

Mauritania Making Long-Term Investments for Refugees and Host Communities

NOUAKCHOTT, 20 June 2020 - On the occasion of World Refugee Day, the World Bank and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) salute the commitment of the Government of Mauritania to continue offering protection to refugees while including the needs of refugee and host communities in the development plans of the country.

Mauritania has been and will remain a safe haven for people who are fleeing armed conflict in the Sahel. In response to the influx of Malian refugees in the country, the World Bank mobilized a total of \$68 million from the dedicated window for Refugees and Host Communities financed under the 18th replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA18), to help improve access to basic infrastructure and services for poor and vulnerable communities, including the 60,000 refugees in the Hodh Ech Chargui.

"The financing provided by the Refugee Sub-Window is complementing the humanitarian work of UNHCR which focuses on the most fragile areas of the country where climate change, poverty and growing insecurity is affecting the daily lives of people," said **World Bank Country Manager, Laurent Msellati**.

For several years, emergency assistance has been covering basic needs such as access to health care. Long-term investments are therefore needed to ensure that local host communities that are receiving refugees become self-reliant and do not remain dependent on assistance in the long term. The World Bank and UNHCR are working closely with the government, regional and local authorities, as well as refugees and host communities, to ensure that both refugees and their hosts get the support they need.

"While the investments of the Government with the support of the World Bank will bring about lasting changes for everyone, the current humanitarian assistance system needs to be reinforced to provide a stable environment for those changes to happen," said **Maria Stavropoulou, UNHCR Representative in Mauritania**. *"The conjunction of the regional food emergency, COVID-19, and continued conflict in Mali means that humanitarian support for refugees and their hosts is more than ever required in Mauritania."*

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