

## Bi-weekly Operational Update: 16-31 December 2019

**Ethiopia announced new pledges at the first Global Refugee Forum:** A high-level Ethiopian delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen participated in the first Global Refugee Forum which took place in Geneva, Switzerland, from 16-18 December 2019. Mr. Demeke announced four new pledges that are strongly linked with existing commitments and aligned with the focus areas of the Forum. Accordingly, Ethiopia has committed to: Create up-to 90,000 socio-economic opportunities through agricultural and livestock value chains that benefit both refugees and host communities; Provide quality and accredited skills training to 20,000 Ethiopians and refugees on an equitable basis, taking into account the demands of the labour market linked with existing and new commitments in expanding socio-economic opportunities; Provide market-based and sustainable household and facility-based energy for three million Ethiopians and refugees through promoting clean and renewable energy sources, and strengthening the Government of Ethiopia's Asylum System and Social Protection Capacity. The Deputy Prime Minister highlighted the progress Ethiopia has made over the last few years to improve the lives of refugees and their host communities and said the responsibility to support refugees is a collective responsibility of humanity.

Ethiopia was both a co-convenor and an active participant in the forum which was attended by 3,000 people. It brought together rich and diverse ideas that led to promising results, with more than 774 initial pledges announced and 418 good practices submitted. The breadth and depth of the commitments announced at the forum underscores the potential that the Global Compact on Refugees has to transform the lives of refugees and their host communities. The true success of the forum will largely be measured by the implementation of these pledges, and it is now incumbent upon all stakeholders to help translate these pledges into action. The next opportunity to take stock of progress in the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees will be in 2021, when a high-level meeting will be organized. UNHCR co-hosted the Global Refugee Forum together with the Government of Switzerland.

**Relocation of refugees from Gambella:** A total of 268 South Sudanese refugees were relocated from Pamdong Reception Centre in Gambella to Gure-Shembola Refugee Camp in the Benishangul-Gumuz Region (BGR). These were among the recent arrivals from South Sudan's Upper Nile State. The refugees were flown from Gambella to Assosa in four rotations and then transported by road to Gure-Shembola where they underwent physical and medical screening. They were initially accommodated in communal hangars pending the installation of family emergency shelters and provided with hot meals and other essential aid items. UNHCR, together with operational partners briefed the new arrivals about the camp's facilities and services, including the usage of sanitation facilities, the need to protect the environment and procedures for enrolling their children in school.

**UNHCR donated vehicle to Tselemti Woreda Administration:** As part of its support to refugee-hosting communities and government structures, UNHCR donated a vehicle to the Tselemti Woreda Administration in Tigray Region which hosts the Adi-Harush and MaiAini refugee camps, sheltering thousands of Eritrean refugees. The donation was made to help address the mobility challenges faced by the local administration in doing its daily work and in appreciation of the authorities' continued support to the refugee operation in the area. The authorities thanked UNHCR for the support and reconfirmed their ongoing commitment to refugees and the agencies assisting them.