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GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM 2023

Mega Pledge on Economic Inclusion and Social Protection

REFUGEE SELF-RELIANCE INITIATIVE

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

PRM U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Kingdom of the Netherlands

IGAD

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK

International Labour Organization

ipa Innovations for Poverty Action

POVERTY ALLEVIATION COALITION

Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement

IFC International Finance Corporation WORLD BANK GROUP

unicef

OECD

Call to Collective Action

We face a time of unprecedented global forced displacement, driven by new emergencies and increasingly protracted and overlapping crises, and further exacerbated by limited access to durable solutions. In this context, self-reliance – defined as the social and economic ability of an individual, household, or community to meet essential needs in a sustainable manner and with dignity – is crucial as it lays the foundation for durable solutions and promotes resilience against future shocks. Economic inclusion[1] and social protection[2] are critical components of self-reliance, enabling refugees, other forcibly displaced and stateless people, and host communities to: provide for themselves and their families; work, including in the newly emerging digital economies that transcend land borders; use their skills and expertise; and contribute to local economies. This enables them to make decisions about their lives and futures, whether they stay in their country of asylum or origin, move to another, or return home.

Mega Pledge Goal

The Mega Pledge on Economic Inclusion and Social Protection aims to galvanize concrete commitments from a wide range of stakeholders to advance the self-reliance of refugees, other forcibly displaced and stateless people, and host communities, by addressing the specific and structural barriers and risks that they face while strengthening their resilience to shocks. Pledge commitments will support the implementation of and advocate for inclusive legal and policy frameworks to promote economic inclusion and social protection, including through policies and programmes needed to reduce the lifelong consequences of poverty and exclusion. Pledge commitments will be evidence-informed and supported by relevant programmes, technical assistance, and financing mechanisms.

The Mega Pledge will serve as a platform to promote synergies and matching opportunities between pledging entities and other stakeholders to fulfill implementation of pledges, share best practices, and aggregate resources, ensure tracking and accountability related to the thematic areas of economic inclusion and social protection.

The Mega Pledge recognises the generous commitments made at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum (GRF) by States and other stakeholders and seeks to build upon implementation and progress made to date with renewed support.

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[1] Economic Inclusion entails access to labor markets, assets, finance, entrepreneurship, and economic opportunities for all, including non-citizens in addition to vulnerable and under-served groups. Economic inclusion contributes to the self-reliance and resilience of refugees, empowering them to meet their needs in a safe, sustainable and dignified manner; avoids aid-dependency and negative coping mechanisms; contributes to their host economies; and prepares refugees for their future whether they return home, integrate in their country of asylum or resettle in a third country.

[2] Social protection refers to a nationally defined system of policies and programmes that provide equitable access to all people and protect them throughout their lives against poverty and risks to their livelihoods and well-being. For more details, see: the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (USP2030).

Pledge Thematic Areas

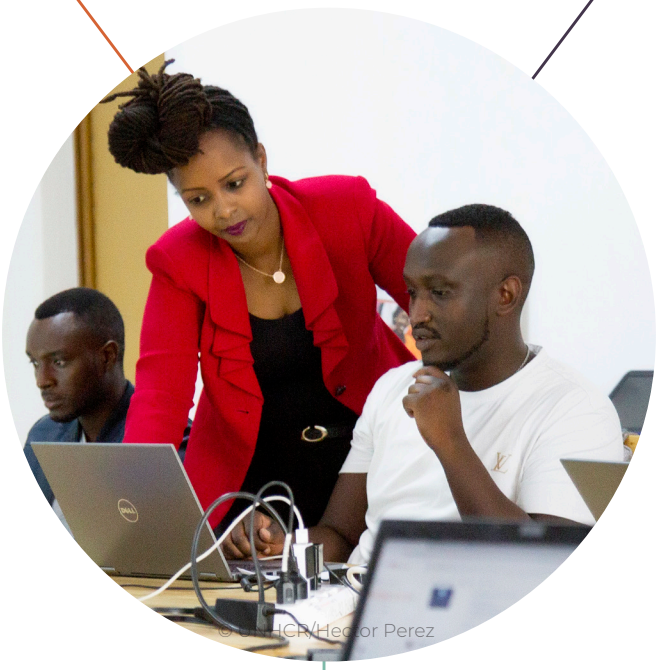
Supporters commit to taking specific actions in the following thematic areas:

Law & Policy

Pledges will build enabling environments in States to promote equal access to economic opportunities, employment, decent work, and inclusive government social protection systems.

Data and Evidence

Pledges will support strengthened planning, effective programming, and inclusive law and policy-making to advance measurement and build the evidence-base related to self-reliance, economic inclusion and social protection.



Programmes

Pledges will support socio-economic inclusion and enhance employability and employment, including through: strengthening pathways to inclusion in and adjustment of government social protection systems to address poverty and vulnerabilities across all stages of life; implementing programmes and providing technical assistance to facilitate self-reliance for people of all ages, genders, and diverse groups; creating decent employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in local and digital economies; and supporting local economic development through intersectional area-based approaches in urban and rural contexts.

Thematic Area: Law and Policy

Law and policy pledge commitments will build enabling environments in States to promote equal access to economic opportunities, employment, decent work, and inclusive government social protection systems. This includes effective access to the right to work, rights at work and social rights through access to labour markets and contributory and non-contributory social protection systems to address poverty and vulnerabilities across all stages of life. Pledges will support related rights such as freedom of movement, access to individual registration, documentation, and legal status, as well as access to productive land, education and training, bank accounts, and other financial services. Policy pledges will also assist States and local governments to implement national legislative frameworks, prepare for future needs and shocks, and promote strategies that mutually benefit refugees, other forcibly displaced and stateless people, and host communities.

Goal: Over the next four years, at least 15 States - with the support of relevant stakeholders - adopt and/or strengthen laws and policies supporting economic inclusion and social protection.

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Thematic Area: Programmes

Programmes pledge commitments will support socio-economic inclusion and enhance employability and employment, including through: strengthening pathways to inclusion in and adjustment of government social protection systems to address poverty and vulnerabilities across all stages of life; implementing programmes and providing technical assistance to facilitate self-reliance for people of all ages, genders, and diverse groups; creating decent employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in local and digital economies; and supporting local economic development through intersectional area-based approaches in urban and rural contexts. In addition, pledges will support the development of innovative, flexible, and predictable funding models to support inclusion and allow for sustainable funding to local governments and communities, including organizations led by forcibly displaced persons, alongside the expanded engagement of development partners and the private sector. Pledges may include linked outcomes for vulnerable groups including women, children, youth and adolescents, older persons, and persons with disabilities.

Goal: Over the next four years, reach one million refugees, forcibly displaced and stateless people, and members of host communities with holistic economic inclusion and broader social protection programming to effectively address poverty and vulnerabilities across all stages of life, resulting in expanded access to basic services necessary for human development, participation in economic activities, and enhanced employment and decent work opportunities in local and global markets.

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Thematic Area: Data and Evidence

Data and evidence pledge commitments will support strengthened planning, effective programming, and inclusive law and policy-making through the provision of tools, expertise, and data disaggregated by age, gender, and disability status to advance measurement and build the evidence-base related to self-reliance, economic inclusion and social protection outcomes.

Goal: Expand quality data and evidence to promote effective programmes and policies for economic inclusion and social protection that integrates the perspectives and needs of refugees, other forcibly displaced and stateless people, and host communities. Over the next four years, research will be undertaken to address key evidence and knowledge gaps identified through existing efforts and agendas on self-reliance, economic inclusion and social protection.

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Cross-Cutting Principles

Multi-stakeholder partnerships will facilitate advancement of economic inclusion and social protection through commitments that are supported with financial, technical and material support.	Efforts to promote economic inclusion and social protection outcomes will also include **support to host communities** and development of hosting areas, including infrastructure development, to promote mutually beneficial strategies.	Accountability is predicated on the **meaningful, intentional, and systematic inclusion of the expressed needs, concerns, capabilities and views of refugees, other forcibly displaced and stateless people, and host communities** – in their diversity – in the development and implementation of pledges.
Mainstreaming of age, gender and diversity and intersectional approaches and best practices will inform pledge development across all three thematic areas.	The principle of **non-discrimination and equality of opportunity and treatment,** in particular gender equality, will be championed across pledges.	**Gender-transformative economic inclusion and social protection pledges** and pledges targeting women and girls' empowerment and participation, should be considered as approaches to mitigate the risk of gender-based violence (GBV) and promote prevention outcomes.
Children should be considered as a critical component of human capital development pledges recognizing that they comprise 41% of the displaced population, with pledges – as appropriate – considering their future economic inclusion and contributions to economic growth and social cohesion in host States.	**Economic, environmental and social sustainability** considerations will guide economic inclusion and social protection approaches and pledges.	The design of economic inclusion and social protection programmes and implementation decisions will consider **context, feasibility, community preferences and market system dynamics,** including wider labour market implications.
Pledge commitments shall seek a **"do no harm" approach** and endeavor to assess risks and mitigate potential negative effects of their actions.		

Core Convening Group

This pledge is co-convened by the Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative (RSRI) and UNHCR, with the United States of America, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and Denmark. Technical co-conveners include Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Poverty Alleviation Coalition (PAC). Technical contributors include International Finance Corporation (IFC), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), UNICEF, and the World Bank-UNHCR Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement.

The Mega Pledge brings together different groups of friends and stakeholders that are committing to promoting the development of new and high-quality pledges or matching pledges ahead of the 2023 GRF via the dissemination of technical guidance and learnings, identification of pledge initiatives requiring additional support, and through facilitation and sharing of best practices.

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For updates, pledging technical guidance notes, contributing pledge initiatives, a calendar of events and information about how to get involved, visit:

refugeeselfreliance.org/megapledge2023