter's Primary School in Adagom had 36 pupils, three classrooms, one office, and six teachers. The schools in this location lacked water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities. *"Allowing refugee children to attend primary school in the host community has brought about infrastructural development, innovations, and integration. Currently, the school hosts over 500 pupils, the number of teachers has increased to 16, and we now have two offices, six toilets, and 21 classrooms*", says Mr Boniface Ugar, the head teacher at St. Peters Primary School.

*"The host community children have also benefitted from the distribution of learning materials by UNHCR and partners. There is also the integration of ideas and culture by both refugees and host community pupils through play, songs, rhymes, games, and cultural dance. The inclusion of refugee pupils has brought innovations such as the solarisation of the school for the Digital Education Project supported by ProFuturo Foundation, the training of teachers on education innovations, and ICT*," Mr Boniface Ugar added.

*Refugee pupils and locals can study together at St Peter's Primary School Adagom, Cross River State, thanks to the Nigerian government granting refugees access to public schools. © UNHCR/Lucy Agiende.*

Refugees and host community pupils study and play together without any form of discrimination, as noted by Fortune Einge, a 15-year-old Cameroonian refugee pupil of St Peter's Primary School, Adagom. "*My best friend is from the host community. Sometimes I go to her house, and we read together. Teachers treat us the same*," Fortune said.

The Gross Enrolment Rate for Cameroonian refugee pupils in Nigeria is 44% and 33% at the primary and secondary school levels, respectively, which is below the national average. Currently, 13,964 (6,881M and 7,083F) refugee children remain out of school, due to their parent's inability to pay education-related costs.

The Government allows refugee children to sit for national examinations coordinated by the Ministry of Education to qualify them for higher institutions. However, only 1% of refugee youths are currently enrolled in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Many refugees are willing to further their education after completing secondary education. However, the low enrolment rate is caused by limited scholarship opportunities at the tertiary level for refugees.

To further enhance refugees' access to tertiary education, Cross River State University approved that refugees admitted into the institution should pay the same fees as nationals since 2019. Similarly, in 2023, UNHCR will partner with Benue State University and the University of Calabar to provide fee waivers to 20 qualified refugees. Benue State University will also allow refugees to pay the same fees as Nationals.

The Nigerian Government also contributed to complementary education pathways by issuing six (5M: 1F) Cameroonian refugees Convention Travel Documents to enable them to travel to Italy to pursue master's degree programs in various Italian universities, under the University Corridors for Refugees (UNICORE) scholarship. The Travel Documents promote refugees' access to solutions through education pathways.

*UNICORE Students (Cameroonian refugees) with the UNCHR Country Representative in Nigeria before their Departure to Italy. © UNHCR/Gabriel Adeyemo.*

## Development partnerships

### Inclusion of refugees in World Bank-funded Agro-Processing, Productivity Enhancement, and Livelihood Improvement Support

The World Bank has been supporting the Agro-Processing, Productivity Enhancement, and Livelihood Improvement Support (APPEALS) Project in five Nigerian states since 2017, including Cross River. The project aims to enhance the agricultural productivity of small and medium-scale farmers and improve value addition along priority value chains (Rice, Poultry, and Cocoa).

*Cameroonian refugees in their poultry pen at the Adagom Farm village established by UNHCR, on land provided by the government in Cross River State. © UNHCR/Lucy Agiende*

The project achieves its goals by supporting farmers' productivity and market linkages, facilitating the consolidation of agricultural products and cottage processing, connecting small and medium businesses to infrastructure networks and business services, and providing technical assistance and institutional support to beneficiaries and federal and state governments in value chain development. The objective is to increase productivity, production, processing, and marketing of targeted commodities, fostering job creation along value chains.

Following a GCR assessment visit to Cross River State in 2022, UNHCR initiated discussions with the WB-APPEALS Project team to explore the inclusion of

refugees. The Project agreed to include approximately 600 refugees in the poultry value chain in Ogoja and Ikom communities.

In this partnership, UNHCR will provide poultry infrastructure and form and register beneficiaries into Cooperative Societies, while the APPEALS Project will provide production inputs, training, and market linkages to facilitate the ventures' success.

The effort targets 72 individuals, comprising 70% refugees and 30% locals in the targeted communities with experience in poultry production, piloting the layers (egg production) sub-sector at the Adagom 1 Farm Village. The layers sub-sector was chosen based on its comparative advantage in Ogoja, where a good market for eggs seems to exist. Beneficiaries will receive additional training in layer production, point-of-lay birds, battery cages, and other inputs to utilize the poultry pens at the Farm village for production. Other refugee locations like Adagom 3, Ukende, and Ikom will be considered during the project's expansion phase.

## The Poverty Alleviation Coalition (PAC) in Nigeria

*Refugee entrepreneur at her market stall selling food condiments. © UNHCR/Emmanuel Campos*

A global coalition of UNHCR, the World Bank Partnership for Economic Inclusion (PEI), and 13 NGOs aims to increase self-reliance and economic and social inclusion of extremely poor refugees & host community members using the well-proven graduation approach from 2020-2025. A global pledge was made at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum to alleviate poverty for half a million households consisting of refugees and host communities as an objective within five years. The graduation approach combines social protection and development assistance to help extremely poor refugees and host communities to become self-reliant. The methodology is developed by BRAC and shows impressive results, with 95% of participants graduating out of poverty.

The PAC[1] employs parallel funding, where donors fund implementing NGOs directly. The overall objective defined by the PAC Nigeria is to contribute to durable solutions through sustainable livelihoods and economic inclusion for refugees, IDPs, returnees, and host communities in Nigeria. The Coalition will support Cameroonian refugees and host communities in the Cameroon refugee response. Using the graduation model, Women for Women International (WfW) aim to target 600 women-headed refugee households in Calabar Municipal, Calabar South and Akampa LGAs in Cross River State (WfW) over 24 months.

The actions will contribute towards sustainable livelihoods and self-reliance of refugees and host communities by facilitating them to graduate out of extreme poverty and humanitarian assistance through access to sustainable structures and self-help mechanisms.

[1] https://www.unhcr.org/poverty-alleviation-coalition.html

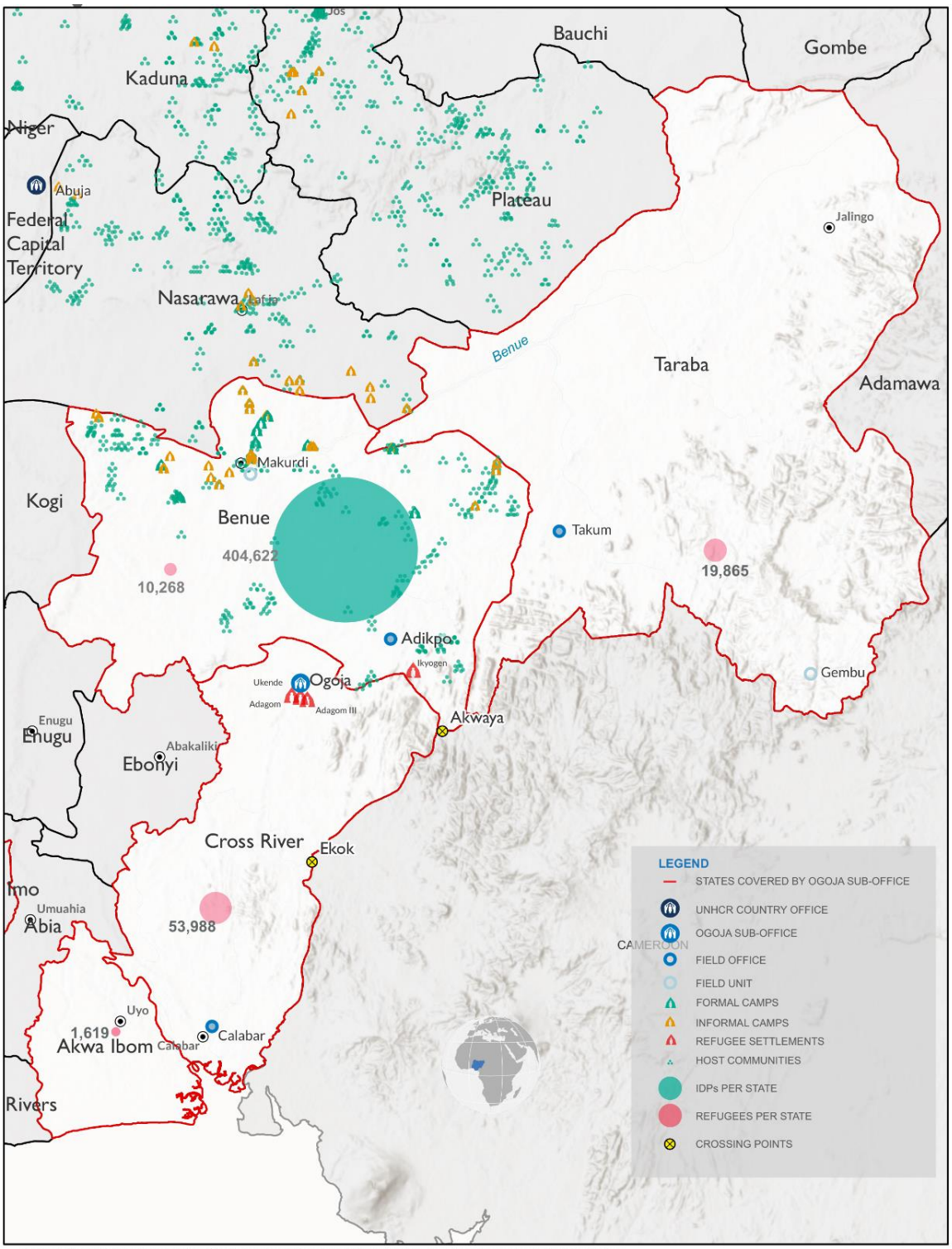
## GCR Updates by Sector

Current progress: ▲Good ► Developing ▼Weak

| Sector | Current Situation | Steps to take/ achieve |
|---|---|---|
| Education | ▲Inclusion of refugees in the national education system, with access to certification<br>▼Low enrolment and completion rates among school-aged refugee children<br>▼Not enough teachers<br>▼Large out-of-school population<br>▼Disincentives such as fees, lack of school feeding, discrimination | ▼School enrolment and completion of all school-aged refugees (SDG 4)<br>►Sufficient number of qualified, supported teachers delivering quality education to all |
| Health | ▲Refugees access the national health system, referral system functioning<br>►Health interventions fully funded by UNHCR<br>► Village health community-led drug revolving fund is supporting health system strengthening and medicines supply, but gaps still exist.<br>▼Inadequate health professionals and facilities, including solar electricity in some facilities. | ►Sustainable model whereby refugees self-finance health insurance<br>►Improved SDG3 indicators for refugees and host communities. |
| Economic Inclusion | ▲Refugees have the right to work<br>▲Informal businesses are common among the population<br>►Limited self-reliance among refugees, particularly those living in settlements<br>►Refugees face difficulties accessing formal jobs<br>▼Large-scale training or development programs not available in refugee-hosting locations<br>▼Limited or challenging access to land to pursue agricultural livelihoods | ▼Large-scale job creation programmes for refugees and hosts<br>▼Large-scale business development programmes for refugees and hosts<br>►Strengthened national employment services and opportunities<br>►Some efforts to allocate land by State governments to refugees for agricultural livelihoods, but insufficient/ requires significant advocacy/ mediation with host communities |
| Protection | ▲Refugees have freedom of movement and access to identification documents, including enrolment in the national identity management system<br>▲Refugees have access to national justice and policing systems<br>►Response to gender-based violence and child protection provided by UNHCR funded by humanitarian funding streams<br>▲Asylum system/ refugee status determination (RSD) processing is improving<br>▲Temporary Protection Status (two years)<br>▲SOPs on maintaining the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum approved | ►Improved access to functioning justice mechanisms<br>►Lack of discrimination due to refugee status<br>▼Refugees to be fully included in stronger national Child protection and SGBV systems and responses<br>►Enhanced referral systems for persons in need of international protection identified/caught up in mixed flows of persons<br>►Strengthening of RSD processing/review of RSD standard operating procedures<br>►Need for a longer/more permanent protection status<br>►Operationalization of the SOPs on maintaining the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum. |
| Social Protection | ▼Many refugees highly dependent on UNHCR support and cash-based interventions for food assistance<br>►Food security assessment of refugee population completed by WFP | ▲Refugees are included in the NASSCO universal register of beneficiaries (URB)<br>▼Vulnerable refugees to be supported through same government programmes as nationals, with diversified financing<br>►Strengthened social protection systems and safety nets for all in Nigeria |
| Data | ►Separate system to collect socioeconomic data on refugees, supported by UNHCR<br>▼No poverty analysis of refugees<br>▼Refugees missing in national surveys/ data systems | ▼Refugees are included in Household Surveys, data collection exercises, SDG indicators disaggregated by status and Age, Gender, Diversity (AGD)<br>►Refugees to be included in the Census |

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

**NIGERIA:** Cameroonian Refugee Population in ABCT States




*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply off icial endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.*

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# GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES IN NIGERIA

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