MID-TERM PROGRESS REVIEW ON THE UGANDA 2023 GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM PLEDGES

DECEMBER 2025

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AVSI	Association of Volunteers in International Service (an INGO)
AYAN	African Youth Action Network
BDS	Business Development Services
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (an INGO)
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
CTD	Conventional Travel Document
DDP	District Development Plan
ECD	Early Childhood Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (UK)
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Development Agency)
GoU	Government of Uganda
GRF	Global Refugee Forum
HDP Nexus	Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus
HINGO	Humanitarian International Non-Governmental Organization
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MEMD	Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
MoWE	Ministry of Water and Environment
MSMEs	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
MSD	Market-Systems Development
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDP IV	National Development Plan IV
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PCMS	Partner Coordination and Monitoring System
PSFU	Private Sector Foundation Uganda

PSES	Private Sector Engagement Strategy
QuAM	Quality Assurance Measurement tool
REF	Refugee Engagement Forum
RIF	Refugee Investment Facility
RHD	Refugee-Hosting Districts
RLOs	Refugee-Led Organizations
RRP	Refugee Response Plan
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SOLCO	(Partnership for) Solar E-Cooking
SRI	Self Reliance Index
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SRM	Self-Reliance Model
SRS	Self-Reliance Strategy
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UCRRP	Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
URRI	Uganda Refugee Resilience Initiative
UWS	Uganda Water Services
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WESRRP	Water and Environment Sector Refugee Response Plan
WFP	World Food Programme

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This Mid-Term Progress Review on the Ugandan 2023 Global Refugee Forum Pledges was made possible through the collective commitment and collaboration of a wide range of stakeholders dedicated to advancing Uganda's progressive refugee response model.

First and foremost, we extend our sincere gratitude to the Government of Uganda, under the leadership of H.E. the President and the Office of the Prime Minister, for its unwavering commitment to refugee protection and inclusion. We particularly acknowledge the dedication of the CRRF Secretariat and the various line ministries - including the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development; Ministry of Water and Environment; Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development; Ministry of Local Government; Ministry of Education and Sports; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries; Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives; and Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development - for spearheading the implementation of the GRF pledges and providing invaluable data and insights.

We are deeply grateful to UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, for its steadfast partnership and technical support throughout the stocktaking process, and to the United Nations Country Team in Uganda for its collective engagement under the UN Common Pledge 2.0.

Our appreciation extends to all development and humanitarian partners, including bilateral donors, international and national non-governmental organizations, refugee-led organizations, and the private sector, for their contributions to the pledges and their active participation in the national consultations. Special thanks are due to the Government of Japan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for co-convening the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Forum, which enriched the dialogue on integrated approaches.

We acknowledge the critical role played by refugee and host community representatives, including the Refugee Engagement Forum (REF) and District Engagement Forums (DEF), whose voices and experiences are central to shaping an inclusive and sustainable response.

Finally, we recognize the dedicated efforts of the CRRF Secretariat, UNHCR teams, the German Development Cooperation (GIZ), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the technical consulting teams in coordinating the comprehensive data collection, analysis, and successful organization of the National Stocktaking Meeting

in November 2025. This report is a testament to what can be achieved through solidarity, shared responsibility, and a collective resolve to uphold Uganda's model of refugee inclusion, even in times of significant challenge. Together, we reaffirm our commitment to fulfilling the pledges made and to building a future where both refugees and host communities can live in dignity, resilience, and peace.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Uganda has long been recognized as a global leader in refugee protection, hosting one of the largest refugee populations in the world with a progressive policy framework that promotes the rights and self-reliance of those fleeing conflict and persecution. This leadership was reaffirmed at the **2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF),** where the Government of Uganda, serving as a co-convenor, made a series of ambitious, forward-looking pledges to promote the sustainability of its Refugee Response. These commitments were structured across five key thematic areas:

1. Increasing Resilience and Self-Reliance;
2. Addressing Environment, Climate Change and Energy Challenges;
3. Localising the Refugee Response: Strengthening the Role of Local and National Responders;
4. Securing Durable Solutions for Refugees, and;
5. Transition Management - Pathways to Sustainable Burden-Sharing.

Two years onwards, Uganda's pledges remain as relevant as ever. Yet their implementation is being severely tested by the current context. To date, Uganda is hosting nearly 2 million refugees, making it the largest refugee hosting country in Africa. This number is likely to further increase in 2026. At the same time, the country is facing an unprecedented collapse in funding for the refugee response. As a result, many partners have had to prioritise lifesaving and emergency interventions - potentially at the cost of longer-term, development-oriented solutions.

This ***"Mid-Term Progress Review on the Ugandan 2023 Global Refugee Forum Pledges"*** report documents the findings of a pivotal national consultation convened by the Government of Uganda (GoU) in collaboration with UNHCR from 4th to 5th November 2025 at Speke Resort Munyonyo, as well as the data collection conducted by the CRRF Secretariat in collaboration with UNHCR on partner's contributions to the pledges. As the first stocktaking exercise of its kind in the region, the meeting was held to assess the progress achieved in the two years since the GRF 2023, critically examine the challenges hindering implementation, and chart a collective path forward. The stocktaking meeting was complemented by a **Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus Forum** held on 6th of November by GoU, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to showcase Uganda's achievements in implementing the HDP-Nexus, identify challenges and promote further initiatives.

The meetings brought together a wide range of stakeholders, including government ministries, UN agencies, international and national NGOs, development partners, the private sector, and refugee representatives, to review data, identify challenges, lessons learnt and good practices, and chart a path forward.

Progress was reported in all five thematic areas:

THEMATIC AREA 1: CREATING RESILIENCE AND SELF-RELIANCE: Promoting the self-reliance and resilience of refugees and host communities is at the heart of the commitments of the Government of Uganda and its partners. Uganda has made substantial progress towards its target of creating 300,000 viable economic opportunities for refugees and host communities: to date, over 223,463 economic opportunities have been generated. A notable success has been the development and launch of a government-led, standardized National Self-Reliance Index (SRI). The SRI will ensure that all programmes aimed at fostering self-reliance are guided by a unified measurement approach, allowing for more effective decision-making and targeted interventions. Progress has also been made towards the development of relevant labour market skills and the transition towards employment through the establishment of ten job centres and satellite stations and the provision of over 12,000 scholarships for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Efforts were made to increase sustainable agricultural productivity: over 93,000 smallholder farmers in refugee-hosting districts were supported to adopt climate-smart agricultural practices and over 20 agricultural value chains were developed.

The highlighted achievements are the result of leveraging synergies and strong cooperation with partners. The Self-Reliance Model and Graduation approaches supported by partners such as the World Food Programme, BRAC and AVSI have yielded significant results in improving refugees' food security, income and psychosocial wellbeing and have the potential to be further scaled up. The same holds true for market-based approaches promoted through initiatives such as the Dutch-funded PROSPECTS programme and the Uganda Refugee Resilience Initiative (URRI), funded by Denmark.

THEMATIC AREA 2: CLIMATE, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT: Another strategic objective is to integrate refugees into Uganda's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), aiming to reduce carbon emissions and ensure access to sustainable energy by 2027.

The pledge has seen substantial progress, in particular with regards to the integration of climate, energy and environment-related issues into ministerial policies and plans, ecosystem management and the access to clean cooking solutions.

Through strong partnerships, including close collaboration with multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the Solar Electric Cooking Partnership (SOLCO) and EcoAdapt, the **transition toward clean cooking technologies and the restoration of degraded ecosystems** exceeded set targets. Over 34,000 households were supported to access user-friendly clean cooking solutions and over 4,100 hectares of ecosystems were restored. Going forward, efforts will be intensified to include refugees into the NDC 3.0 and the NAP, while blended financing models will be further pursued to further unlock global climate finance and advance global climate goals.

THEMATIC AREA 3: LOCALISATION OF THE REFUGEE RESPONSE: Strengthening the role of local and national responders is high on the agenda of the Government and its partners to enhance the sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the Refugee Response. To this end, a **National Localisation Strategy** is underway and localisation provisions have been embedded into Uganda's National Development Plan IV. To ensure accountability, localisation criteria have been integrated into the Partner Coordination and Monitoring System (PCMS), requiring partners to declare resources directed toward national actors.

A number of partners have incorporated **localisation provisions** into their country strategies and plans and provided institutional capacity development to over 1,100 local and national actors. Promising initiatives include secondment models, through which INGOs such as Save the Children embed staff within local organisations to facilitate a transfer of technical skills.

With the support from CARE, efforts have been made to develop a common framework for **due diligence processes** through an adapted version of the Quality Assurance Measurement tool (QuAM). The QuAM plus has the potential to become an accepted assessment tool that would greatly ease and streamline assessments for future funding opportunities. As a result of Uganda's enabling environment, **refugees are actively involved in the response:** the Refugee Engagement Forum (REF) has proven to be a successful model for sustained refugee participation in national decision-making, while refugee-led organisations (RLOs) are playing a crucial role in promoting peaceful co-existence and contributing to Uganda's national economy and social protection systems. Going forward, the focus will be on strengthening monitoring and accountability systems to reach the goal of channelling 25% of funding to national and local actors.

THEMATIC AREA 4: DURABLE SOLUTIONS: Promoting Durable Solutions presents a critical pillar of Uganda's refugee response. With a strategic horizon set for 2027, the government aims to foster socio-economic rights, ensure access to legal identity, and support peace-building processes that facilitate voluntary repatriation.

The success of this pledge is however contingent upon regional political stability and successful peace dialogues. Voluntary repatriation remains the most desirable yet challenging outcome and is currently only deemed feasible for Burundian refugees. Since December 2023, 3,810 Burundian refugees have returned. 7,222 individuals have benefited from resettlement programmes since December 2023, although the resettlement quotas have sharply declined. On a positive note, **Complementary Pathways** have increased, with **14,208 individuals** benefiting from third-country education, employment programs or family reunification.

In order to facilitate access to rights and socio-economic inclusion of refugees, the pledge has been focusing on the critical area of **civil registration and documentation.** Since the last Global refugee Forum, the Government of Uganda has issued over **250,000 birth certificates** and **147,000 Conventional Travel Documents.**

Going forward, the Government of Uganda aims to further strengthen regional engagement through bodies such as IGAD and the East African Community and enhance cross-border initiatives.

THEMATIC AREA 5: TRANSITION MANAGEMENT/INTEGRATION OF SERVICES:

Another priority area is the **smooth and phased integration of services** into government-management with support from partners. Many education, health and water facilities in refugee hosting districts were established in humanitarian emergencies and have been in operation for decades.

Recognizing that parallel, partner-managed systems are not sustainable in the long-run, Uganda has been shifting to a development-oriented, integrated approach to service provision through so-called **Transition Management.** Under the leadership of the Ministry of Finance (MoFPED) and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Uganda has developed a **National Transition Strategy (NTS)** to guide this process.

Substantial progress has been made with regards to the transition of services in the water sector, including through support from the German Development Cooperation for the rehabilitation and hand-over of water supply schemes to national utilities. The **biggest challenge to the planned transition management is the current financing crisis.** A large portion of human resources in the education and health sector in refugee settlements are still being financed through partners. Recent funding cuts from key donors risk jeopardizing the phased approach and the principle of responsibility-sharing, on which the idea of Transition Management is based.

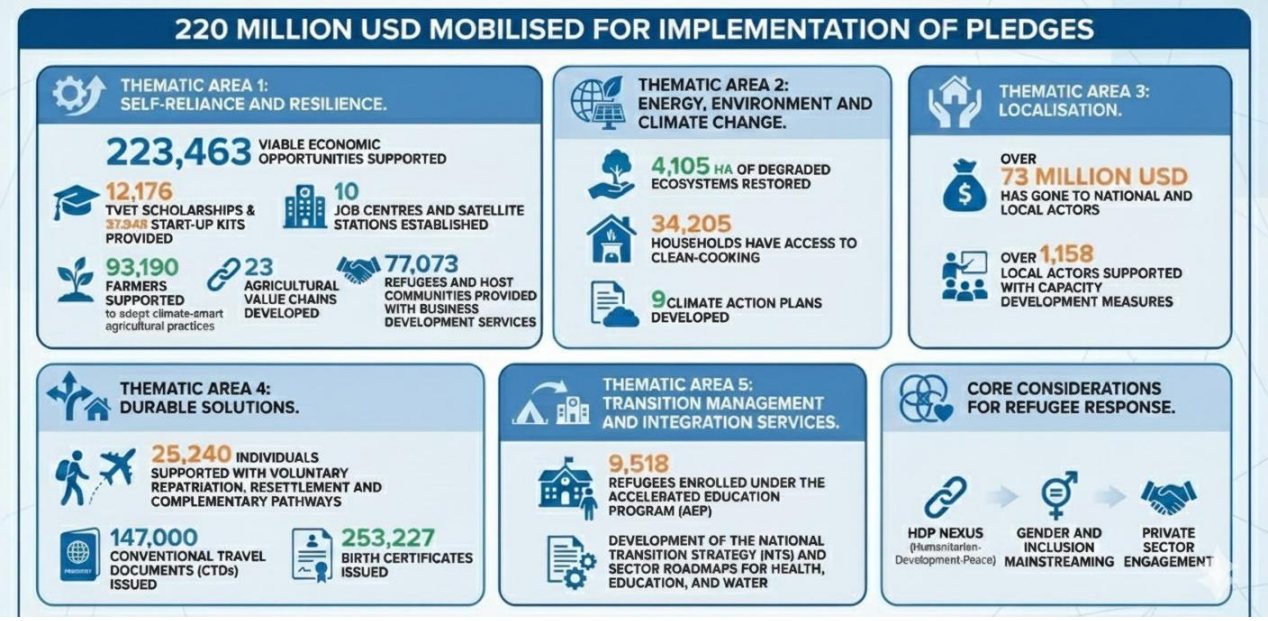
In order to ensure the success of transition management, Government and partners

further need to discuss the medium-term and long-term strategy to sustainably finance running costs of critical health, education and water services in refugee settings.

Recommendations Going forward:

In the next two years leading up the Global Refugee Forum 2027, Uganda and its partners will focus on scaling-up proven approaches to support refugees' and host communities' self-reliance and resilience and driving forward the implementation and resourcing of strategies such as the Localisation and Transition Strategies. An additional effort needs to be made on engaging with non-traditional actors, including the private sector. Importantly, the focus needs to be on strengthening regional approaches to displacement and conflict prevention to support durable solutions and create conducive conditions for voluntary return.

This report serves as both a testament to the collective resolve and as a candid, evidence-based roadmap. By taking stock of our shared progress, this document aims to reinvigorate partnerships, enhance accountability, and accelerate action towards fulfilling Uganda's GRF commitments, ensuring that the nation's model of refugee inclusion remains a beacon of solidarity and shared responsibility. Finally, it is a call for more international responsibility-sharing, including through expanding resettlement options and complementary pathways.



1

INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

The **Global Refugee Forum (GRF)** is a key international gathering, convened every four years by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to support the practical implementation of the **Global Compact on Refugees (GCR),** which seeks to transform the way the world responds to refugee situations and leverage multilateral and multistakeholder action. The GCR has four main objectives: (1) Easing pressure on host countries (2) Enhancing opportunities for self-reliance, (3) Expanding access to third-country solutions and (4) Supporting the conditions in countries of origin for the safe and dignified return of those who have fled.

As a **co-convenor of the GRF** in December 2023, Uganda reaffirmed its position as a global leader in refugee protection and made a series of ambitious, forward-looking **pledges across five key thematic areas:** 1) Increasing Resilience and Self-Reliance, 2) Addressing Environment, Climate Change and Energy Challenges, 3) Localising the Refugee Response by Strengthening the Role of Local and National Responders, 4) Securing Durable Solutions for Refugees, and 5) Transition Management, meaning the smooth and phased transfer from parallel, partner-managed systems and services to a system sustainably managed by Government with support from partners.

These pledges represent a comprehensive national strategy, spearheaded by various line ministries and implemented through a government-wide approach, to strengthen the sustainability of Uganda's refugee response. They are further bolstered by **92 matching pledges from partners,** creating a multi-stakeholder framework for action.

In December 2025, the **GRF Progress Review Meeting** is taking place in Geneva, to:

1. Take stock of progress made since the 2023 GRF towards more equitable and predictable responsibility sharing including through the pledges and commitments made;
2. Identify challenges and where further engagement might be needed; and
3. Maintain the momentum towards achieving the objectives of the GCR.

Ahead of the international GRF Progress Review Meeting in Geneva, the Government of Uganda (GoU) has undertaken national efforts to take stock of the implementation of both Government pledges and the matching pledges and contributions made by partners.

This includes a pivotal **National Stocktaking Meeting** held from 4th to 5th November 2025 at Speke Resort Munyonyo, as well as data collection conducted by the

Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) Secretariat in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) in collaboration with UNHCR. As the first stocktaking exercise of its kind in the region, the meeting was convened to assess the progress achieved in the two years since the GRF 2023, critically examine the challenges hindering implementation, and chart a collective path forward.

The stocktaking meeting was complemented by the **Humanitarian Development and Peace-Nexus (HDP-Nexus) Forum** held on 6th of November by the GoU, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to showcase Uganda's achievements in HDP-Nexus, identify challenges and promote further initiatives. The HDP-Nexus is considered a method that takes a comprehensive approach to Uganda's five thematic areas, supporting their implementation by promoting cross-sectoral and whole-of-society approaches.

1.1. CONTEXTUAL AND POLICY BACKGROUND

As of November 2025, Uganda is hosting **1,967,186 refugees and asylum seekers,** making it the largest refugee hosting country in Africa. The majority of refugees are from South Sudan (52.4%), followed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (32.9%) and Sudan (4.7%). According to projections by UNHCR, it is expected that numbers will further increase by another 200,000 refugees in 2026.

Uganda has been internationally recognized for its **progressive model** of hosting refugees. The Refugee Act (2006)[1] and Refugee Regulations (2010)[2] guarantee refugees the right to work and freedom of movement. Section 29(1)(b) of the 2006 Act allows refugees the right to engage in gainful employment, including self-employment, while Section 29(1)(c) allows them to establish businesses and trade in the economy.[3] Section 30 of the 2006 Act further enshrines the right to movement for refugees, allowing them to reside outside of designated settlements, if they can sustain themselves.[4] Refugees further receive a plot of land to live and farm on.

In 2017, Uganda further advanced its refugee response by adopting the **Comprehensive**

1 The Refugee Act, 2006, available online at https://ulii.org/akn/ug/act/2006/21/eng@2006-08-04/source.

2 Refworld, 2025, 'The Refugee Regulations, 2010,' available online at https://www.refworld.org/legal/decreees/natlegbod/2010/en/102127, accessed Aug 2025.

3 The Refugee Act, 2006. Also see the Refugee Regulations, 2010 which further reinforce the right to work, emphasizing refugees' right to freedom from discrimination in employment opportunities.

4 Ibid.

Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) as one of the first countries globally.[5] The CRRF is an outcome of the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants, and calls for more predictable and equitable responsibility sharing, as well as a holistic, multi-stakeholder approach to refugee management. It was integrated into the Global Compact on Refugees in 2018.

The GoU has put in place a number of national arrangements to implement the GCR and the CCRF, including the CRRF Steering Group and the CRRF Secretariat. The CRRF Steering Group is the highest-level decision-making body for the implementation of the CRRF, and brings together relevant sections and levels of government, humanitarian, development, civil society and private sector partners, as well as refugees and host communities themselves. The CRRF Secretariat supports the CRRF Steering Group and is responsible for multi-stakeholder coordination.

Through government-led **Refugee Response Plans (RRPs)** for education, health, water and environment, jobs and livelihoods, and sustainable energy, as well as the integration of refugees into the **National Development Plans (NDP) III and IV,** Uganda is promoting a government-led and development-oriented response. The five pledges made at the GRF are spearheaded by different line ministries in line with their respective mandates, further underscoring Uganda's whole-of-government approach.

Uganda's internationally lauded model is however currently being severely tested by an u**nprecedented collapse in funding.** This is not a temporary gap but a structural deficit, with 67% of UNHCR's global budget unfunded. In 2025, only 22% of the Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan (UCRRP) was funded. Within this current funding situation, even basic support is currently no longer guaranteed. In May 2025, the World Food Programme (WFP) had to take 1 million refugees out of food assistance and acute malnutrition has increased from 5.4% to 7.8%. Thousands of teachers and health workers in refugee settlements risk being unfunded from January 2026 onwards, which would result in disastrous health, learning and development outcomes, if not urgently addressed.

The GRF Progress Review Meeting is thus timely to take stock of shared progress and challenges, reinvigorate partnerships, enhance accountability and accelerate action towards fulfilling Uganda's GRF commitments, ensuring that the nation's model of refugee inclusion remains a beacon of solidarity and shared responsibility.

5 OPM, 2017, 'Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework Uganda,' available online at https://opm.go.ug/comprehensive-refugee-response-framework-uganda/, accessed July 2025.

UNHCR

2

METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH TO THE STOCKTAKING

2. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH TO THE STOCKTAKING

The stocktaking process for the GRF pledges in Uganda was conducted through an extensive multi-stakeholder consultation. This inclusive approach engaged government ministries, UN agencies, development partners, financial institutions, the private sector, INGO and NGOs, as well as refugee-led organizations to collectively assess progress, identify challenges, and chart a pathway forward.

2.1. SURVEY

To quantitatively evaluate progress against the specific, measurable targets of the GRF pledges, the CRRF Secretariat, in collaboration with UNHCR, administered an online survey to all pledging entities that made commitments for Uganda, as well as to non-pledging entities directly involved in delivering activities aligned with the GoU pledges. The questionnaire specifically asked for contributions towards the thematic areas of Resilience and Self-Reliance, Energy, Environment and Climate Change and Localisation. Progress towards Durable Solutions and Integration of Services (Transition Management) is currently mainly tracked by the Government in collaboration with UNHCR and was therefore excluded from the survey sent to partners.

The survey also gathered information on financial contributions to map commitments and disbursements against pledged amounts, identifying funding gaps and progress in resource mobilization. In total, 44 entities responded, including development partners, international and national NGOs, UN agencies, and foundations. Relevant ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) further provided supplementary data to ensure completeness.

To verify the accuracy of the collected information, a meeting was convened on 28th of October 2026 with lead implementing MDAs and organizations. Task teams for each thematic area reviewed and validated the data ahead of the stocktaking meeting. The verified dataset was then analyzed to assess the status of each pledge, categorizing them as “On Track,” “Not on Track,” “Target Achieved,” “Target Exceeded,” or “No Progress.” Pledges were considered “On Track” if at least 50 percent of the target had been achieved by the midterm point (2023–2025) of the 2023–2027 implementation period, while those with no implementation were classified as “No Progress.”

This quantitative analysis provided the empirical foundation for the stocktaking exercise, enabling an objective assessment of achievements and highlighting areas

where significant gaps remain. However, several limitations were noted. Despite efforts to reach all pledging entities, as well as active development partners within the CRRF Development Partners Group, not all actors reported. Some pledging entities were not based in Uganda and could not be reached or did not respond, and several non-pledging actors contributing to pledge implementation did not submit data.

While efforts were made to cross-check entries and minimize duplications, the involvement of multiple actors across government, development, and humanitarian sectors means that the possibility of double counting in some instances cannot be fully excluded. Furthermore, not all data was disaggregated by gender or by refugee and host community status. Consequently, the dataset cannot be considered fully complete, though efforts will continue to improve coverage and accuracy over the next two years in preparation for the 2027 GRF meeting.

2.2. MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

In addition to the survey and reports provided by MDAs, the GRF National Stocktaking Meeting, as well as the HDP Nexus Forum, served as a key source of qualitative data through presentations by lead MDAs, sharing of good practices and lessons learnt by partners, panel discussions, and plenary sessions. This process enabled the collection of rich qualitative insights. At the core of the methodology was an extensive and inclusive consultation process that engaged the full spectrum of actors in Uganda's refugee response. The meeting structure facilitated plenary discussions, thematic deep-dives, and interactive panels, creating a platform for dialogue, shared learning, and collaborative problem-solving.

Beyond data collection, the stocktaking meeting strengthened government ownership and provided a multi-stakeholder forum for discussing progress, challenges, gaps, and opportunities. It also served as a critical preparatory step for the global GRF progress review in December 2025, while fostering momentum among all actors in Uganda's refugee response to jointly commit to accelerated implementation over the next two years. Participants included representatives from the following entities:

Government of Uganda	UN Agencies
Representatives from lead ministries across all five GRF thematic areas, including the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD), Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives (MTIC), Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) and Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MOFPED)	The UN Country Team, led by the Resident Coordinator, with substantive contributions from UNHCR, WFP, UNDP, UN Women, FAO, WHO, UNEP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNCDF, IOM and ILO, on the UN Common Pledge 2.0.
Development and Donor Partners	**Implementing Partners**
Bilateral donors and International Financial Institutions	International and National Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs/ NNGOs), Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), and the Uganda Red Cross Society.
Private Sector and Financial Institutions	**Refugee and Host Community Representatives**
Representatives from business associations, impact investors, and commercial banks	Refugee-Led Organizations (RLOs) and host community leaders, ensuring their voices were central to the assessment.

This structure facilitated plenary discussions, thematic deep-dives, and panel sessions, creating a platform for candid dialogue, shared learning, and collective problem-solving.

2.3. SYNTHESIS AND VALIDATION

The findings from the different methodological streams were synthesized into the draft

outcome report. Key findings and recommendations were presented and validated in a plenary session on the final day of the stocktaking meeting, ensuring collective ownership and accuracy before being finalized.

This robust, multi-faceted methodology ensured that the Uganda GRF Stocktaking Report is a credible, evidence-based, and inclusive document that truly reflects the collective effort and provides a clear roadmap for accelerated action towards the 2027 goals.

3

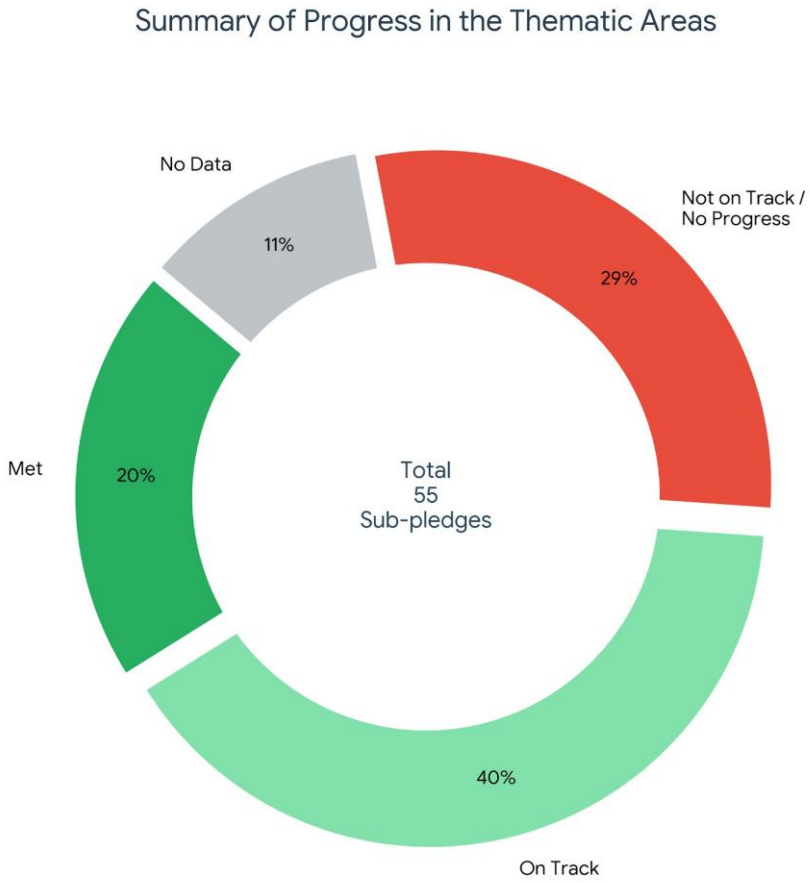
OUTCOMES OF THE STOCKTAKING: PROGRESS, CHALLENGES, AND THE WAY FORWARD

3. OUTCOMES OF THE STOCKTAKING: PROGRESS, CHALLENGES, AND THE WAY FORWARD

This section forms the core analytical body of the report, structured around Uganda's five key pledge areas from the 2023 Global Refugee Forum. It synthesizes the progress assessed during the national stocktaking meeting, identifies critical challenges and gaps, and provides actionable recommendations to accelerate implementation towards the 2027 goals.

Under each of the five pledges made per thematic area, the Government of Uganda made a number of sub-pledges that contribute to the achievement of the overall pledge. In total, 55 sub-pledges were made, of which 25 relating to the thematic area of resilience and self-reliance, 22 to the area of Energy, Environment and Climate Change, 3 to Localisation, 3 to Durable Solutions and 2 to Transition Management.

Uganda is on track to achieve its GRF targets by 2027, with 11 (20%) targets already met and 22 (40%) on track. However, 16 targets (29%) are not on track or have seen no progress. 6 indicators did not have any data to assess progress. Sections 3.1 to 3.5 present details of performance in each thematic area.



3.1. THEMATIC AREA 1: INCREASING SELF-RELIANCE AND RESILIENCE

Uganda pledges to create a minimum of 300,000 viable economic opportunities for refugees and host communities by 2027. This shall be realized by including refugees in agricultural value chains, increasing agricultural production and productivity, enabling private sector investments, promoting graduation and market systems development approaches, increasing access to formal and non-formal vocational skills training, promoting the development of market relevant skills and employment creation.

Promoting self-reliance of refugees and host communities, which UNHCR defines as ***"the social and economic ability of an individual, a household or a community to meet its essential needs in a sustainable manner and with dignity"*** is at the heart of the commitments of GoU, as well as humanitarian and development partners.

Under the GRF Thematic Area 1, the Government of Uganda is shifting from humanitarian aid to more sustainable economic inclusion. Led by the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development (MGLSD), in collaboration with the Ministries of Agriculture (MAAIF), Education (MoES), and Trade (MTIC), the primary objective is to create 300,000 viable economic opportunities for refugees and host communities by 2027.

As of November 2025, the pledge is classified as being "On Track," having achieved 79% of its employment target. As a result of measures put in place by the GoU through lead MDAs, as well as over 20 initiatives by development partners, ***223,463 economic opportunities have been generated, benefiting 124,334 refugees and 96,451 host community members.*** Gender-disaggregated estimates indicate that approximately 56% of these opportunities benefited women and 44% benefited men.

Number of Viable Economic Opportunities Created

Agency name	Host - F	Host - M	Host Total	Refugee - F	Refugee - M	Refugee Total	Overall Total (Refugees + Host communities)
African Youth Action Network-AYAN	630	270	900	1,260	840	2,100	3,000
AVSI Foundation			69,702			85,191	154,893
DanChurchAid (DCA)	3,610	2,477	6,086	2,785	2,104	4,889	10,977
Danish Refugee Council	395	450	845	438	515	953	1,798
Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Uganda			379	784	679	1,463	1,842

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	810	440	1,250	2,700	1,480	4,180	5,430
German Embassy Kampala							2,000
International Organization for Migration				1		1	1
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)			89			177	1,026
Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Uganda							110
Kampala Capital City Authority	131	112	243	156	133	289	532
Mercy Corps Uganda	1,911	600	2,511	7,078	1,187	8,265	10,776
Royal Danish Embassy			7,895			3,225	11,120
Uganda Biodiversity Trust Fund (UBF)	7	7	5	5	7	7	7
UN Capital Development Fund	864	216	1,080	576	144	720	1,800
UN Women	35	0	35	295	23	318	353
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	1,591	860	2,451	3,713	1,591	5,721	8,172
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)				15		15	15
WANA Energy Solutions	39	39	80	60	59	120	161
World Food Programme	1,160	1,740	2,900	4,020	2,680	6,700	9,600
Total	**11,183**	**7,211**	**96,451**	**23,885**	**11,442**	**124,334**	**223,464**

In order to achieve the overall pledge to create viable economic opportunities, MGLSD, MAAIF, MTIC and MoES made 25 sub-pledges. Of 22 pledges of which data are available, 6 have been achieved, 9 are on track, while 7 are not on track (for more details on progress and key achievements, as well as a detailed breakdown of progress per indicator, see Chapter 3.1.1 and Annex 1).

The achievements are a result of leveraging synergies and strong cooperation with partners who have provided targeted support for sustainable livelihoods through practical approaches.

Among others, the following partners were identified as contributing to the thematic area of resilience and self-reliance (as not all partners responded to the questionnaire, the list is not exhaustive):

DONORS / DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS
European Union (EU) and ECHO, Governments of Austria, Belgium through the Belgian Development Agency Enabel, Denmark, Germany (including through the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)), Italy through the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), Japan through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Kingdom of the Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom through the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Royal Danish Embassy, Switzerland through Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the World Bank. Foundations (among others): Mastercard Foundation, Novo Nordisk Foundation, Hilton Foundation, LEGO Foundation, IKEA Foundation
UN ORGANISATIONS
IOM, UNCDF, UN Women, FAO, UNDP, WFP, ILO, UNICEF, UNFPA
(I)NGOS
AVSI, Dan Church Aid (DCA), Lutheran World Federation (LWF), IRC, Norwegian Refugee Council, Danish Refugee Council (DRC), PLAN, Caritas Uganda, Humanity and Inclusion, Save the Children Uganda, Mercy Corps Uganda, Give Directly, NAWAD, Jesuit Refugee Service, Malteser International, Last Mile Climate
RLOS
Community Empowerment for Creative Innovation (CECI), African Youth Action Network (AYAN),
OTHERS
Kampala Capital City Authority, Private Sector Foundation Uganda, WANA Energy Solutions, Bayrisches Bildungswerk, Uganda Biodiversity Fund, Cities Alliance

Good examples include initiatives such as the Self-Reliance Model (SRM) implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP), the Graduation Model implemented by partners such as BRAC, AVSI, and Village Enterprise, among others:

Good Practice: The Self-Reliance Model and the Graduation Approach

WFP's Self-Reliance Model (SRM) was launched in January 2024 with funding from FCDO, EU, Germany, Austria, Norway, Ireland. During the last two years, 9,698 participants of Cohort-1 and their **family members (48,500 individuals),** which included 6,782 refugees and 2,916 host community members, have been supported under the programme providing them with a comprehensive support package that includes: monthly cash assistance, livelihood diversification, financial literacy, behavioural change and positive mindset change communication, NutriCash assistance to over 1,200 mothers and their babies and Social Cash Transfer to Elderly Refugees. The programme is going to achieve an important milestone in the next couple of months whereby **5,598 SRM participants (28,000 individuals) will complete the first phase of graduation,** which is the phasing out of humanitarian cash assistance. The participants and their family members (both refugees and host community members) will continue to receive critical support through mentoring and coaching for one more year, which aims to consolidate the progress made, sustain their advancement toward improved livelihood opportunities, and foster cohesion between refugees and the host population.

Key results:

- Significant **improvement in overall food security,** with the acceptable food consumption score rising from **35% to 54%**
- The share of SRM beneficiaries avoiding negative coping strategies increased from **13% to 30%.**
- **74% feel safe** pursuing social, economic, and educational opportunities.

The Graduation Approach, implemented by partners such as AVSI with funding from FCDO, AICS, USAID, ILO, The IKEA Foundation and EKN similarly follow a comprehensive, sequenced and timebound approach. With 80 evaluations conducted in 37 countries, AVSI has strong evidence for the positive impact of the model on participants' income and revenue, assets, consumption, savings and psychosocial wellbeing, among others.

Why It Works:

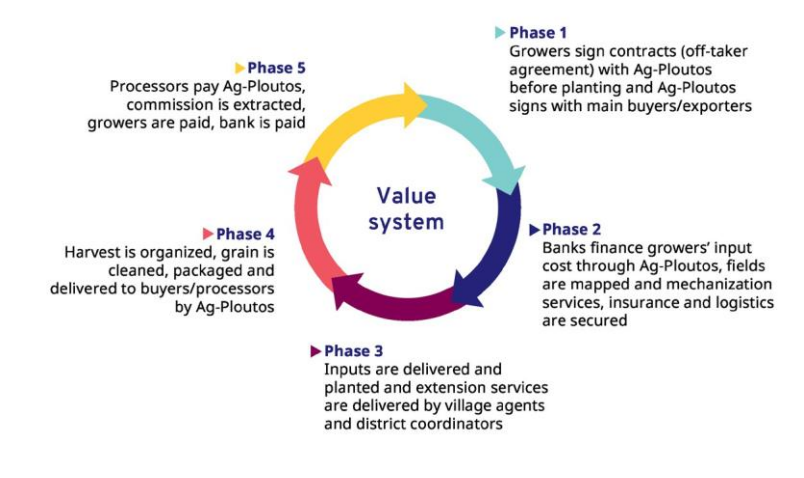
The model works due to its layered and sequenced approach and its mutually

reinforcing components that focus on promoting diversification of livelihoods, digital financial inclusion and positive mindset development. This is complemented by social protection activities, i.e. by providing participants with a temporary, cash-based assistance.

According to lessons learnt from AVSI, the component of asset transfer is critical. It is moreover important to target the whole household, apply group coaching methods (which is 11% cheaper) and diversify livelihood opportunities. The optimum timing for graduation programmes are between 18 – 24 months. Graduation models are cost-effective: according to WFP, it takes 1,500 USD per household (15 Million USD for 10,000 households) to engage on a pathway towards self-reliance for 3 years, with return on investment starting to materialize after the 4th year. Graduation approaches are also ideal to enable partners to work in a consortium approach.

Partners are also increasingly adopting a market systems development (MSD) approach, which works by promoting two complementary strategies: a push approach, which focuses on preparing vulnerable groups for the market through training and financial literacy and a pull approach that aims to attract market actors to Refugee Hosting Districts (RHDs) through de-risking innovations, co-investments, and improved market information:

Good Practice: ILO PROSPECTS



Market-systems development projects (MSD) have the potential to play a crucial role in facilitating the shift towards more sustainable economies. In the framework of the

Dutch-funded Partnership for Improving Prospects for Forcibly Displaced Persons and Host Communities (PROSPECTS), the ILO is putting this principle into practice through supporting sesame and cassava value chains to provide livelihoods to refugees and host communities.

A five-phase model was developed with Ag-Ploutos to facilitate access to export markets by de-risking transactions between large export buyers, banks and small-scale farmers:

Results:

- In all, 5,740 refugees and host community farmers had access to inputs and extension services, as well as guaranteed access to export markets.
- In one season, 350 tons of sesame worth US$420,000 were produced and aggregated.
- The new seed variety introduced by Ag-Ploutos improved farmers' yields, increasing them from 100 kilograms per acre to 500 kilograms.
- Farmers' revenue increased by a minimum of 150,000 Ugandan shillings (US$40) and up to 800,000 shillings (US$216) in one season.
- In total, 890 individual bank accounts were opened for farmers at Equity Bank.
- Overall, 215 businesses were started in the sesame value chain

3.1.1. PROGRESS AND KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The Government of Uganda has developed the **Uganda Self-Reliance Index (SRI),** which was launched on 27th of November 2025. The framework will provide a national, government-led, standardized measurement and ensure that all programmes aimed at fostering self-reliance are guided by a unified measurement approach, allowing for effective decision-making and targeted interventions. The Index has clear guidelines, digital dashboards, and will be supported by capacity-building to ensure uniform data submission.

In order to promote the development of relevant labour market skills and employment creation, MGLSD with support from partners have established **3 Regional Job Centres** in Mbarara, Arua and Lira and **7 Satellite Job Stations** in Madi-Okollo, Isingiro, Terego, Mbale, Kiryandongo, Nakivale and Rhino.

To increase sustainable agricultural productivity, MAAIF and partners successfully

established over 20 agricultural value chains,[6] surpassing the target of 15, and supported 93,190 smallholder farmers to adopt or use climate-smart agriculture practices, while over 40,000 smallholder farmers were supported in accessing agricultural extension services. Over 2,900 matching grants and subsidies worth over 1.4 million USD were provided for agricultural machinery and/or appropriate infrastructure facilities for agricultural produce.

Number of Smallholder Farmers Supported to Adopt or Use Climate-Smart Agriculture Practices, Technologies and/or Natural Resource Management in the Refugee Settlements and Host Communities

Agency name	Host - F	Host - M	Host - Total	Refugees - F	Refugees - M	Refugees - Total	Overall Total
African Youth Action Network-AYAN	288	72	360	672	168	840	1,200
AVSI Foundation							34,799
DanChurchAid (DCA)	1,500	0	1,500	3,500	0	3,500	5,000
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	1,270	680	1,950	3,780	2,035	5,815	7,765
German Embassy Kampala							6,500
GiveDirectly							2,400
International Labour Organization (ILO)				415		169	584
Italian Agency for Development Cooperation - AICS							700
Kampala Capital City Authority	131	112	243	156	133	289	289
Lutheran World Federation	500	1,360	1,860	200	597	797	2,657
Royal Danish Embassy			7,908			3,107	11,015
Uganda Biodiversity Trust Fund (UBF)	2,900	600	4,000	30,000	933	3,933	5,798
UN Women	475	205	680	1,708	410	2,118	2,798
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)							10,137
World Food Programme	1,037	691	1,728	2,419	1,613	4,032	5,760
Total	**8,101**	**3,720**	**20,644**	**42,435**	**5,889**	**24,600**	**93,190**

6 Passion fruit, onion, poultry, egg, maize, beans, egg plants, tomatoes, cabbage, sesame, soybean, sunflower, cassava, sorghum, pigeon peas, groundnuts, piggery, apiary, black soldier flies, shea nut, rice, goats, mushroom among others

The MoES with support from partners has supported **access of refugees to vocational education skills.** 12,178 out of the targeted 41,040 refugee and host community students received sponsorships in TVET. The Ministry and partners developed 84 formal and non-formal training modules, nearly double the target of 45.

Number of Refugees and Host Communities Provided with Scholarships in Formal Skilling Programs in TVETs

Agency	Refugee - M	Refugee - F	Refugee - Total	Host - M	Host - F	Over all - Total	Awarded with certificates - Refugees	Awarded with certificates - Host	Awarded with certificates - Total
Community Empowerment for Creative Innovation-CECI	21	65	86	18	38	56	86	56	142
DanChurchAid (DCA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	30	71	101	0	0	0	101	0	101
German Embassy Kampala						6,500			
International Labour Organization (ILO)	732	1,248	1,980	208	386	594	176	38	214
Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Uganda	182	363	545	52	146	198	545	198	743
UN Women	5	555	560	1	165	166	432	159	591
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)						430			430
World Food Programme	272	400	672	115	173	288	672	288	960
Total	**1,242**	**2,702**	**3,944**	**394**	**908**	**1,302**	**2,012**	**739**	**3,181**

A good example for the skilling of youth in technical and vocational skills is the ILO supported Apprenticeship Programme in the Hotel and Tourism sector, which trained 295 youth, 190 refugees and 105 host community members, through a 12-month theory-and-practice model, achieving a 70% employment transition rate. Building on this success, the 2025 phase expanded the curriculum to six modules, adding pastry,

bakery, barista, and bartender training, targeting an additional 200 youth.

With regards to the objective to strengthen affirmative action to increase the number of students with special needs and other persons with disabilities, 4000 students with special needs were trained and assessed under informal programmes and formal programmes.

To facilitate the transition from learning to earning, partners distributed 39,408 startup kits. Furthermore, the Ministry has developed a national qualifications framework to guide the skilling of refugees and host communities.

Simultaneously, MTIC drove inclusive market access policies. Market stall allocations to refugees in hosting districts now average 39%, significantly outperforming the 10% pledge. Four districts have allocated at least 50% of the main markets or in settlements to refugee market vendors. Some districts, such as Lamwo, reported allocations as high as 74%, while Adjumani, Kamwenge and Obongi have allocated between 70% and 99% of markets in settlements to refugee vendors. Only two districts (Kamwenge central market) and Kiryandongo are yet to achieve the target of 10%.

3.1.2. IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES AND GAPS

With regards to the implementation of GRF Pledges, some gaps remain. Agriculture, the primary livelihood for displaced populations, still suffers from underinvestment. Pledges to improve productivity against a target of 300,000 smallholder farmers are not yet on track in three key areas: irrigation support, climate resilience and access to extension services. Critically, according to the survey administered, less than 1% of the targeted 300,000 smallholder farmers received irrigation support; only 33% of farmers were supported in adopting climate-resilient practices. Less than 20% of the targeted 300,000 farmers have access to crucial agriculture extension services. Furthermore, a lack of mechanization forces a reliance on manual labour such as the hand hoe which disproportionately burdens women.

Key pledges in education and trade and investment also require further focus. MoES and partners have provided sponsorships to less than 40% of targeted refugee and host community students in non-formal skilling programmes in TVET institutions. Additional efforts should be made to ensure that students receive formal certificates - according to survey results, only 3,181 out of the 12,176 TVET students received certificates. Although MTIC staff have profiled common user facilities for workspaces targeting 240,000 refugees in settlements by 2027, these facilities have not yet been operationalized. For business registration, costs for refugees remain a significant obstacle. The government pledged to reduce business registration costs yet reports

indicate fees have risen to UGX 90,000.

Other challenges to achieving sustainable self-reliance and resilience of refugees include:

- **Programming Challenges:** Despite key successes and promising initiatives, the quality and reach of humanitarian and development programmes promoting the self-reliance and resilience of refugees still face constraints. A disparity exists between programme scale and population needs. Short-term programmes may not be able to transmit sufficient and meaningful skills, and while there are several good examples for graduation programmes and market-based approaches, these are often still limited in scale.
- **Bureaucratic and financial barriers:** While the Refugee Act and the Refugee Regulations grant refugees the right to work, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) requires refugees to obtain a work permit. This first requires refugees to obtain a Conventional Travel Document (CTD) and then obtain a work permit stamp. The costs for the CTD presents a bureaucratic and financial barrier for refugees to obtain a work permit, which would facilitate formal employment.
- **Limited private sector engagement and access to finance:** There is still a structural gap of (formal) job opportunities in refugee-hosting districts (RHDs). Private sector engagement, while uniformly acknowledged as an important avenue for self-reliance and resilience of refugees, is still limited. This is due among others to infrastructure gaps in refugee-hosting districts, limited information and awareness by private sector actors on opportunities for investment, a perceived risk by the private sector of doing business with refugees, and lack of incentives (e.g. tax reductions). For further information on private sector engagement see chapter 4.4
- C**oordination and sharing of lessons learnt:** On national level, several working groups exist, including the National Steering Committee of the Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan, The Livelihoods and Resilience Sector Working Group, the Self-reliance Reference Group and the Food Security Sector Working Group. A key challenge remains as duplication of efforts and inadequate communication between national and sub-national working groups. There is currently also limited joint programming, information sharing on the project outcomes and documentation of good practices with regards to livelihood promotion, private sector engagement and access to finance.
- **A persistent gender gap** further limits progress toward the pledge on self-reliance and resilience. Refugee and host community women face a double burden of unpaid care and productive labour, reinforced by traditional gender norms, limited access to resources, low financial inclusion, and barriers to skilling. Compared to men, structural barriers—such as restricted land ownership, limited credit access,

and low decision-making power—reduce women's participation in value chains, training, and markets, hindering their progress toward self-reliance and resilience.

3.1.3. RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FORWARD

From the National Stocktaking event, it was discussed that Government and partners embark on the following:

S/N	Recommendation	Breakdown / Key Actions
1	Strengthen coordination and synergies on livelihood promotion, private sector engagement and access to finance	Improve multi-stakeholder coordination to boost efficiency in resource use and ensure aligned implementation, including through: • Joint programming for livelihood projects where feasible, to ensure activities are complementary and impactful • Conducting joint monitoring and verification visits to foster a shared understanding and leverage collective resources • Strengthening and streamlining the existing coordination mechanisms for jobs and livelihood promotion and include non-traditional actors, including the private sector and foundations
3	Standardize Data and Strengthen Sharing of Lessons Learnt	• Mandate the use of the National Self-Reliance Index by all partners to ensure uniform data submission. • Establishing data- and lessons learnt sharing mechanisms (e.g. on good practices to promote access to finance and private sector engagement)

4	Invest in Long-Term Economic Inclusion and an Enabling Environment for Private Sector Engagement	• Scale up the services of job centres and satellite stations in RHDs to widen access to career guidance, job matching, and skills development for refugees and host communities. • Shift from short-term projects to long-term market-based systems. Donors to adopt flexible, multi-year funding (spanning 4-6 agricultural seasons) to allow households to generate and reinvest income. • De-risk private sector engagement through incentives for private sector companies (e.g. through tax incentives), blended finance, and impact-linked loans for clients without traditional collateral
5	Ensure Sustainability through National Alignment and the Removal of Bureaucratic Barriers	• Align interventions with national systems, such as the Parish Development Model (PDM) to ensure long-term sustainability. • Drive forward the implementation of the Private Sector Engagement Strategy and invest in infrastructure development in RHDs • Simplify the process of work permits
6	Promote Gender-Responsive Economic Inclusion	• Integrate gender-responsive measures in livelihoods programmes by reducing unpaid care burdens (e.g., childcare services, labour-saving technologies) and ensuring flexible training and work schedules. • Enhance women's access to resources and opportunities through targeted financial inclusion, credit access, skilling, and support for participation in value chains and markets to strengthen their self-reliance and resilience.

3.2. THEMATIC AREA 2: ADDRESSING ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND ENERGY CHALLENGES

The Government of Uganda commits to include refugees and their specific situations in its nationally determined contributions and adaptation plans to effectively reduce the carbon emissions from deforestation and to enhance access to safe, clean, and affordable energy in refugee hosting districts by 2027.

Thematic Area 2 (Addressing Environment, Climate Change, and Energy Challenges) is led jointly by the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) and the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD). The strategic objective is to integrate refugees into Uganda's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), aiming to reduce carbon emissions and ensure access to sustainable energy by 2027. The Thematic Area encompasses 22 sub-pledges, under which notable progress has been achieved in immediate service delivery and planning. However, structural gaps (particularly in financing and technical infrastructure) continue to constrain long-term implementation.

A major policy achievement in this thematic area was the launch of the **Water and Environment Sector Refugee Response Plan II (WESRRP II),** which explicitly incorporates GRF pledges. Furthermore, an ongoing process, supported by UNDP and UNEP, is underway to include refugees and their specific situations in Uganda's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 3.0. The successful integration of the refugee response into ministerial policy and plans and strong partnerships with multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the Solar Electric Cooking Partnership (SOLCO) and EcoAdapt, have been crucial in advancing clean cooking technologies and the restoration of degraded ecosystems.

Among others, the following partners were identified as contributing to the thematic area of energy, environment and climate change (as not all partners responded to the questionnaire, the list is not exhaustive):

DONORS
Denmark, European Union/ECHO, FCDO, Germany, Italy, Japan/JICA
UN

FAO, IOM, UNDP, UN Women, UNEP

(I) NGOS

Caritas, DanChurch Aid, CARE, Last Mile Climate, NAWAD, Norwegian Refugee Council, Danish Refugee Council, Plan, Save the Children, AVSI, Jesuit Refugee Service, Last Mile Climate, LWF, Mercy Corps, World Vision

RLOS

African Youth Action Network (AYAN), Community Empowerment for Creative Innovation (CECI)

OTHERS / PRIVATE SECTOR

African Clean Energy, U-LEARN, Impact Initiatives, KCCA, Private Sector Foundation, WANA Energy Solutions, Uganda Biodiversity Fund

3.2.1. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Thematic Area 2 has 22 pledges whose implementation is led by MWE and MEMD. Of 19 pledges of which data are available, 5 have been achieved, 5 are on track, while 10 are lagging and 2 did not have any data to assess progress.

Progress within this thematic area has been notably robust in planning and household-level interventions. The pledge to develop Climate Action Plans in on track with 9 plans formalized across districts such as Yumbe, Koboko, and Moyo. Similarly, the transition toward clean cooking technologies exceeded set targets; against a target of 2,600, a total of 34,205 households were supported to access user-friendly clean cooking solutions.

Number of Households in Refugee Settlements and Refugee Hosting Countries who have been Supported to Access User-Friendly Clean-Cooking

Agency	Female Headed HHs	Male Headed HHs	Overall Total
African Clean Energy - Uganda	142	173	315
African Youth Action Network AYAN	7	6	16
Community Empowerment for Creative Innovation-CECI	5	13	21
DanChurchAid (DCA)			10,600
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	1990	1070	3,600

German Embassy Kampala			11,500
International Organisation for Migration			2,121
Lutheran World Federation	3700	2246	5,946
UN Women	165	0	165
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)			815
WAMA Energy Solutions	2	1	6
Total	**6001**	**3509**	**34,605**

Good Practice: SOLCO and EcoAdapt

SOLCO (Solar Electric Cooking Partnership) and EcoAdapt (Eco-Adaptation Partnership) are multi-stakeholder initiatives contributing to Thematic Area 2. They aim to reduce carbon emissions from deforestation and enhance access to safe, clean energy in reugee-hosting districts by 2027.

Both initiatives operate as 'Climate Action Partnerships' that maximize the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus. Aligned with Uganda's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) 3.0 and National Adaptation Plan (NAP), they integrate climate resilience into refugee responses. SOLCO utilizes a Market Systems Development Approach (MSDA), coordinating diverse partners to build a sustainable market for "last mile" off-grid renewable energy. Conversely, EcoAdapt focuses on ecosystem health, employing nature-based solutions like reforestation and agroforestry to safeguard critical resources and drive climate adaptation.

Key Results:

SOLCO has significantly overachieved its initial target of 2,600 by supporting 29,001 households to access clean cooking. Currently, 1,023 solar e-cooking products have been acquired, and 16,712 households have received solar cooking knowledge. The initiative aims for 150,000 households in Uganda to transition to clean cooking by 2027. Financially, €5.5 million has been raised, including €2.5 million via Mercy Corps and €3 million from Last Mile Climate. EcoAdapt contributes to a net carbon emission reduction of 2–4 tCO2e per household per year. It has successfully restored 4,105 hectares of degraded ecosystems, including forests and wetlands, and supported 1,587 households with sustainable livelihood interventions.

Why it Works:

The success of these pledges relies on innovative sustainability, financing, and community strategies:

Blended Financing: Grant funding serves as seed capital to attract climate and private sector capital. SOLCO aims to mobilize 20million in grants and 80 million in climate/ impact financing.

Affordability Solutions: To address high upfront costs, SOLCO pilots financing models like Pay-As-You-Go (PAYGO) and Energy-as-a-service, while leveraging subsidies and carbon credits to accelerate uptake.

Localisation: Efforts are locally led; SOLCO supports Refugee-Led Organisations (RLOs) for demand activation, while EcoAdapt integrates indigenous knowledge into landscape management.

Policy Advocacy: The partnerships actively lobby the government to reduce taxation on imported solar products, lowering costs for consumers.

In the realm of ecosystem management, partners reported the restoration of 4,105 hectares of degraded ecosystems, far exceeding the target of 1,600 hectares.

Ha of Degraded Eco-Systems (Forests, Wetlands, Riverbanks, Lakeshores) Restored in Refugee-Hosting Districts

Agency	No. of ha of Degraded Ecosystems
DanChurchAid (DCA)	0
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	113
Uganda Biodiversity Trust Fund (UBTF)	2,120
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	1,872
Total	**4,105**

Infrastructure resilience has also advanced, with 50 solar-powered water pumping stations installed (classified as “On Track”) and the successful commissioning of two waste incinerators. Furthermore, capacity-building efforts have enabled 300,000 refugees and host community members to access early warning weather information, significantly enhancing climate resilience.

Pledges made by the Refugee Engagement Forum (REF) and the District Engagement Forum (DEF)

In line with the Government of Uganda, Refugees and Host Communities made a commitment on environment and climate change, Refugees pledge to plant 7.5 million trees around households and woodlots by 2027. Host Communities through the DEF pledged to plant 40 million trees. Refugees pledge to work closely with the local Government to enforce the laws and by-laws on environmental protection within the settlements.

The REF and DEF jointly planted more than 17 million trees and established over 3,000 woodlots between 2024 and 2025, with seedlings provided by government and partner organizations. The current challenge is to support communities in nurturing these trees to reach the target of over 50 million. In addition, refugees are working closely with District Local Governments to enforce laws and by-laws on environmental protection within the settlements.

3.2.2. IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES AND GAPS

Despite these successes, there is still a lack of funding and infrastructure, resulting in five sub-pledges having made “no progress” (0%). These neglected areas represent the technical backbone of climate monitoring: the installation of 20 hydrological monitoring stations, the establishment of 33 weather stations, and the acquisition of High-Performance Computing facilities. The lack of this infrastructure results in weak baseline data, which in turn hinders access to large-scale climate finance from global mechanisms like the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

With regards to energy access, the World Bank financed Electricity Access Scale-up Project (EASP) plans to connect 267,000 households, institutions and other public spaces to the grid, and 13,500 to the off grid. This has not yet been achieved, which also provides a challenge to private sector engagement in the refugee-settlements.

Furthermore, a severe affordability barrier undermines the scalability of private sector-led energy solutions. The high cost of solar technologies presents a challenge to many refugee households and may risk trapping them in perpetual debt. Poverty within refugee and host communities also contributes to increased pressure on natural resources and accelerated deforestation due to unsustainable practices like excessive firewood collection and land clearing for agriculture, directly impacting the local environment and intensifying resource scarcity.

There is also still room for improvement in supporting businesses with clean energy for productive use: while the target was 2,500 institutions, only 516 have been supported to date.

Ministries and partners face significant constraints due to limited, short-term financing, which is particularly challenging for climate and energy initiatives that require substantial, long-term investment. This mismatch between funding cycles and the capital-intensive nature of these programs hinders effective planning and project implementation.

3.2.3. RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAYS FORWARD

S/N	Recommendation	Breakdown / Key Actions
1	Operationalize a "blended finance model"	• Operationalise blended financing models, combining donor funds with private capital to de-risk investments. • Further promote Multi-stakeholder initiatives such as SOLCO (solar e-cooking) and EcoAdapt (ecosystem restoration) which are well designed to attract blended finance, combining grants with carbon credits and impact investment. • Develop a climate and energy resource mobilisation plan • Ensure that financing models prioritize women-led enterprises and include gender criteria in investment selection.
3	Integrate Refugees into national climate frameworks and strengthen climate finance readiness and access to global funds	• Finalise the integration of refugees into the NDC 3.0 and the NAP to access global climate finance, rather than project-based, financing. • Strengthen M&E systems for NDC/NAP and GRF Pledge Tracking
4	Address the affordability gap	• To address the affordability gap, leverage carbon credits and targeted subsidies to lower appliance costs, alongside a continued dialogue on taxation relief for imported solar products.

5	Harmonize economic empowerment of refugees and social norms change with environmental mandates and increase community ownership	• Harmonize self-reliance initiatives with environmental mandates, while ensuring that the drive for green energy does not outpace the economic capacity of the populations it intends to serve. • Invest in reforestation, watershed restoration, and ecosystem protection and support community-led restoration and resilience programs, ensuring women are meaningfully included in decision-making processes at all stages. • Pair clean cooking programmes with initiatives that promote positive social norms, ensuring the shift to cleaner energy supports equitable sharing of household responsibilities rather than reinforcing traditional gender roles.

3.3. THEMATIC AREA 3: LOCALIZING THE REFUGEE RESPONSE

The Government of Uganda pledges to include localisation provisions in strategies and frameworks for the refugee response to strengthen the role of national and local responders and gradually achieve the Grand Bargain commitments by 2027.

The localization of humanitarian aid represents a critical paradigm shift to enhance the sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the Refugee Response. In Uganda, this commitment is encapsulated in Thematic Area 3: Localizing the Refugee Response, which aims to strengthen the role of local and national responders and achieve the Grand Bargain commitment of channelling 25% of partner resources to local actors by 2027. Led by the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), and coordinated by a Multi-Stakeholder Task Team, progress in this area is currently classified as “On Track”. However, while significant policy milestones have been achieved, the operational landscape still remains characterized by financial disparities and fragmented approaches.

3.3.1. PROGRESS AND KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Progress has been made in channelling resources and decision-making to national and local actors. The most significant quantitative achievement is the channelling of **USD 73.3 million** in programme funding to national or local actors, as reported in survey results.[7] On the policy front, the development of a National Localization Strategy is underway, which aims to provide a comprehensive framework to systematically strengthen the role of national and local responders in the refugee response by embedding localization provisions into strategies and operational plans.

Localization provisions have been embedded in the National Development Plan IV (NDP IV), ensuring alignment with District Development Plans (DDPs). To enforce accountability, localization criteria have been integrated into the Partner Coordination and Monitoring System (PCMS), requiring partners to declare resources directed toward national actors.

A number of partners have incorporated localisation provisions into their country strategies and plans and provided institutional capacity development to a total of 1,168 local and national actors have received institutional capacity development support. Innovative partnership models are emerging to bridge the capacity gap: promising initiatives include secondment models, through which INGOs such as Save the Children embed staff within local organisations to facilitate a transfer of technical skills.

Progress has also been made to develop a common framework for due diligence processes, through an adapted version of the Quality Assurance Measurement Tool (QuAM). The **QuAM plus** has the potential to become an accepted assessment tool that would greatly ease and streamline assessments for future funding opportunities.

7 This figure is an indication, based on the reports from the 44 entities who took part in the survey. It does not represent a complete picture.

Good Practice: QuAM Plus, a fit for-Purpose Digital Platform to Enhance Capacity Sharing, Accountability, and Trust (CAT) within the Humanitarian and Development Sector.

The Quality Assurance Mechanism (QuAM), led by CARE International together with the Uganda National NGO Forum and DENIVA, is driving a strategic shift toward locally led leadership in humanitarian and development response. The model tackles long-standing barriers to localization by strengthening the capacity of national actors, promoting co-creation, expanding local networks, and reframing the role of INGOs from implementers to enablers of local leadership. QuAM directly addresses three systemic challenges that hinder localization:

1. **Fragmented due-diligence systems** that burden national actors with repetitive assessments and drain limited administrative resources.
2. **Concerns about capacity, accountability, and trust (CAT)** that often make donors and INGOs hesitant to channel funds through local partners.
3. **Power imbalances in the aid system,** which limit the decision-making authority of national organizations.

From QuAM to QuAM Plus: A Strengthened, Digitized Framework

Launched in May 2025, QuAM Plus is a digitized and enhanced version of the original mechanism and is designed as a comprehensive common due-diligence framework that reduces duplication across donors and INGOs. The update involved revisiting more than 60 organizational development standards and strengthening critical areas such as Safeguarding, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Environmental Sustainability. The framework includes six core components:

- Governance and Strategic Leadership
- Risk and Compliance
- Organizational Integrity
- Capacity Building and Organizational Effectiveness
- Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability
- Legal and Statutory Standing

QuAM Plus has become a practical model to reduce administrative burdens, increase transparency, and promote equitable partnerships that center national actors. It is also aligned with broader efforts to create a common due-diligence tool for the sector - an approach that has the potential to streamline assessments and open more funding opportunities for local partners.

QuAM Plus is funded by ECHO Uganda and supported through a multi-stakeholder Technical Working Group that includes CARE, DENIVA, UNHCR, UNICEF, GIZ, World Vision, NRC, Save the Children, Iceland, DCA, GOAL, and others. The QuAM Plus digital platform is expected to go live at the end of November 2025, with further capacity-building and stakeholder engagement beginning in December 2025.

As a result of Uganda's enabling environment, refugees are actively involved in the response: the **Refugee Engagement Forum (REF)** has proven to be a successful model for sustained refugee participation in national decision-making.

The Refugee Engagement Forum (REF) is a successful pioneering refugee-participation mechanism designed to systematically ensure that refugee voices are considered in national decision-making. The REF members are appointed through the elected leadership structures in the settlements, the Refugee Welfare Councils (RWCs). The REF Members identify community concerns and conduct consultations, review and discuss at the quarterly REF meetings to identify key concerns, present the information to the CRRF Steering Group Meetings and report back to the communities by sharing the outcomes. Given the current context of declining funds, the sustainability of the REF needs to be discussed with key stakeholders, to ensure the continuity of refugee engagement in high-level decision making.

Refugee-led organisations are playing a crucial role in promoting peaceful co-existence and contributing to Uganda's national economy and social protection systems. The below sampled RLOs employ over 378 people and contribute over UGX 189 million monthly in taxes and social security (URA and NSSF), challenging the narrative of dependency:

ORGANIZATION	FOCUS	EMPLOYMENT	ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION
YARID – Young African Refugees for Integral Development	English for Adults, Women Empowerment & Livelihoods supports, Job Training & Placement, ICT & Digital competency, protection & Psychosocial Support, and Research & Advocacy	130 employees (57.3% Ugandans, 42.7% refugees) + 16 volunteers	URA: UGX 46 M NSSF: UGX 36 M
CIYOTA – COBURWAS International Youth Organization to Transform Africa	For two decades, CIYOTA has provided access to quality education, leadership training, and economic opportunities to those most affected by displacement and instability.	118 employees (80% Ugandans, 20% refugees)	URA: UGX 24M NSSF: UGX 14M
RELON Uganda – Refugee-Led Organization Network	Umbrella body representing over 135 member RLOs	Strengthens & advocates for RLOs Supports RMP and policy engagement initiatives Provides seed grants of USD 50,000, distributed to five RLOs each year	66 employees (83.3% Ugandans, 16.7% refugees)

AYAN – African Youth Action Network	Supports both refugees and host communities through essential training, mentorship, psychosocial support, peacebuilding workshops, and economic empowerment	29 employees (44.8% refugees, 55.2% Ugandans)	PAYE/URA: UGX 12,770,000 NSSF: UGX 7,942,500 Local Service Tax: UGX 1,890,000
CECI – Community Empowerment for Creative Innovation	Supports refugees and host communities through education, peacebuilding, livelihoods and Environment	27 employees (37% refugees, 63% Ugandans)	NSSF: UGX 5,123,400 PAYE: UGX 7,992,800
YEFOSR - Youth Empowerment for Self Reliance	Builds self-reliance among youth, with focus on education, economic empowerment, and leadership.	8 employees (75% refugees, 25% Ugandans)	URA: UGX 1,616,000 NSSF: UGX 1,200,000 Local Service Tax: UGX 660,000

3.3.2. IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES AND GAPS

Progress in this thematic area is hindered by four main challenges. First of all, the National Localization Strategy remains in development, and its finalization, official adoption, and, most critically, its resourcing and operationalization are pending. Without this finalized framework, efforts may remain ad-hoc.

Secondly, the tracking and reporting of localisation investments and impact remains a challenge and the amounts reported as disbursed to local and national actors per donor are highly uneven, with ranges from as low as 1% to 100%. This stark variation

indicates the sector continues to struggle with consistently meeting the 25% Grand Bargain target for local funding. This highlights a need for more systematic tracking to ensure funding is not just reported but is also equitable and aligned with the responsibilities of local actors.

Thirdly, the response is further characterized by short-term, fragmented grants that make long-term strategic planning a challenge for local entities.

Finally, the "Trust and Capacity Gap" remains a major impediment. International partners often hesitate to devolve funding due to concerns regarding the fiduciary and operational capacity of local actors. National and local actors at times have to undergo different due diligence processes by multiple donors, resulting in a heavy administrative burden.

3.3.3. RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAYS FORWARD

S/N	RECOMMENDATION	BREAKDOWN / KEY ACTIONS
1	Expedite the finalization, official launch, and resourcing of the National Localization Strategy.	• Finalize the Localisation Strategy: hold a national validation meeting, adopt, and roll out the strategy
2	Strengthen systems to track localisation investments and impact	• Institutionalise and standardise the practice of tracking funding to local actors across all partners to provide a clear baseline and measure progress against a specific target. • Track and publish localisation financing data disaggregated by recipient and purpose
3	Harmonize due diligence processes	• Harmonise due diligence processes, e.g. through the uniform adoption of the QuAM-Plus quality assurance system, to reduce administrative fatigue.

4	Invest in capacity development for local and national actors	• Focus on capacity development of local actors, e.g. through secondment models • Share data and good practices on capacity development of local actors to avoid duplications and ensure that they are equipped to effectively manage and implement programmes, moving beyond sub-contracting to genuine partnership.
5	Strengthentheparticipation and leadership of local actors in decision-making processes at all levels	• Increase participation of refugees and host communities in coordination and decision-making platforms, ensuring women's meaningful participation at all stages. • Develop a sustainability strategy for the Refugee Engagement Strategy

3.4. THEMATIC AREA 4: SECURING DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR REFUGEES

The Government of Uganda pledges to support peace-building processes and negotiations that will lead to voluntary repatriation of refugees back home. The Government of Uganda pledges to provide opportunities to all refugees to access electronic Conventional Travel Documents and birth certificates by 2027 to foster socio-economic rights and the rights of the child.

The Thematic Area 4 of Durable Solutions is led by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and presents a critical pillar of Uganda's refugee response. With a strategic horizon set for 2027, the government aims to foster socio-economic rights, ensure access to legal identity, and support peace-building processes that facilitate voluntary repatriation.

The three durable solutions for refugees include voluntary repatriation, resettlement to third countries and local integration. Given the current security situation in the region, voluntary repatriation is currently only deemed a feasible option for Burundian

refugees, while resettlement quotas have declined by 90% following the suspension of resettlement to the United States in 2025. Therefore, promoting durable solutions remains a significant challenge. Progress has however been achieved in supporting complementary pathways and providing legal documentation for refugees (i.e. birth certificates and Conventional Travel Documents (CTDs)).

3.4.1. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Government of Uganda endeavours to create conditions conducive to safe and dignified returns. Since December 2023, a total of **25,240 individuals have been supported to attain durable solutions** including voluntary return to the country of origin, complementary pathways or resettlement. **Voluntary repatriation** remains the most desirable yet challenging outcome as it is dependent on the security in the refugees' country of origin. Currently, it is deemed feasible primarily for the Burundian caseload due to positive political changes. Consequently, **3,810 Burundian refugees** have returned since December 2023, contributing to a total of 15,500 returns since 2020. To ensure the sustainability of these returns, the government has enhanced the integrated return package, which now includes cash transfers, SIM cards, health insurance, access to interest-free loans and business training upon arrival.

7,222 individuals have benefited from **resettlement programmes** since December 2023, although the resettlement quotas have reduced by 90% in 2025, as a result of the suspension of resettlement to the United States. On a positive note, **Complementary Pathways** have increased, with **14,208 individuals** benefiting from third-country education, employment programs or family reunification.

Moreover, this pledge focuses on the critical area of **civil registration and documentation,** which are foundational for rights access and preventing statelessness. Through the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA), the government has institutionalized the issuance of birth certificates for all refugee children born in Uganda. In 2024 alone, 196,589 refugee children received birth certificates, with an additional 5,688 registered by October 2025, amounting to a total of **253,277 birth certificates issued.**

Furthermore, the modernization of the **Convention Travel Document** system marks a significant bureaucratic achievement. The introduction of an online application platform in 2024 has streamlined processing, improved predictability, and reduced turnaround times. As of August 2025, the government has issued **147,000 electronic CTDs.** These documents are vital not only for travel but also for accessing the formal

labour market, although challenges persist regarding the linkage between CTDs and work permits, as outlined in the chapter of Self-Reliance and Resilience.

UNHCR is working with Government stakeholders to support the **integration of protection services** into national structures. Under PROSPECTS 2.0, case management within the Kampala City Authority (KCCA) was piloted, serving both refugees and host communities. In just four months, 1,934 refugees accessed child protection and Gender-based violence (GBV) services.

There have also been promising initiatives to promote cross-border initiatives, such as the ***Cross-border Initiatives for Sustainable Livelihoods and Peacebuilding*** and the ***COMPASS Bridge Project,*** which are implemented by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) to jointly promote dialogue, reconciliation, and economic empowerment across Uganda and South Sudan.

3.4.2. IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES AND GAPS

Despite the administrative achievements in this thematic area, the broader context is characterized by acute volatility. There is an inherent difficulty of influencing the political and security context to enable voluntary repatriation. The pledge to "support peace-building processes and negotiations that will lead to voluntary repatriation" is recognized as highly ambitious and largely beyond the direct control of the refugee response structure within Uganda. The success of this pledge is contingent upon regional political stability and successful peace dialogues, making its progress slow and unpredictable within the current timeframe of the GRF cycle.

Indeed, the rate of voluntary repatriation remains disproportionately low compared to the continuous influx of new arrivals. Between January and October 2025, Uganda received 138,846 new refugees, a 14% increase from the previous year. The 25,240 people who have benefitted from voluntary repatriation or resettlement since December 2023 account for only 1.4% of the current refugee population (1.95 Million) in Uganda. Sustained conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan, and South Sudan renders repatriation a distant thought for most, while peace efforts, such as the Tumaini Peace Initiative for South Sudan (in which Uganda served as a guarantor), face implementation hurdles.

Additionally, administration of voluntary repatriation has been difficult. The ***'Go and See' and 'Come and Tell' visits*** to Burundi, as well as the Tripartite Commission meeting

between Uganda, Burundi and UNHCR, were not conducted due to time constraints. Gaps remain in the issuance of birth certificates to around 200,000 refugee children in the Southwest of Uganda, due to funding constraints.

Refugees in the formal employment sector are required to have a CTD by the Immigration Department to receive a work permit stamp which is required by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. While the work permit is free, most refugees cannot afford the legal application fees for the CTD. This has hampered their employment in the formal sector, as also outlined in the chapter on self-reliance and resilience.

Despite the fact that urban areas host a substantial population—including nearly 160,000 refugees in the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) alone—resources remain disproportionately focused on established settlements, leaving urban refugees underserviced and neglected. This disparity is worsened by the false assumption of self-sufficiency; in reality, the 50% of refugees who receive only $3 a month face significantly greater challenges surviving in urban centers compared to settlements. A critical gap remains in integrating these populations into municipal structures and data capture, as current policies historically prioritize resettlement data. This lack of integration hinders access to social services and infrastructure in cities like Arua and Gulu, and leaves vulnerable groups exposed to severe protection risks, including femicide, medicalized FGM, and early marriage.

Sustainable Urban Integration of Displacement-Affected Communities (SUIDAC) Programme through Cities Alliance

Cities Alliance is supporting cities on the front lines of managing migration and displacement of large populations driven by crises such as climate change, conflict, and economic instability. Through the Sustainable Urban Integration of Displacement- Affected Communities (SUIDAC) programme, Cities Alliance is supporting local authorities in Arua City and Koboko Municipality to integrate displaced communities sustainably by strengthening local governance, improving urban planning, and fostering policy dialogue in key cities across Sub-Saharan Africa. SUIDAC aims to localise solutions to displacement, strengthen urban governance, and foster inclusive development. SUIDAC seeks to demonstrate how working with cities can potentially provide a viable alternative to policies of refugee camps. In Year 1, the programme focused on the analytical and diagnostic phase, completing feasibility studies including baseline perception surveys in all target cities. Year 2 (2025-26) will begin implementation of tailored interventions. Priorities include strengthening the connection of cities to identified economic corridors, improving access to basic services, livelihoods, and legal identity, and enhancing inclusive urban planning.

3.4.3. RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAYS FORWARD

The following strategic recommendations were identified to promote durable solutions:

S/N	RECOMMENDATION	BREAKDOWN / KEY ACTIONS
1	Advance regional dialogue on peace and stability and actively sustain diplomatic channels to keep the prospect of voluntary repatriation viable	• Increase collaboration with IGAD and the East African Community (EAC) to advance regional dialogue on peace and stability • Pursue the implementation of the Munyonyo Declarations, including through regional technical and ministerial follow-up meetings • Engage the Government of Burundi to convene joint Tripartite Meetings and organize refugee 'Go and See' and 'Come and Tell', Peacebuilding and Confidence visits. • Continue to participate in livestreaming sessions with Burundi to provide an opportunity for refugees to receive information covering access to education, land and property rights upon return to Burundi, paving the way for informed and voluntary decisions about return when conditions permit.
2	Intensify efforts to ensure access to legal documentation, including birth certificates and CTDs	• Continue engaging with partners to support the continuation of the issuance of birth certificates for the remaining refugee children. • Engage MIA to provide a waiver for refugees to get a work permit

3	Increase national and regional Stakeholder Engagement to promote durable solutions for refugees	• Establish a Task Team on Durable Solutions in Uganda, including participation from Government, UNHCR, the Resident Coordinators Office and relevant UN Organisations, as well as development partners to further discuss opportunities for cross-border collaboration, as well as return packages and support in countries of origin • Scale up cross-border initiatives for sustainable livelihoods and peacebuilding
4	Integrate the Refugee Response into Urban Development Systems:	• Mainstream refugee inclusion within urban authority structures and planning processes to improve access to social services, infrastructure, and employment opportunities. • Strengthen partnerships between municipalities, private sector actors, and humanitarian agencies to promote social cohesion and sustainable urban integration of refugees

3.5. THEMATIC AREA 5: TRANSITION MANAGEMENT: PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABLE BURDEN-SHARING

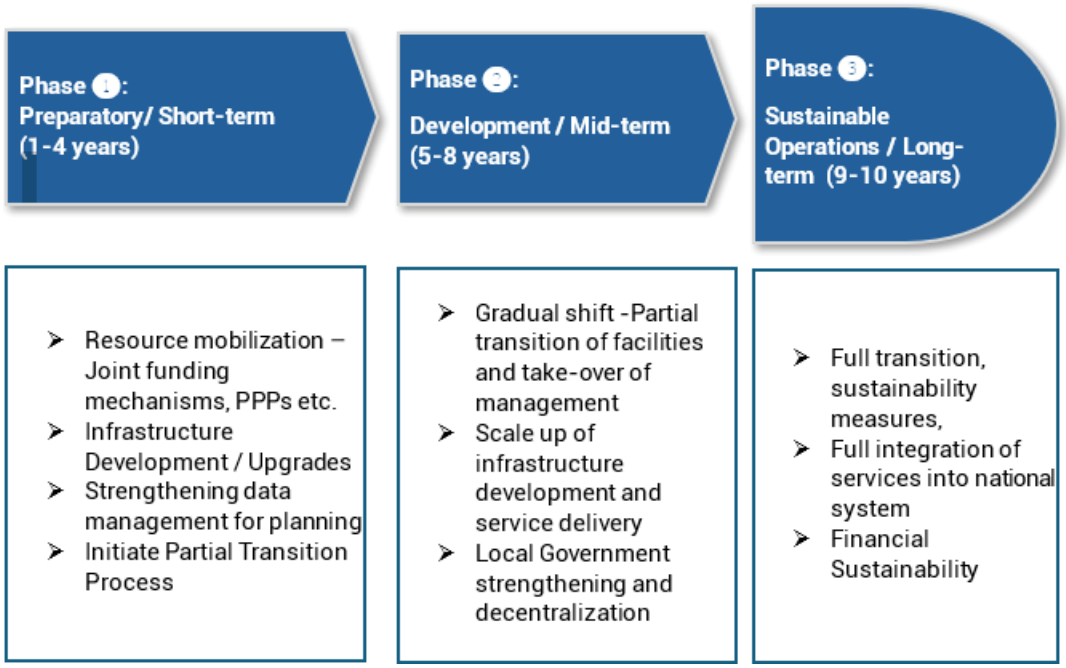
The Government pledges to continue managing and integrating the infrastructure and services specifically in health, education and water aligned with the government requirements in a phased approach. This will call for alignment of partner investments with in the NDP and DDPs. The Government commits to put in place a transitional strategy and guidelines to facilitate coordinated transition planning and management.

Many education, health and water facilities in refugee hosting districts were established in humanitarian emergencies and have been in operation for decades. Recognizing that parallel, partner-managed systems are not sustainable in the long-run, Uganda has been shifting to a development-oriented, integrated approach to service provision, albeit with continued strong support from humanitarian partners. Transition management describes the smooth and phased transfer from partner managed parallel systems and services (infrastructure, facilities, human resources, consumables, and management) for refugees and host communities to a system

sustainably managed by the Government with support from partners, adhering to national quality standards in the Water, Education and Health sectors.

3.5.1. PROGRESS AND KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

As part of the GRF pledges, the GoU, under the leadership of the Ministry of Finance (MoFPED) and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), committed to develop a **National Transition Strategy (NTS).** Following a consultancy period from August 2024 to February 2025, the draft NTS and associated Sector-Roadmaps were approved by the CRRF Steering Group in March 2025. The NTS outlines a comprehensive ten-year pathway divided into three phases: a Preparatory Phase (1–4 years), a Development Phase (5–8 years), and a Sustainable Operations Phase (9–10 years):



The most significant progress has been achieved in the **water sector:** 46 water supply systems have been handed over for management by Government. Out of these, 16 have been fully transitioned and are operating fairly well, while 30 are still operating with support from partners, due to financial and other resource constraints. A **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** was signed in June 2025 between OPM, the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), and UNHCR to detail the roles and responsibilities in the transition process – marking a decisive step toward shifting water supply systems from humanitarian models to utility-based management.

Good Practice: Water Supply and Sanitation for Refugee Settlements and Host Communities in Northern Uganda (WatSSUP)

The WatSSUP project is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). It aims to support the transition to longer-term provision of services for water supply and sanitation in refugee settlements and host communities in West Nile by national institutions. On national level, the project supports the Water and Environment Sector Response Plan Secretariat (WESRRP) in the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) to strengthen their coordination role. At regional level, it supports decentralised entities of MWE (particularly the Northern Umbrella for Water and Sanitation (NUWS) on adopting, improving and maintaining water supply systems. At district level, it advises local administrations in Arua, Yumbe and Madi-Okollo and Terego on optimising their water supply and sanitation services. Finally, it supports skills development and community participation at local level.

Key results:

- Supported **MoU signing** between MWE, UNHCR, OPM and NUWS
- **Rehabilitated 23 formerly humanitarian-operated water systems** in West Nile to national-standard, solar-powered hybrid water systems and handed them over to NUWS
- Improved sanitation access by constructing over **600 household latrines**
- **Strengthened foundation for utility-led service** delivery through capacity building in Operation and Maintenance, customer care, data management, finance, and accounting
- Implemented targeted community engagement and behaviour change interventions to **sensitize on the transition (introduction of water tariffs)**

Lessons learnt:

- **Strong partnerships with political partner, multi-level approach** and early coordination with all stakeholders are essential
- **Zonal (phased) transition approach** to prevent disparities in service access and ensure willingness to pay.
- **Community participation** (including refugees) in planning and governance fosters ownership and social cohesion
- **Financial sustainability must be planned from the outset** — e.g. blended finance, grants and user contributions.

In the education and health sector, significant progress has been achieved with regards to the "coding" of facilities, meaning that a health or education facility receives a unique identification code by which it is included in Government systems and can be budgeted for. However, while 92% of health facilities in the refugee context are coded, 75% of human resource salaries remain dependent on international partners. Similarly, while 37% of schools are coded, over half of the funding remains humanitarian.

Good Practice: The Koboko Model

The Koboko Model, implemented through a partnership framework agreement between UNHCR, UNICEF and Local Government, promotes the integration of the refugee response into the local government system.

Unlike parallel systems, this approach routes partner funds (from UNHCR and UNICEF) directly to the local government as on-budget support, enabling the district to implement the response using its own systems, staff, and resources across sectors like health, education, and WASH. The Model showcases how these collaborations can be embedded in local development frameworks, strengthening State capacity and district refugee response.

Key Results:

The model has proven effective in sustaining services through strong government integration. Schools and two settlement health facilities were formally coded by the respective ministries, ensuring long-term inclusion in national systems. Even after funding cuts, Koboko district successfully negotiated wage support for 76 additional teachers, demonstrating the government's recognition of the service burden and the strength of existing integration mechanisms.

Effective coordination has also been central to the model's success. Partners meet quarterly to review progress and address gaps, leading to practical solutions such as resolving a mental-health drug shortage when the DPO identified clients needing medication that the local government already had in storage and nearing expiry. This structured collaboration has strengthened service continuity and responsiveness across sectors.

The district's impact is evident in both scale and inclusivity. It currently hosts **6,200**

refugees in the settlement and **34,000 self-settled refugees** across the district. Market inclusion for refugees averages **39%** district-wide and reaches **70%** in settlement markets. Education investments remain strong, with the AEP (run with War Child Canada) allocating **70% of capacity to persons of concern** and **30% to the host community.** Environmental sustainability is reinforced by the planting of **1,044,000 trees,** highlighting the district's commitment to long-term resilience.

Why it Works:

The model functions effectively because it addresses core challenges in the refugee response ecosystem:

- **Sustainability and Burden Sharing:** By routing funding through local systems, the district is better able to **sustain the response even amid funding cuts**. It promotes absorbing contract staff (initially hired with partner support) into the **government payroll** over time.
- **Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness:** The utilization of existing government systems, staff, and resources is **cost-effective** and ensures that staff are permanent government employees,,.
- **Accountability and Alignment:** Reporting for the integrated services is simplified as it is done through **government systems** (like HMIS and AIS), allowing UNHCR to receive reports through the same established channels. This practice aligns service provision with the **localization agenda** and national development priorities.

3.5.2. IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES AND GAPS

Despite these institutional milestones, significant gaps remains with regards to the financing of transition (in particular the running costs of health and education facilities), facility ownership and operational viability. The NTS estimates a ten-year transition budget of UGX 6.638 trillion (approximately $1.8 billion USD), with the Education Sector accounting for 81% of this projected cost (UGX 5.386 trillion). There has been a recognition that these budgets need to be prioritised and adapted to short-term and medium-term scenarios, given the current context.

The current system faces a ***financial dependency*** crisis. The high dependency on donor funding was starkly exposed by recent funding cuts from key donors: in 2024 there were 5,411 teachers in refugee settlements, of which 1,037 were funded by Government and 4,374 by UNHCR and other partners. Given the funding reductions in

2025, the number of teachers decreased to 4,117, of which 1,364 paid by Government and 2,753 by UNHCR and partners. As a result of Education Cannot Wait (ECW) deprioritising Uganda from 2026, the current secured funding enables payment of only 2,154 teachers from January 2026 (of which 1,364 by Government and the remaining 790 by partners). If not addressed urgently, this will have wide-reaching consequences, affecting 92 schools and thousands of school children.

The situation for health workers is equally critical: the confirmed budget for 2026 allows for payment of only 1,183 health workers of which 637 by the Government of Uganda, 50 by UNHCR and 460 by other partners. This would mean an over 50% reduction in health workers compared to 2025 (who are already conducting an average of 53 consultations per day in Q3 2025).

3.5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAYS FORWARD

S/N	RECOMMENDATION	BREAKDOWN / KEY ACTIONS
1	Finalise the cabinet approval of the NTS to formalise the government's commitment	• The immediate priority is the Cabinet approval of the NTS to formalize the government's commitment, as well as the development of prioritized budgets and activities in the short and medium term. Concurrently, line ministries (MoH, MoES, MWE) must reassess budgets to distinguish between realistic government contributions and necessary donor support for recurrent costs.
2	Secure multi-year development financing from Government, as well as both traditional and non-traditional donors to fund the transition process	• MoFPED and OPM to hold further discussions with partners on financing modalities for the National Transition Strategy and • Promote private sector co-financing

4

PLEDGE MATCHING AND MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CONTRIBUTIONS

4. PLEDGE MATCHING AND MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CONTRIBUTIONS

4.1 MATCHING PLEDGES AND ALIGNMENT OF HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

“Matching” translates the principle of responsibility sharing into action by pairing policy pledges made by host countries with pledges by donors and implementing partners to provide the financial, material, or technical support necessary for their implementation.

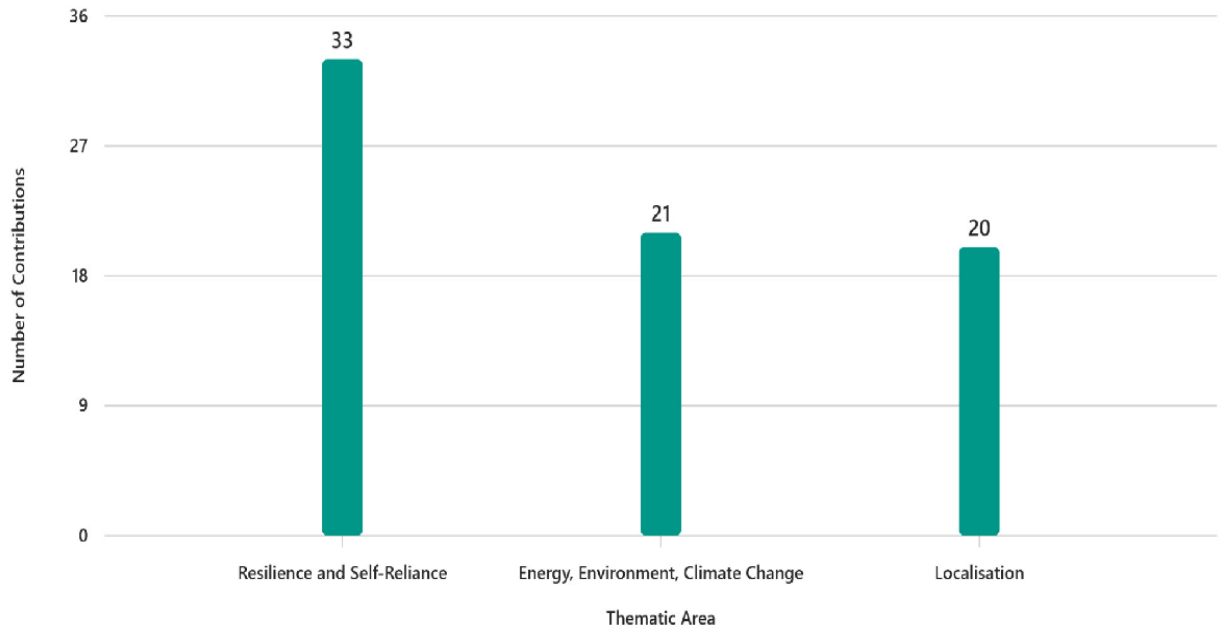
At the GRF 2023, Uganda received **93 pledges made by 63 entities**, the highest number of matching pledges received by any country. Some of the 93 pledges were global or regional pledges, i.e. also targeting other countries besides Uganda.

In 2024, the CRRF Secretariat held a number of bilateral engagements with pledging entities to identify their scope and financial commitments. These efforts were intensified in 2025, through a questionnaire administered to all pledging entities, as well as to development partners who did not make their own pledges, but who contributed to the achievement of the GoU pledges (see chapter 2.0 for a description of the methodology).

44 entities responded to the questionnaire, of which 34 had made pledges at the GRF, while 10 had not pledged.

Out of the 34 pledging entities, 24 were able to specify their financial commitments, which resulted to an overall **373 Mio USD in commitments,** of which **220 Mio USD (60%)** had already been mobilised. For a detailed breakdown of funds committed and funds mobilized for per pledging entity, see Annex 2.

The following graph shows how many partners who filled in the questionnaire are contributing to which thematic area, with Resilience and Self-Reliance receiving the highest number of **contributions (33),** followed by **Energy, Environment and Climate Change (21)** and **Localisation (20).**



Many **development partners are aligning with the GRF priority areas,** even if they did not make a pledge themselves. Their contributions need to be taken into account when assessing the progress of government pledges.

In order to gain a better understanding of development partners' contributions to the refugee response, a mapping of development funding was conducted through the CRRF Development Partners Group end of 2024.

According to this mapping, which collected data from 15 donors, **2.09 Billion USD** had been committed in **development funding for the refugee response from 2016 to 2024,** including both on and off-budget resources. As of December 2024, it was estimated that 1.2 Billion USD had been disbursed between 2016 and 2023, an additional 311 Million USD had been disbursed in 2024, while 582 Million USD were still to be disbursed in 2025 and beyond. The majority of partners reported that their projects were contributing to one of more of the GRF thematic areas.

Contributions of the Uganda Humanitarian INGO (HINGO) Forum:

The Uganda Humanitarian INGO (HINGO) Forum made 9 pledges at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum. 5 of these pledges were in support of the Government of Uganda pledges on self-reliance, climate change, localization, durable solutions and transition management. HINGO made a further 4 pledges focusing on inclusion of children and women in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus, support to refugee-leadership in programmes and coordination and advocacy to build international support and solidarity or the Uganda Refugee Model.

For the mid-term pledge review, HINGO compiled reports from its membership on the activities conducted aligned to the pledges made. HINGO then reported

on progress both to the Global Refugee Forum directly, and facilitated members to report their progress against the Government of Uganda pledges.

In total, members reported 50 projects supporting the HINGO pledges totaling 111 million USD. Importantly, the pledges highlight the increased number of local and refugee-led organizations partnering with INGOs to deliver services to refugees and host communities in the refugee-hosting districts.

4.2 CHALLENGES WITH MATCHING PLEDGES

While the GoU pledges and five thematic instruments have been key in setting the strategic priority areas for the Refugee Response and have allowed partners to mobilize development funds, some challenges remain.

A significant gap still exists between global commitments and ground-level implementation. A number of pledges made by partners at the GRF 2023 are still subject to resource mobilisation, and while most interventions by partners fall (broadly) under one of the GRF thematic areas, they do not always address the specific objectives set by Government. It is also difficult to ascertain how much of the funding reported one for pledge implementation is "new" money, i.e. how much funds were a direct outcome of the pledging process (and what had already been committed before).

Tracking the implementation of the pledges also proves challenging – partners face multiple requests for reporting which can generate reporting fatigue, and not all pledging entities are based in Uganda – especially for pledges made at Global or Regional level; which makes it very difficult to obtain information.

It is therefore recommended to the organisers of the Global Refugee Forum to introduce a verification mechanism to ensure pledges are new, targets are measurable and linked to additional resources or innovative approaches.

4.3 PROGRESS ON THE UN COMMON PLEDGE 2.0

At the Global Refugee Forum in 2019, the UN Secretary-General and the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator committed UN entities to systematically include refugees in analyses, planning, and national systems, working alongside refugee-hosting governments and communities. In preparation for the 2023 Forum, over 20 UN entities co-created the UN Common Pledge 2.0, renewing and strengthening this commitment to integrating

refugees into national plans, budgets, datasets, and service delivery systems. This approach underscores the critical role of refugee inclusion in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and ensuring that no one is left behind.

For Uganda, 11 UN agencies—UNHCR, WFP, IOM, FAO, UNICEF, UNDP, UN Women, WHO, ILO, UNFPA, and UNCDF—made pledges under the UN Common Pledge 2.0, collectively pledging USD 235.8 million, of which USD 95.828 million has been mobilized to date.

Substantial progress has been achieved across the pledge's key areas:

Durable Solutions and Protection

- Strengthened health security systems, managing disease outbreaks through improved surveillance and frontline training
- Mapped mobility routes and protection risks, including GBV and trafficking, and facilitated the resettlement of over 10,700 refugees.
- Expanded multi-stakeholder partnerships and joint programming to enhance collective impact.

Self-Reliance, Livelihoods, and Climate Action

- Developed the National Self-Reliance Index and supported 10,500 refugee and host households through self-reliance programmes.
- Tangible results include increased food consumption scores (49.0% to 53.1%), improved dietary diversity (2.8 to 4.7), creation of 8,172 businesses, 10,137 temporary employment opportunities, and support to 1,000+ MSMEs.
- Over 3,500 individuals enrolled in non-formal skills and vocational training; 2,000 women trained to strengthen leadership and SRHR/SGBV service access.
- Integrated refugee priorities into Uganda's NDC 3.0, expanded clean energy access, supported 7,900 energy-efficient initiatives, trained youth in green livelihoods, and implemented large-scale tree planting.

Localisation, Data, and Cross-Border Coordination

- Strengthened early warning and preparedness through border monitoring, empowered local actors to lead inclusive responses, and improved data systems for evidence-based planning via the Operational Data Portal and UCRRP Information Centre.
- Facilitated regional dialogues and built capacity of national taskforce members on anti-trafficking, border management, and victim identification.

In conclusion, the UN Common Pledge 2.0 has provided a vital, unified framework for the UN system in Uganda to support the Government's GRF commitments. Despite challenges, including financial constraints and the need for strengthened government ownership, the pledge has catalysed measurable progress in resilience, protection, gender equality and durable solutions. The achievements demonstrate the power of a coordinated UN response and the critical role of Development Partners and financial institutions in advancing refugees' self-reliance and integration into national systems.

4.4 THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS: POTENTIAL ENGINES OF GROWTH

The engagement of the private sector and the prioritization of innovation have emerged as fundamental components in the shift towards market-based, development-oriented solutions for the refugee response. The GoU in collaboration with development partners, views the private sector as the necessary "engine of growth" to accelerate the HDP nexus. This strategic realignment is anchored in Uganda's GRF commitments, specifically the pledge to promote self-reliance and to create at least 300,000 viable economic opportunities for refugees and host communities by 2027.

The fundamental rationale for Private Sector Engagement (PSE) lies in the recognition of the refugee context as an untapped economic asset rather than a burden. According to a Consumer and Market Study conducted by the International Finance Cooperation (IFC) in 2021, the household consumption expenditure in refugee hosting districts is estimated at $485 million annually.

Private sector actors, driven by the "Four Ps" (Profit, People, Place, and Policies), are increasingly interested in this space, spanning sectors such as manufacturing, finance, agriculture, and ICT. However, while businesses are more and more concerned about corporate social responsibility, their engagement remains contingent on a clear assessment of risk, cost, and benefit. Consequently, clear market opportunities and distribution mechanisms, an enabling environment and "de-risking" strategies are prerequisites for investment.

Some of the key challenges for private sector engagement include:

- **Infrastructure constraints,** among others including poor road networks and limited access to electricity, especially in the West Nile region
- **Limited access to finance, Affordability and Economic vulnerability:** FIs currently have limited tailored financial packages for refugees and host communities.

Collateral is one of the biggest hurdles, as most refugees and host community members lack assets to back credit applications. There is also an ethical debate regarding loaning to this demographic, as it risks trapping vulnerable populations in perpetual debt. There are also issues around affordability of products, e.g. for technologies like solar products, which are quite expensive.

- **Perceptions of Risk:** Refugees are often perceived as constituting a higher risk for doing business and loan repayments, as private sector actors tend to perceive them as a highly mobile demographic.
- **Limited information and awareness on opportunities in refugee hosting districts:** Businesses face "information asymmetry," characterized by a lack of reliable market data.
- **Policy and Regulatory Gaps:** Tax incentives for private sector investment in refugee-hosting districts which could allow for business profitability amidst a potentially longer payback period is currently not available. Stakeholders are also advocating for tax relief on inputs such as imported solar cooking products to lower consumer prices. Additionally, mobilizing climate finance is hindered by weak baseline data in refugee-hosting districts.

To mitigate these challenges, the Government of Uganda is actively strengthening the policy environment. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) has developed the **Private Sector Engagement Strategy (PSES)** for RHDs (2024/25–2028/29), focusing on human capital development and legal frameworks. Concurrently, the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives (MTIC) is spearheading an incentives regime and carrying out ideas to promote innovation, including the JICA-supported Acceleration Program, which includes conducting business contests for refugees and their host communities. Large-scale infrastructure projects, such as the World Bank-backed INVITE project, aim to establish industrial parks in RHDs to spur activity.

The integration of the private sector into Uganda's refugee response represents a complex but essential evolution. By moving toward localization and Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), the response seeks to replace the dependency mindset with ownership and entrepreneurship. However, the long-term sustainability of this transition relies on strengthening the capacity of both the private sector and the local population. As subsidies eventually exit, the continued engagement of market actors will depend on the successful implementation of policy reforms, the reduction of infrastructure deficits, and the creation of genuine, unsubsidized purchasing power within refugee and host communities.

Promoting Access to Finance – Highlighting Good Examples:

Good Practice 1: The Refugee Investment Facility (RIF)

RIF is a blended financing initiative co- managed by iGravity and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), with funding support from DANIDA, ECHO (EU), IKEA Foundation, Hilton Foundation, Novo Nordisk Foundation, and Cabrini. It promotes resilience and self-reliance among refugees and host communities by providing impact-linked loans and technical assistance to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) operating in refugee-hosting areas. RIF adopts an impact-first approach, prioritizing social outcomes over financial returns, and focuses on four investment themes: capacity and skills, decent work, financial inclusion, and access to goods and services.

Key Results:

Through the facility, a total of USD 1,925,000 in impact-linked loans have been extended to six private companies and microfinance institutions (predominantly agribusinesses) working to improve livelihoods and strengthen local economies in refugee and host community settings. Loans are complemented by Technical Assistance grants that are aimed at strengthening business capacity, growth and impact measurement.

Good Practice 2: The GROW Facility

The Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) Project is a Government of Uganda Project, funded by the World Bank, implemented by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and the Private Sector Foundation Uganda in all districts, municipalities and cities. It aims at increasing access to entrepreneurial services that enable female Entrepreneurs to grow their enterprises from micro to small and small to medium in targeted locations, including refugee hosting districts. The project falls within the strategic approach of using large-scale development investments to support refugee inclusion and resilience.

Good Practice 3: The Tondeka Facility

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), in partnership with Pride Bank, has established a revolving concessional loan facility targeting urban refugees, youth, and women.

Key Results:

In the last 2 years, it has financed over 1,800 small businesses and created over 2000 jobs. The revolving facility has now grown from US$200,000 to now US$500,000 and it is available at Pride Bank for refuges in Arua City, Koboko and Gulu City.

4.5 HDP-NEXUS MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PLEDGE

The Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus, often termed the Triple Nexus, is a framework that seeks coherence and complementarity among humanitarian, development, and peace actors to reduce vulnerabilities and address root causes of fragility. In Uganda, this approach is not an end goal but a strategic means to achieve broader objectives, specifically inclusion, self-reliance, and resilience. The 'Multi-Stakeholder Pledge' (MSP), announced at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF), was led by the Government of Japan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with the Government of Uganda also participating as a member.

Uganda is internationally recognized as a pioneer and a role model for the institutionalization and implementation of the Nexus. The government is working to establish a government-led refugee response, with refugee issues integrated into the National Development Plan (NDP IV), District Development Plans (DDPs), and sectoral policy frameworks. The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) serves as a central platform for convening diverse actors. Furthermore, initiatives by ministries other than the Office of the Prime Minister have become more active, and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development has developed the Uganda Self-Reliance Index (SRI), an important tool for both humanitarian and development partners to measure progress toward self-reliance.

Programmatic results demonstrate the practical application of these policies. The HDP-Nexus Forum held on November 6 highlighted several good examples that promote peace and social cohesion (see Chapter 5 for details), initiatives to encourage private sector engagement (see Chapter 4.3), the important roles of local governments (see Chapters 4.5), and how peace can be integrated into humanitarian and development assistance.

To solidify the HDP approach, partners must institutionalize Nexus principles within national policies and mainstream conflict sensitivity to prevent tensions. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive financing strategy that prioritizes multi-year, flexible funding and leverages Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). Furthermore, the leadership of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) to streamline coordination and empower local governments to define priorities should be strengthened.

PRIME
A Coordinate
SPEKE RESORT
CONVENTION CENTER

5

CRUCIAL THEMES: GENDER, INCLUSION AND SOCIAL COHESION

5. CRUCIAL THEMES: GENDER, INCLUSION AND SOCIAL COHESION

Mainstreaming gender, inclusion and social cohesion is not a standalone activity, but a fundamental principle woven into the fabric of Uganda's refugee response. The progress documented across the five GRF thematic areas reveals a concerted effort to ensure that the interventions reach the most marginalized and that their voices shape the response. This intentional focus on gender, disability, and youth is critical for building a response that is not only sustainable but also equitable and just, transforming pledges into tangible improvements in the lives of all individuals within refugee and host communities.

5.1. ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Women and girls constitute over half of Uganda's refugee population, and 64% of refugee households are female-headed. These populations face specific vulnerabilities, including limited access to resources, heightened exposure to gender-based violence, and exclusion from decision-making structures. Structural inequalities, compounded by traditional gender norms, often restrict women's participation in economic, social, and governance activities, making them more vulnerable to poverty and marginalization.

In response, Uganda's refugee programmes have increasingly adopted gender-responsive approaches to strengthen self-reliance, resilience, and protection. Examples include initiatives that integrate skills development, financial literacy, and access to savings and credit, alongside interventions aimed at changing social norms. Community-focused programs encourage equitable household decision-making, while mentorship and enterprise support empower women to lead and sustain livelihoods. Women are increasingly taking leadership roles in refugee and host communities, with women-led organisations (WLOs) playing a crucial role in advocacy, community mobilization, and ensuring women's voices shape humanitarian programming.

Despite these advances, structural challenges remain. Unpaid care work continues to disproportionately burden women, limiting their participation in training, livelihoods, and leadership opportunities. Broader structural barriers—including limited inclusion in governance structures at local and national levels, restricted access to financial and productive resources, and social norms that constrain mobility and decision-making—persist. The lack of sex, age, and disability-disaggregated (SADD) data further limits

the ability to design and monitor interventions that meet the specific needs of women and girls, potentially undermining the achievement of GRF pledges.

Good Practice: Gender-Transformative Programming – UN Women's LEAP Program

With support from Norway, UN Women's LEAP program is its flagship humanitarian initiative in Uganda, using a gender-transformative approach to strengthen refugee and host-community women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access, and Participation. The programme links education, skills training (including non-traditional trades), financial inclusion, entrepreneurship support, social-norms change, and protection, enabling women to achieve self-reliance, participate in decision-making, transform traditional gender norms, and link protection with sustainable livelihoods. Unlike traditional programs, LEAP explicitly addresses power dynamics at household and community levels and removes structural barriers limiting women's participation in economic, social, and governance spheres.

Key Results:

- **Economic empowerment:** 1,000 women trained in traditional and non-traditional income-generating activities, 3,356 gained literacy and numeracy skills, 3,000 women business owners supported, and 330 VSLAs reaching 100,000 women and youth.
- **Social norms change:** 25,000 men and women engaged in SASA (Start, Awareness, Support, Action) and Gender Action Learning System (GALS) programs, promoting equitable decision-making and women's control over resources.
- **Leadership and capacity:** Women's representation in refugee leadership increased from 15% (2017) to 55% (2025); 500 humanitarian actors trained in gender-responsive action; Uganda's RRP Gender and Age Marker (GAM) score improved from 1 (2021) to 4 (2024).

Why It Works:

LEAP's integrated model demonstrates that combining economic empowerment, social-norms change, and protection creates truly gender-transformative outcomes. Women gain not only skills and income but also decision-making power, leadership opportunities, and safer environments, ensuring long-term self-reliance and community resilience in humanitarian contexts.

5.2. ENSURING THE INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The inclusion of persons with disabilities is being systematically tracked and advanced, with affirmative actions embedded within key pledges. A standout achievement is in the skilling sector, where the target was to increase the number of students with special needs accessing vocational education from 1,200 to 4,800. The report shows significant progress, with 4,000 students with special needs already trained and assessed under both informal and formal programs, putting this commitment firmly "On Track". This demonstrates a deliberate effort to create accessible learning pathways and ensure that persons with disabilities can acquire the skills needed for self-reliance.

Looking ahead, specific programmes are now being designed with disability inclusion at their core. The AVSI Foundation's work on the "Graduating to Economic Resilience Scale" project, funded by FCDO, explicitly includes a focus on "Disability and Early Childhood Development (ECD) inclusion" in the Kyaka and Kyangwali settlements. This represents an evolution from mainstreaming to targeted, dedicated support within larger frameworks. By intentionally designing for inclusion and tracking progress against clear targets, the response is working to ensure that persons with disabilities are not left behind but are active participants and beneficiaries in the journey towards self-reliance.

5.3. ENGAGING YOUTH IN THE REFUGEE RESPONSE

Youth engagement is strategically focused on equipping the next generation with the skills, opportunities, and innovative capacity to drive their own futures and contribute to their communities. Under Pledge Nr. 1, 15,180 youth have been enrolled in TVET and non-formal skilling programmes, while the establishment of 10 job centres and satellite stations in settlements and host communities provides physical hubs where youth can access career guidance, market information, and employment linkages.

The response is also tapping into youth potential for green innovation and climate action. A notable example is IOM's E-Waste Innovation which has trained youth in e-waste repair and recycling, creating green livelihoods in a sector with high future potential.

Moreover, the architecture of the response itself is creating space for youth leadership. The active involvement of refugee-led organizations (RLOs) like the African Youth

Action Network (AYAN) as implementing partners (not just participants) in major initiatives such as SOLCO ensures that interventions are youth-informed and culturally relevant. This multi-faceted approach, combining education, green jobs, and leadership opportunities, recognises youth not as a vulnerable group, but as essential agents of change and architects of a more sustainable and cohesive society.

5.4. EMBEDDING PEACE IN THE REFUGEE RESPONSE

The National Stocktaking and HDP-Nexus Forum emphasized the need to institutionalize peace as a foundational pillar and to pursue it through consistent and deliberate action. Uganda reaffirmed its longstanding commitment to maintaining a peaceful and stable environment as the foundation of its refugee policy. Peace is recognized both as a condition that makes Uganda a safe place of refuge and as a central outcome that the response must continually nurture.

Within this framework, a diverse range of actors—including the government, local authorities, humanitarian and development partners, international organizations, refugees, and host communities—are actively engaged in achieving these objectives. For example, a lack of development in refugee-hosting areas can often generate grievances, challenge social cohesion, and destabilize peace. To mitigate these risks, local governments, together with development partners, are implementing an area-based development approach, with support from the World Bank and JICA.

Stakeholders acknowledged that Uganda's continued investments in inclusive service delivery—including roads, energy systems, community market infrastructure, community policing, and social services—anchor social cohesion and reduce the risk of conflict. At the same time, the government and partners emphasized that each settlement has distinct historical and cultural dynamics, requiring approaches tailored to local realities rather than uniform solutions. NGOs, CBOs, and RLOs, which have a deep understanding of local contexts, play a key role in supporting these efforts.

Intercultural exchange remains a core strategy within Uganda's peace framework. Expanding language learning programs, structured community dialogues, and joint activities between refugee and host communities were highlighted as effective tools for easing tensions. Local peace actors—including religious leaders, cultural institutions, women's groups, and first responders—are recognized as trusted mediators, and their involvement strengthens early conflict resolution efforts.

District-level planning and coordination mechanisms, including inter-agency meetings and political leadership platforms, continue to serve as Uganda's frontline system for

detecting and managing emerging conflicts.

5.4.1. PROGRESS IN SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND COHESION

Partners shared lessons in social integration and cohesion in refugee response, including:

- Mainstreaming conflict sensitivity analysis across programming, screening proposed programs for potential conflict triggers, including around natural resources in refugee hosting districts. UNDP worked with and supported the delivery of multi-sectoral support to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) while ensuring access to justice, psychosocial support, and livelihood opportunities for survivors. Taken together, this and the connection between essential social services (such as health centres, water points, schools, markets, and religious facilities) contributed to improved access to essential services and promoted community social cohesion through increased interaction among community members.

For example, JICA's Northern Uganda Farmers Livelihood Improvement Project (NUFLIP), when providing agricultural support in conflict-affected areas, goes beyond technical farming assistance by integrating household-level behavior change. This includes family goal-setting, gender discussions, nutrition planning, and household cash-flow management, which help improve family relationships, decision-making, and long-term planning, thereby enhancing livelihoods. Such a comprehensive livelihoods improvement model, which incorporates psychosocial and behavioral support, not only produces synergistic effects with agricultural outcomes but also contributes to peace within households through improved gender balance, builds trust, and ultimately promotes community-level peace, making it an approach that supports sustainable development.

- Partnering with national religious institutions, who support host communities in welcoming refugees as members of the wider human family. Through church and mosque-based development committees and parish-level structures, faith actors help prepare communities, address misconceptions, and defuse tensions early.

Civil society organizations remain essential partners in localizing the HDP-N. CSOs support culturally grounded mediation, deliver dignity-restoring services such as emergency cash and dignity kits, and reinforce the principle that peace encompasses not only the absence of violence but freedom from fear and deprivation.

5.4.2. PEACE IN DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

The Government highlighted ongoing work to operationalize community security through inclusive planning and regular dialogue. The Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP) remains a flagship initiative, advancing:

- Broader community participation in collective decision-making;
- Local mechanisms for managing conflicts as they arise;
- Enhanced capacity of Local Councils and district structures to act as credible, accessible conflict-management bodies.

These structures help anchor peace at the most local level, where tensions first appear. The planning process itself has become a mechanism for relationship-building between refugees and host communities. Embedding peace in District Development Plans (DDPs) has thus emerged as a good practice. Shared infrastructure (schools, health facilities, shared market facilities supported by UNDP, community access roads, and most recently a new solar mini grid supported by the German Development Cooperation through GIZ in Obongi) has strengthened cooperation, access and reduced disputes over services. These plans also include joint management measures to safeguard community assets from theft or misuse. In addition, JICA's PROCEED project, the Project for Strengthening Resilience in Refugee-Hosting and Affected Districts in the West Nile Sub-Region, supports mechanisms that enable refugees and host communities to jointly develop local development plans, ensuring that the needs of refugees are appropriately incorporated into Local Government Development Plans.

5.4.3. ADVANCING THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA IN REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS

Uganda has been a continental frontrunner on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) since adopting its first National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325 in 2008. The third NAP, endorsed by H.E. the President in 2021, further strengthens a comprehensive

approach across the four WPS pillars—prevention, protection, participation, and relief and recovery—and responds to emerging threats linked to climate shocks, pandemics and humanitarian crises.

In refugee-hosting districts, recent influxes have heightened risks of localized conflict and insecurity. In Northern Uganda's post-conflict communities, pressure on land, water and forest resources intersects with limited economic opportunities. In the Southwest, spillovers from instability in Eastern DRC have exacerbated tensions and raised concerns around violent extremism, radicalisation and sexual exploitation and abuse, in a context where women and children constitute the majority of the displaced, and funding for essential services is declining. Climate-related flooding, deforestation and erratic weather patterns further strain food systems and nutrition, with gendered impacts increasing women's and girls' exposure to gender-based violence.

Implementation of NAP 1325 in refugee settlements has advanced through localisation. Localised Action Plans (LAPs) on 1325—developed and costed within district planning frameworks—have anchored WPS priorities for both refugee and host communities. Local Action Plans developed with women leaders, cultural authorities, and women-led CSOs ensure that peacebuilding responds to the gendered realities of conflict and displacement. In Yumbe, for example, the LAP—supported by UN Women—prioritises women's protection and participation and recognises women's roles in water and land management as central to preventing inter-community conflict. The Ministry of Internal Affairs' Early Warning and Early Response Conflict Prevention Unit has revitalised district peace committees, while targeted programming is expanding women mediators' networks in refugee settlements. The government of Japan, through UN Women, supports peacebuilding and conflict mitigation in refugee settlements, supporting 150 women gain leadership and conflict analysis skills, while 500 refugee and host community women and youth are engaged in formal and informal peace structures.

Despite progress, gaps remain in gender-responsive security operations, access to protection, and the inclusion of refugee and host community women in peace processes. Funding cuts risk heightened tensions and violence, making it essential to sustain investment in social cohesion, strengthen protection for women and girls, and ensure their meaningful participation in peace and security in refugee settlements.

6

CONCLUSIONS AND CONSOLIDATED RECOMMENDATIONS

6. CONCLUSIONS AND CONSOLIDATED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GRF PROGRESS REVIEW AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE HDP- NEXUS

6.1. STRATEGIC CONCLUSION

The stocktaking exercise reveals mixed results. On the one hand, the GRF framework and the clear priority areas set by the Government of Uganda at the Global Refugee Forum 2023 have undeniably catalysed significant, measurable progress. The pledges and Uganda's five thematic areas have received commitment from Government and partners alike and fostered unprecedented multi-stakeholder collaboration.

The strong focus on initiatives to promote self-reliance and the launch of the national SRI, efforts to promote integrated service delivery and localisation, and a strong commitment to promote climate change adaptation and sustainable energy solutions all have the potential to make the Ugandan Model more sustainable, if successfully implemented.

On the other hand, this progress is extremely fragile: Uganda's ambitious GRF commitments are being severely tested by the current context, in which partners need to prioritise lifesaving and emergency interventions, potentially at the cost of longer-term, development-oriented solutions. At the same time, needs are expected to further increase, with projections by UNHCR estimating an additional 200,000 refugees in 2026.

In order to sustain the Ugandan Model and the wellbeing of refugees, the Government of Uganda and partners should focus on the following areas in the next two years leading up to the GRF 2027:

6.1.1. **A stronger regional approach** to displacement and conflict prevention, and strengthened diplomatic and multi-stakeholder engagements to support durable solutions and create conducive conditions for voluntary return;

6.1.2. **Scaling-up of proven approaches** to support refugees' and host communities' self- reliance and climate-smart economic inclusion;

6.1.3. **Long-term development investments** aligned with humanitarian needs to promote Uganda's national development goals and Transition agenda;

6.1.4. Ensure the **cost-efficiency and effectiveness of interventions:** Invest directly in local government capacity and national NGOs to reduce overheads, ensure contextual relevance and build lasting systems;

6.1.5. Promote **joint and complementary interventions, strengthened coordination** and sharing of data and lessons learnt to make informed decisions on the allocation of resources;

6.1.6. Drive forward the **implementation and resourcing of strategies and address bureaucratic barriers,** e.g. to ease the process for refugees to obtain a work permit;

6.1.7. **Engage non-traditional actors,** including the private sector by creating investment incentives in host districts, and consciously linking refugees and hosts to national and regional value chains;

6.1.8. Continue to **advocate for more responsibility-sharing,** including expanded resettlement and complementary pathways for refugees.

6.2. ADVANCING THE HDP-NEXUS THROUGH WHOLE-OF- SOCIETY AND WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACHES

Accelerated progress calls for the increased integration of HDP-N principles within the CRRF Framework, the National Development Plan, relevant sector policies (e.g. education, health and water) and in the Draft Refugee Policy for Uganda.

Strengthening whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches will ensure that the refugee response is embedded within the country's long-term development process, rather than operating as a parallel system. This requires the adoption of a national HDP–N policy directive – a government-led framework or policy statement that provides clear guidance for joint outcomes across ministries, local governments, and humanitarian and development partners. Such a directive would create the institutional structures necessary to advance coherence, support predictable planning, and strengthen accountability for results.

Within this, three key concerns were raised;

1. **The need to reinforce national leadership and coordination,** particularly the central role of OPM in aligning ministries, districts, and partners around shared HDP–N outcomes, while clarifying mandates and improving integrated planning and financing;

2. **The importance of empowering district governments and advancing localization,** ensuring that refugee-related priorities are fully reflected in District Development Plans and that DLGs, community-based organizations, and women- and youth-led groups have the technical and financial capacity to manage programmes and resources effectively;
3. **The need to mainstream conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding,** integrating prevention, dialogue, and social cohesion initiatives into sector programmes and local government plans, while leveraging cultural, religious, and traditional institutions to foster reconciliation and strengthen coexistence in refugee-hosting districts.

6.3. A CALL TO ACTION: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

To avert a reversal of the progress achieved and to accelerate impact, this report issues a consolidated call to action, demanding targeted commitments from all stakeholders at the December GRF Progress Review:

To the Government of Uganda:

1. **Champion the Investment Case:** Lead a high-level advocacy campaign, that highlights the cost of inaction and showcases the investment into the refugee response as a strategic investment in national development and regional stability.
2. **Increase Domestic Resource Mobilization and Public Financing:** Expand budgetary allocations for service delivery and HDP-N interventions in refugee hosting districts. Strengthen fiscal decentralization, local government financing and human resource capacities to support sustained delivery of integrated services.
3. **Finalize and Drive Key Strategies:** Expedite the official launch, resourcing, and implementation of the National Localization Strategy and the National Transition Strategy, providing a clear framework for partners for aligned action.
4. **Promote Private Sector Engagement:** Implement the recommended regulatory reforms, including waivers for Convention Travel Documents for employment and incentives for businesses investing in host districts, to unlock the economic potential of the refugee and host community population. Drive forward the implementation of the Private Sector Engagement Strategy.
5. **Enhance Strategic Planning and Coordination Mechanisms:** Strengthen integrated planning and coordination frameworks across humanitarian, development, and peace actors under the leadership of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

Ensure coherent linkages between national, district, and local structures to drive unified action, track progress, and improve overall efficiency in Uganda's refugee response.

6. **Strengthen Regional and Cross-Border Collaboration:** Foster cross border collaboration with regional entities such as IGAD to promote regional policy coherence, coordination, and shared learning across member states in addressing displacement and resilience challenges. Pursue stronger coordination and collaboration among international partners to advance durable solutions, including joint efforts toward post-conflict recovery and social reconstruction in refugee-producing countries.

To Donors and Implementing Partners:

1. **Bridge the Immediate Gap:** Urgently disburse flexible funding to reinstate critical services, particularly for teachers and health workers facing layoffs, and reverse the ration cuts that threaten food security.
2. **Pledge predictable, flexible and multi-year development financing** aligned with humanitarian needs and national development priorities, including Uganda's National Transition Strategy. Adopt adaptive and context-responsive programming approaches that allow humanitarian, development, and peace actors to adjust interventions to evolving political, social, and environmental dynamics.
3. **Promote Localization and Empower Local Actors:** Advance a deliberate shift toward localization, empowering DLGs, community-based organizations, and women-led and youth-led groups to define priorities, implement programmes, and manage resources. Strengthen their technical and financial capacity to enhance local ownership, accountability, trust, and social cohesion within refugee-hosting communities. Commit to and report against the Grand Bargain and GRF target of channelling at least 25% of program funds directly to national and local actors, including refugee-led organizations, by the end of 2027.
4. **Embrace Cost Efficiency and joint planning:** Invest in shared services (e.g. joint logistics, human resources) to reduce overheads and free up a greater proportion of resources for direct programming.
5. **Align for Accountability:** Ensure all interventions are explicitly mapped against the specific objectives of the Government of Uganda's GRF pledges, with transparent reporting through government systems.
6. **Improve coordination and regional-level programming:** Further enhance coordination to ensure the complementarity of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding initiatives and institutionalize regional-level programming and

cross-border partnerships to promote coherence in addressing shared risks, displacement dynamics, and structural drivers of fragility in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa region.

7. **Mainstream conflict sensitivity peacebuilding, gender equality and social inclusion:** Embed peace and social cohesion objectives into humanitarian and development planning to prevent tensions in refugee-hosting communities. Ensure all programmes are gender-responsive and socially inclusive, addressing the specific needs of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups. Promote equitable participation in decision-making, resource access, and livelihood opportunities to achieve inclusive and sustainable development.

7

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: BREAKDOWN OF PROGRESS FOR THEMATIC AREAS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

THEMATIC AREA 1: INCREASING RESILIENCE AND SELF RELIANCE

Uganda pledges to create a minimum of 300,000 viable economic opportunities for refugees and host communities by 2027.

Lead Ministry: Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development

Partner Ministries: Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives

Policy Frameworks/Ministry Mandate

- Jobs And Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities in Uganda (2020/ 2021 - 2024/ 2025)
- UCRRP (Uganda Refugee Response Plan) Refugee Livelihoods and Resilience Sector Strategy (2022-2025)
- Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities

This shall be realized by including refugees in agricultural value chains, increasing agricultural production and productivity, enabling private sector investments, promoting graduation and market systems development approaches, increasing access to formal and non-formal vocational skills training, promoting the development of market relevant skills and employment creation.

A total of **223,463 viable economic opportunities** have been created for refugees and host communities, with an estimated **56% for women and 44% for men**[8]. The disaggregated data showed that the Government worked with 20 agencies and institutions to create 96,451 economic opportunities in host communities and 124,334 economic opportunities for refugees.

Performance	Likelihood of achieving target
74 % of the viable economic opportunities have been created	ON TRACK

8 For gender-disaggregated data throughout the report, the disaggregation is based on estimates as not all partners reported gender-disaggregated data.

No	Pledge	Progress Made: Dec. 2023 - Oct. 2025	Assessment	Contributing Partners
A	**MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (MGLSD)**			
1	Promoting the development of relevant labour market skills and employment creation through establishment and operationalization of 5 regional job centres with satellite stations in 13 refugee settlements (including Kampala urban) and host communities by 2027, to enhance skills needs assessment, employability skills training (basic, technical, and soft), counselling and guidance, mentorship and job matching services for at least 1,500 refugees and host community members.	10 job centers or job satellite stations established and operationalized with partners: AVSi Foundation, FAO, ILO • 3 of 5 regional job centres have been created. (Mbarara, Arua & Lira) • 7 of 13 satellite job stations have been created. (Madi-Okollo, Isingiro, Terego, Mbale, Kiryandongo, Nakivale and Rhino)	ON TRACK	AVSI, FAO, ILO
2	Developing national minimum standard indicators for measuring self-reliance and resilience of refugees and host communities in order to measure partner commitments, and investments and contribute to building an evidence base on sustainable livelihoods and self-reliance in Uganda by improving the measurement and understanding of key drivers of self-reliance and resilience.	The Uganda Self Reliance Index (SRI) has been developed and launched in November 2025.	TARGET ACHIEVED	WFP

3	Developing and deploying a measurement tool to assess: the movement towards or away from self-reliance among refugee and host community households, the types of households that tend to make more or less progress, and the identification of some of the key barriers and enablers of self-reliance.	The Uganda Self Reliance Index (SRI) was launched in November 2025	ON TRACK	WFP
B	**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES (MAAIF)**			
1	Increasing sustainable agricultural productivity from the current average of 50% to 75% of the yield potential by 2027 for food, nutrition and income security in the refugee settlements and host communities.			
	1.a Promoting climate-resilient productivity through climate-smart agriculture practices and natural resource management	93,190 smallholder farmers (appr. 60% women and 40% men) supported to adopt or use climate sector agriculture practices	NO SET TARGET PROGRESS MADE	AYAN, AVSI, DCA, FAO, Germany, Give Directly, ILO, Italy, KCCA, LWF, Denmark, UBF, UN WOMEN, UNDP, WFP
	1.b Increasing access to small and micro-scale irrigation facilities for at least 300,000 smallholder farmers in the refugee settlements and host communities	2,055 micro and smallholder farmers supported to access small and micro-scale irrigation facilities	NOT ON TRACK	DCA, Mercy Corps, Uganda Bioversity Fund (UBF), WFP
	1.c Increasing access to appropriate agricultural mechanization technologies for at least 300,000 smallholder farmers in refugee settlements and host communities		NO DATA	

2	Promoting value addition of agricultural produce through provision of matching grants and subsidies for machinery, clean energy, post-harvest management, secondary processing equipment, packaging materials and appropriate infrastructure facilities.	2,936 of matching grants and subsidies worth a total of 1.4 Mio USD provided for agriculture machinery, clean energy, post-harvest management, secondary processing equipment, packaging materials and appropriate infrastructure facilities	NO SET TARGET PROGRESS MADE	DCA, FAO, JICA, Last Mile Climate, LWF, PSFU, UN WOMEN, WFP
3	Facilitating sustainable development of at least 15 agricultural value chains in refugee settlements and host communities to contribute to the creation of 300,000 economic opportunities.	20 agricultural value chains established Fish, Poultry, Piggery, Goats, Egg, Market vegetables, Onion, Mushrooms, Maize, Passion Fruits, Cassava, Rice, Sesame, Sunflower, Groundnuts, Sheanuts, Apiary, Beans, Soybeans, Sorghum, soldier flies	TARGET EXCEEDED	DCA, ILO, Mercy Corps, UBF, UN Women, UNDP, WFP
4	Scaling-up private sector initiatives and engagements in refugee settlements and host communities through market systems development.		NO DATA	
5	Increasing access to Agricultural Extension Services to at least 300,000 smallholders in refugee settlements and host communities.	40,016 smallholder farmers accessing Agricultural Extension Services	NOT ON TRACK	FAO, WFP, LWF, AYAN, KCCA, DCA, UN Women, Italy, Denmark, UNDP
C	**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS (MOES)**			
Increasing the number of students and other non-formal trainees accessing vocational education skills from the current 13,680 to 54,720 by 2027 through:				
1	Providing sponsorships to 41,040 refugee and host community students and other trainees, including youth and women in non-formal skilling programmes in TVET institutions	12,176 refugees and host communities provided with scholarships in TVET	NOT ON TRACK	Germany, ILO, WFP, UNDP, UN WOMEN, FAO, CECI, DCA, JRS

2	Strengthening affirmative actions to increase the number of students with special needs and other persons with disabilities accessing vocational education skills from the current 1,200 to 4,800	4,000 students with special needs trained and assessed under informal programs and formal programs	ON TRACK	
3	Providing startup kits for 54,720 trained refugee and host community students to attain self-employability, income security, self-reliance, and resilience	37,948 refugees and host communities (appr. 77% women and 23% men) provided with startup kits	ON TRACK	AVSI, CECI, DCA, Netherlands, FAO, Germany, ILO, Italy, JRS, Mercy Corps, Denmark, UN Women, UNDP, WFP
4	Developing a national qualifications framework to guide the skilling of refugees and host communities	1 National qualifications framework developed	TARGET ACHIEVED	
5	Developing 45 formal and non-formal modules for skilling refugees and host communities	84 modules developed into flexible training packages to suit the refugees needs, and reviewed 7 Assessment and training packages	TARGET EXCEEDED	DCA, FAO, ILO, UN WOMEN
6	Awarding and certifying 54,720 refugees and host community candidates with certificates, diplomas, and certificates of competence	3,181 students awarded with certificates	NOT ON TRACK	CECI, FAO, ILO, JRS, UN WOMEN, UNDP, WFP
D	**MINISTRY OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (MTIC)**			
1	Setting up at least 13 workspaces with common user facilities in 13 refugee settlements	The Ministry's extension staff (commercial Officers) profiled the common user facility needs in their respective areas	NOT ON TRACK	
2	Setting up refugee-friendly procedures and charges for certification of products made by refugees through a 10% reduction on such charges and simplification of procedures			

3	Setting up at least 7 inclusive business incubation hubs in 13 refugee settlements	4 incubation facilities have been setup Including: • leather training and common user facility center in Nakawa, Industrial Area • Textile Development Agency Centre (TEXDA) in Namave • Leather common user Facility Centre at MTAC	ON TRACK	
4	Spearheading initiatives to allocate at least 10% of the proportions of stalls in markets to refugee market vendors, prioritizing new markets and gradual enrolment in old markets	Yumbe 35% Terego 37% Madi Okollo 31% Adjumani 41% (72% in settlements) Kyegeggwa 15% Isingiro 54% Kikuube 53% Kamwenge 8% (central market) / 99% (4 markets in settlements) Kiryandongo 2.7% Obongi 49% (70% in settlement markets) Lamwo 74%	ON TRACK Average: 39% 9 of 11 districts have more than 10% of stalls in markers allocated to refugees 2 of 11 districts have less than 10% allocation	
5	Providing tailored business development services (BDS) to 240,000 refugees, for family businesses and companies	77,073 refugees (appr. 63% women, 37% men) provided with BDS in RHDs BDS services have been provided in all RHD by Commercial Officers as extension staff of the Ministry	NOT ON TRACK	AVSI, DCA,

6	Spearheading initiatives to facilitate business registration by 5% cuts on fees and simplification of procedures	The cost of business registration increased from UGX 24000 to UGX90000 while the cost of the company form 20 increased from UGX 20000 to UGX 30000. The increase was caused by the higher non-tax revenue targets set for URSB.	NO PROGRESS	
7	Automate application and issuance of clearance certificates for foreign traders	The Ministry has finalized automation of application and issuance of certificates. This will be popularized to attract more refugees' entrepreneurs to trade legally.	ON TRACK	
8	Carrying out ideations to promote innovations in refugee settlements	The Ministry under the Entrepreneurship support and Startup ecosystem Strengthening Advisory Project by JICA interested Refugee entrepreneurs to participate in the Acceleration Program through a competitive process.	ON TRACK	JICA

THEMATIC AREA 2: ADDRESSING ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND ENERGY CHALLENGES

The Government of Uganda commits to include refugees and their specific situations in its nationally determined contributions and adaptation plans to effectively reduce the carbon emissions from deforestation and to enhance access to safe, clean, and affordable energy in refugee hosting districts by 2027

Lead Ministry: The Ministry of Water and Environment working with the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development

Progress updates

- Launch of the Water and Environment Sector Refugee Response Plan II which includes the GRF Pledges (supported by GIZ)
- Signing of the MOU between OPM, MWE and UNHCR for transitioning of Water Supply Systems from humanitarian to Utility model.
- Ongoing process to include refugees and their specific situations in Uganda's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) 3.0 (supported among others by UNDP and UNEP)
- Capacity-strengthening of refugees for the National Adaptation Plan (NAP): Workshop organized by Refugees International on Capacity-Building Convening for Refugee Leaders on Climate: Together towards Uganda's National Adaptation Plan,

No	Pledge	Progress Made: 2023 - 2025	Assessment	Contributing partners
A	**MINISTRY OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENT**			
1	Promoting gender-responsive, low-carbon and climate-resilient development through the application of science- and nature-based solutions in all refugee hosting districts especially enhance climate-smart agriculture through:			
	6.a 400 Ha of climate-smart agriculture established across 12 refugee hosting districts 6.b 200 Ha of climate-smart irrigation established in 12 refugee hosting districts.	6,395 Ha of land established using climate smart agriculture in refugee hosting districts	TARGET EXCEEDED	UNDP, Caritas Uganda, Danish Church Aid, Uganda Biodiveristy Trust Fund, FAO, Live in Green, Royal Danish Embassy
2	Improve access to climate resilient WASH facilities – 80% of refugees and host communities to have access.	50 Solar-powered pumping stations have been implemented in refugee-hosting districts Climate-resilient WASH infrastructure (flood-and drought-proof designs) have been developed for Arua area	ON TRACK	World Bank, KfW and GIZ
3	Strengthening of early warning systems for climate-related disaster risk reduction by:			
	1.a installing 20 hydrological monitoring stations (10 surface water and 10 groundwater systems) including rehabilitation of 10 existing surface water monitoring stations.	No funding for implementation secured from GoU nor Partners	NOT IMPLEMENTED	

	1.b digitalization of all existing data and capacity building of Water Resources Managers in the use of Hydrological Applications in analytical skills.	No funding for implementation secured from GoU nor Partners	NOT IMPLEMENTED	
	1.c promote rational and sustainable use of water for various uses through the issuance of water permits and enforcement of permit conditions.	No funding for implementation secured from GoU nor Partners	NOT IMPLEMENTED	
	1.d establishment of 33 weather stations in the refugee hosting districts to strengthen weather monitoring.	No funding for implementation secured from GoU nor Partners	NOT IMPLEMENTED	
	1.e acquire High Performance Computing facilities including 1 Supercomputer to improve meteorological data processing and generation of area specific and tailored early warning information on weather and climate for the refugee hosting districts. `	No funding for implementation secured from GoU nor Partners	NOT IMPLEMENTED	

	Build capacity of both producers (UNMA staff) and end users (40% and 70% respectively) of weather and climate information to improve the quality, increased access, and utilization of early warning information. strengthening dissemination of early warning information on weather and climate to the last mile (up to 80% of the refugee communities) for planning and decision making to ensure early action and climate change adaptation.	300,000 refugees and host communities have access to early warning weather information. As part of the Uganda Refugee Resilience Initiative (URRI), 4,803 individuals were trained in using weather and climate data, enabling 300,000 people to access weather and climate data.	ON TRACK	Denmark
	Developing 12 Climate Action Plans and promoting climate change awareness and capacity-building programmes in each refugee host district	9 Climate Action Plans have been developed in refugee hosting districts: Yumbe, Koboko, Madi Okollo, Terego, Obongi, Moyo, Adjumani and Kampala	On Track (not yet in each RHD)	Denmark, Jesuit Refugee Service, Uganda Biodiversity Trust Fund, and Dan Church Aid
4	Promoting sustainable ecosystems and livelihoods by:			
	1.a restoring 1,600 hectares of degraded ecosystems (forests, wetlands, riverbanks, lakeshores) and demarcating 400 kilometers as buffer zones.	4,105 Ha of degraded ecosystems (forests, wetlands, riverbanks, lakeshores) restored.	TARGET EXCEEDED	Uganda Biodiversity Fund, FAO and UNDP
	1.b supporting 2,400 households (with a specific focus on women-headed households) with assorted sustainable and environmentally friendly livelihood interventions.	1,250 households supported with assorted sustainable and environmentally friendly livelihoods.	ON TRACK	Caritas and Mercy Corps

	1.c Preparation and implementation of community-driven micro-catchment management plans through:			
	i Preparation of 24 Micro Catchment Management Plans including costed reports on confirmed and priority measures,	7 micro catchment management plans prepared and developed in refugee hosting districts (Lamwo, Kyangwali, Kamwenge, Kyegegwa, Kikuube, Terego, Yumbe)	NOT ON TRACK	UBF, FAO
	ii 50 water source protection plans around selected water sources	6 water source protection plans developed and launched in refugee hosting districts	NOT ON TRACK	UBF, FAO
	iii Implementation of confirmed priority measures in refugee host districts to enable the sustainability of water resources	8 measures implemented to support sustainability of water resources. Including Establishment of 5 dams to enhance sustainable water resources (DanChurchAid), establishing water user committees (FAO) and developing management and restoration plans for wetlands (UBF)	ON TRACK NO TARGET	DanChurchAid, FAO, UBF
4	Strengthening the waste management of plastic, solid, and e-waste through public-private partnerships by:			
	7.a installing 2 incinerators (one in the South-West Region and one in the West-Nile Region)	2 incinerators launched	On Track	Jesuit Refugee Service
	7.b establishing 2 landfill sites (one in the South-West Region and one in the West-Nile Region)		NO DATA	
	launching 12 waste management plans in 12 refugee hosting districts	3 waste management plans launched in refugee hosting districts.	NOT ON TRACK	Live in Green
5	Promoting access to and utilization of safe, clean, and energy-efficient technologies for cooking, lighting, and productive use in all refugee hosting districts by:			

	7.c Connecting 267,000 households, institutions, and other public spaces in the refugee settlements and refugee hosting districts to the grid and 13,500 to the off grid.		NO DATA	
	7.d Ensuring that 2,500 businesses/institutions are using clean energy for productive use within refugee settlements and refugee hosting districts.	516 businesses and institutions have been supported with clean energy	NOT ON TRACK	Caritas, Dan Church Aid, Germany, IOM, Live in Green, UBF, WANA Energy
	7.e Ensuring that 2,600 refugee households and refugee hosting districts have access to user-friendly clean cooking.	34,205 households (appr. 63% female-headed HH, 37 male-heade HH) have been supported to access user-friendly clean cooking	TARGET EXCEEDED	African Clean Energy, AYAN, CECI, DCA, FAO, Germany, IOM, LWF, UN Women, UNDP, WANA Energy
	7.f Promote e-mobility within refugee settlements and refugee hosting districts		NO DATA	

THEMATIC AREA 3: LOCALISING THE REFUGEE RESPONSE: STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF LOCAL AND NATIONAL RESPONDERS

The Government of Uganda pledges to include localisation provisions in strategies and frameworks for the refugee response to strengthen the role of national and local responders and gradually achieve the Grand Bargain commitments by 2027.

The localization thematic area is coordinated by a Multi-Stakeholder Task Team which includes representation from Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), National NGOs (NNGOs), Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Refugee representatives, International NGOs (INGOs), Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS), UNHCR.

Anchoring of the Localization Strategy

International Policies and Frameworks

- The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- The Global Compact on Refugees and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
- The 2016 Grand Bargain
- The Humanitarian Donor Principles

National Policies and Frameworks

- The Refugee Act (2006)
- Refugee Regulations (2010)
- The NGO Act (2016) and NGO Policy (2010)
- The Local Government Act (1997) as amended.
- Decentralization Policy (1997)
- The National Development Plan (NDP) IV
- The National Local Content Bill

No	Pledge	Progress Made: 2023 - 2025	Assessment
1	Include localization provisions in strategies and frameworks for refugee response to strengthen the role of national and local responders	• Localization provisions have been included in the NDP IV • Government is now in advanced stages of Developing the Localization Strategy: Stakeholder consultations concluded, a draft in place and is under review by the task team, validation meeting planned for early December.	ON TRACK
2	Developing a detailed implementation plan to enforce the Grand Bargain commitments of international actors:		
	a Requiring the integration of localization in INGOs plans, including institutional capacity development of local actors.	• A number of humanitarian and development partners have incorporated localization in their country strategies and plans. • A total of 1,158 local and National Actors supported with institutional capacity development.	ON TRACK
	b Ensuring a gradual funding of 25% of partner resources is directed to local actors. Requiring the integration of localization in INGOs plans, including institutional capacity development of local actors.	• USD 73,733,268 has been disbursed to local and national actors. • Varying percentages have been reported, with some partners reporting as low as 1% of overall program funding going to Local and National actors, while others reported as high as 100% (on average 28%)	ON TRACK

	c Ensuring transparency and accountability of national and local actors by strengthening their accounting systems, reporting mechanisms, and ensuring oversight by relevant government bodies.	• Localisation criteria integrated in the Partner Coordination and Monitoring System (PCMS) • A tool to standardize assessment of local actors and support the due diligence process is under development.	ON TRACK

THEMATIC AREA 4: Securing Durable Solutions for Refugees

The Government of Uganda pledges to support peace-building processes and

The Government of Uganda pledges to provide opportunities to all refugees to access
electronic Conventional Travel Documents and birth certificates by 2027 to foster

Lead Institution: Office of the Prime Minister

No	Pledge	Progress Made: 2023 - 2025	Assessment
1	Creating conditions conducive to safe, dignified, and voluntary returns as well as support sustainable re-integration of refugees in their home societies by investing in peace-building processes that enable sustainable peace and security, mitigate, and manage insecurity, violence, and conflicts.	1 As per the UNHCR Guidelines on voluntary repatriation, voluntary repatriation is currently only feasible for the Burundian caseload because of the significant or fundamental positive change in Burundi. Since December 2023, a total of 25,240 individuals have been supported to attain durable solutions. Of these; • 3,810 are voluntary returns to Burundi • 14,208 benefited from Complementary Pathways • 7,222 benefited from resettlement 2. There was a noted improvement in the integrated return package, including the provision of cash, SIM cards/phones, and health insurance at the household level for returnees, along with favorable access to interest-free loans, business training, and legal aid to enable recovery and access to land upon return to Burundi. 3. In the efforts of restoring peace in South Sudan, a key impediment was getting all warring groups to sign the 2018 peace agreement. In May 2024, Uganda participated in the Tumaini Peace Initiative, facilitated by the Government of Kenya and served as a guarantor of peace.	ON TRACK

2	Promoting the right to identity for refugee children born in Uganda by enhancing their access to birth registration and issuance of birth certificates (to be performed through the interoperability of the online birth registration system with the Uganda refugee registration database). This will support the identification of their nationalities upon return to their countries of origin and provide documentation supporting third country solutions, including family reunification.	Through the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA), all refugee children born in Uganda are issued with Birth Certificates. This initiative ensures that refugee children have access to legal identity from birth, in line with Uganda's pledge to enhance civil registration for refugees. i In 2024, a total of 196,589 refugee children born in Uganda were issued with birth certificates. ii As of 28th October 2025, a total of 5,688 refugee children born in Uganda have been registered and issued birth certificates.	ON TRACK
3	Improving access to electronic Conventional Travel Documents to all refugees through the development of an online application platform subject to additional resources being availed to Uganda.	i In 2024, the Government introduced an online application platform for online applications to improve the issuance of Convention Travel Documents (CTDs) to refugees. This has significantly improved the turnaround time for processing period for the CTDs. The system is now more predictable and efficient, resulting in a notable increase in the number of applicants. ii As of August 2025, the GoUissued 147,000 CTDs.	ON TRACK

THEMATIC AREA 5: Transition Management: Pathways to Sustainable Burden-Sharing

Lead Institution: Ministry of Finance together with the Office of the Prime Minister, as well as Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Sports and Ministry of Water and the Environment

Goal as defined in the NTS: To transition partner managed facilities to government planning and management with partner support by 2035, ensuring access to quality services in education, health, and water sectors for refugees and host communities, while promoting social inclusion and long-term development.

Definition of Transition: Transition management refers to the smooth and phased transfer from partner managed parallel systems and services (infrastructure, facilities, human resources, consumables, and management) for refugees and host communities to a system sustainably managed by the Government with support from partners, adhering to national quality standards in the Water, Education and Health sectors.

Strategic Focus Areas for the NTS

1. Strengthening policy, institutional and technical capacities
2. Enhancing integrated financial resource mobilization, planning and budgeting
3. Governance – ensuring accountability, enhancing stakeholder engagement, and fostering collaboration & coordination.
4. Monitoring, Evaluation, and adaptive management of the Transition Process

No	Pledge	Progress Made: 2023 - 2025	Assessment
1	The Government pledges to continue managing and integrating the infrastructure and services specifically in health, education and water aligd with the government requirements in a phased approach. This will call for alignment of partner investments within the NDP and DDPs.	In the education and health sector, significant progress has been achieved with regards to the "coding" of facilities, meaning that a health or education facility receives a unique identification code by which it is included in Government systems and can be budgeted for. However, while 92% of health facilities in the refugee context are coded, 75% of human resource salaries remain dependent on international partners. Similarly, while 37% of schools are coded, over half of the funding remains humanitarian. 46 water supply systems have been handed over for management by Government. Out of these, 16 have been fully transitioned and are operating fairly well, while 30 are still operating with support from partners, due to financial and other resource constraints	ON TRACK
2	The Government commits to putting in place a transitional strategy and guidelines to facilitate coordinated transition planning and management.	• **August 2024 – February 2025:** Consultancy to develop the National Transition Strategy (NTS) and the Sector-Roadmaps for Health, Education and Water • **March 2025:** Presentation of the Strategy to the Transition Strategy Reference Group in February and **approval of the Strategy by the CRRF Steering Group** in March 2025 • **Water:** signing of **MoU between OPM, MWE and UNHCR** to further guide the roles and responsibilities in the transition process in June 2025 (to be operationalized through Partnership Agreement with UNHCR) • **Health and Education:** A large % of education and health facilities are coded and receiving government support. **KEY FEATURES OF THE NTS III** **Phase 1: Preparatory Short-term (1-4 years)** • Resource mobilization – Joint funding mechanisms, PPPs etc. • Infrastructure Development / Upgrades • Strengthening data management for planning • Initiate Partial Transition Process **Phase 2: Development -Mid-term (5-8 years)** • Gradual shift -Partial transition of facilities and takeover of management • Scale up of infrastructure development and service delivery • Local Government strengthening and decentralization **Phase 3: Sustainable Operations - Long-term (9-10 years)** • Full transition, sustainability measures, • Full integration of services into national system • Financial Sustainability **Overall budget for the NTS:** 6,444,489,157,194 or UGX (1.8 billion USD) for 10 years Education Sector UGX. 5,386,005,443,900 (81%) **Health Sector** UGX 707,095,713,294 (11%) **Water and Sanitation** UGX 545,693,278,000 (8%) Total: UGX 6,638,794,435,194	ON TRACK

ANNEX 2: LIST OF DONORS' FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

No.	Reporting Agency	Funds Committed (USD)	Funds Mobilized (USD)	Funding Source
1	AVSI	20,000,000	20,000,000	FCDO, AICS, USAID, ILO, The IKEA Foundation, EKN
2	AYAN	150,000	52,000	Last Mile Climate with funding from IKEA Foundation and Robert Bosch
3	CECI	150,000	52,000	Last Mile Climate with funding from IKEA Foundation and Robert Bosch
4	Cities Alliance	3,500,000	3,500,000	European Union
5	Danish Refugee Council (DRC)	1,925,000	1,925,000	DANIDA, ECHO, IKEA Foundation, Hilton Foundation, Novo Nordisk Foundation, and Cabrini sisters of sacred Hearts
6	Denmark	50,000,000	62,000,000	Denmark
7	FAO	48,000,000	5,900,000	Japan, FAO funds, Norway, NL, ECHO, GCF, REP fund
8	Iceland	3,000,000	3,000,000	Iceland
9	ILO	11,000,000*	15,000,000*	Netherlands
10	IOM	1,800,000	17,530,879	EU INTPA, Norway, various donor governments
11	KCCA	100,000	100,000	Government of Uganda, IKEA Foundation through IRC

12	Mercy Corps	1,203,610	1,203,610	Netherlands
13	Netherlands	66,847,000	66,847,000	Netherlands
14	Uganda Biodiversity Fund (UBF)	720,324	n/a	EUTF
15	UN Women	30,000,000	7,138,653	Norway, Japan, Austria, UN Women Emergency Funding Mechanism, UN Central Emergency Response Fund
16	UNCDF	600,000	600,000	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
17	UNDP	4,000,000	n/a	KOICA and UNDP Uganda
18	UNEP	150,000	150,000	IKEA Foundation through Last Mile Climate
19	UNFPA	18,000,000	7,812,997*	Denmark
20	UNHCR	4,000,000	n/a	
21	UNICEF	13,600,000	14,165,677	FCDO, GHTF, ECHO, Japan, CERF
22	WANA Energy Solution	100,000	n/a	
23	WFP	96,000,000	11,000,000	Norway, FCDO Ireland, EU INTPA, Austria, Germany
24	WHO	9,000,000	180,000	GAVI