THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Uganda's Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework

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ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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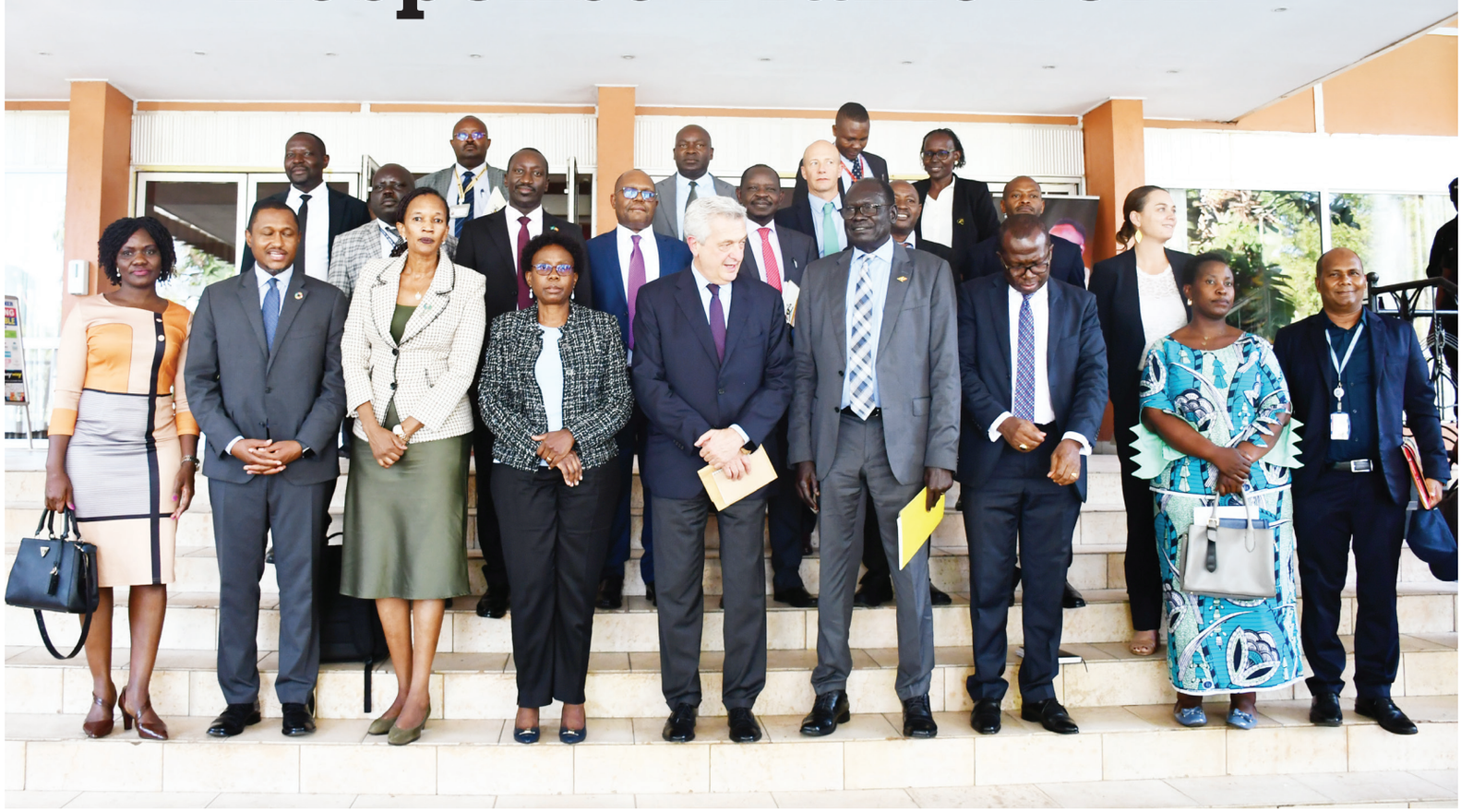


Hon. Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees with colleague ministers after meeting the UNHCR High Commissioner for Refugees on matters of the post 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF).

Collaboration has been key to success

As we present the 2024 Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) Annual Report, I am proud to reflect on the remarkable progress Uganda has made in strengthening its commitment to refugees and host communities alike. This year has been pivotal in building on the foundation laid by the 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF), and it demonstrates Uganda's unwavering dedication to fulfilling its pledges and enhancing the resilience and opportunities for refugees across the country.

Hon. Eng. Hillary Onek, Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees

Our collaborative approach has been central to our success, with consistent engagement from government ministries, development partners, the private sector, civil society, and most importantly, the refugees themselves.

Through the convening of the CRRF Uganda Steering Group meetings, inter-sector meetings, and inter-ministerial dialogue, we have maintained a unified approach that has facilitated timely and inclusive decision-making. Furthermore, the Refugee Engagement Forum and District Engagement Forum have remained key platforms for ensuring the voices of refugees and host communities are heard, empowering them to be active participants in shaping their own future.

As a government, we have remained focused on integrating refugees' needs within Uganda's national development agenda through the National Development Plan IV. We continue to work closely with our partners to make sure that refugees have access to education, health services, and livelihoods, while fostering a conducive environment for their integration into host communities. The recently developed transition strategy presents an important milestone to further promote integrated and sustainable service delivery for refugees.

In 2024, we also undertook the important task of following up on Uganda's pledges made during the GRF, which are a testament to our commitment to ensuring the protection, dignity, and well-being of refugees. I am pleased to report that significant strides have been made in advancing these pledges, but there is still much to be done. The collaboration showcased this year demonstrates that Uganda's refugee response is a shared responsibility, and I am confident that with continued support and partnerships, we will achieve even greater successes in the years ahead.

In 2024, we had the honor of welcoming Hon. Lilian Aber as the new State Minister for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees. Since assuming office, she has demonstrated strong commitment and leadership in advancing the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) agenda. Hon. Aber has effectively chaired the CRRF Steering Group and presided over several key events, including the commemoration of World Refugee Day in Imvepi Refugee Settlement. In a short period, her dedication and proactive engagement have made a meaningful impact on the refugee response landscape in Uganda.

This report is not just a summary of our achievements; it reflects the collective effort, passion, and dedication that defines Uganda's refugee response. It highlights the progress we have made and the challenges we continue to face, while reaffirming our resolve to provide refugees with the opportunities they need to rebuild their lives with dignity.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all the stakeholders involved in this vital work, and I look forward to our continued collaboration as we strive to create a better future for refugees and the communities that host them.

Celebrating innovation and collective achievement

The year 2024 was the seventh since Government of Uganda launched the implementation of the CRRF global framework. It was a year characterized by high level events following our co-convenorship at the GRF in December 2023. As post GRF events, Uganda established the high level Inter-Ministerial Committee on service provision for refugees and hosted the UNHCR High Commissioner for Refugees, who lauded Uganda's progressive refugee policies.

Uganda's innovation of establishing of a Refugee Engagement Forum, a platform for advocacy by refugees was benchmarked by IGAD, which established the IGAD Regional Refugee Engagement Forum. Furthermore, the national CRRF Steering Group made decisions that steered the deepening of the CRRF principles in the provision of services. All these high-level events were fully supported by government agencies, Development and Humanitarian actors, and the UN family among others.

This annual report therefore is a summary of our collective achievements towards a government led, whole-of-society approach for comprehensive solutions to the refugee challenge. It provides visual and narrative backgrounds to events which we all implemented. The year had lessons to benchmark, but it was also one of challenges, especially with the increasing number of refugees amidst declining resources.

I appreciate the support from the Ministers of Relief and Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, and Local Government, who co-chair the SG for the leadership and strategic direction you provided in 2024. My appreciation also goes to members of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on service provision for refugees, all members of the CRRF Steering Group, the CRRF Secretariat, technical officers in ministries implementing refugee response plans and GRF pledges and the whole CRRF fraternity for your unwavering support.

In a special way, I wish to thank UNHCR and GIZ for the budget support to the CRRF Secretariat, other partners for offering comprehensive services to the refugees and host communities and the refugee hosting districts for hosting our brothers and sisters who ran from persecution in their countries of origin. I look forward to your continued support in the year 2025.

For God and My Country.

Hon. Lillian Aber (MP), Minister of State for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees

Significant strides in advancing the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) agenda

Ms. Helen Bugaari, Director, CRRF Secretariat

Dear CRRF Partners,

I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation for your invaluable contributions and unwavering commitment to improving the lives of refugees and host communities in Uganda. We made significant strides in 2024 in advancing the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) agenda, building on the momentum of the 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF). Our continued success has been driven by a collective approach, with strong engagement from government ministries, development partners, civil society, the private sector, and, crucially, the refugees themselves. Through strategic platforms like the CRRF Steering Group meetings, Inter-Sector and Inter-Ministerial dialogues, as well as the Refugee Engagement Forum and the District Engagement Forum, we have maintained a unified response to the challenges faced by refugees, ensuring that their needs remain central to our planning and interventions.

Through collective efforts, significant progress was made under each of the five Global Refugee Forum thematic areas (Resilience and Self-Reliance, Addressing Energy, Environment and Climate Change Challenges, Durable Solutions, Localisation and Transition Management). To name just a few highlights: a measurement framework has been developed to assess refugees' levels of self-reliance, a National Transition Strategy is in place and localisation is being promoted by government and partners alike. Through the creation of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Refugees, a step has been made to further advance the whole-of-government approach through coordination and collaboration on ministerial level.

As we move forward, I remain optimistic about our shared ability to respond to the needs of refugees and host communities alike, ensuring that no one is left behind. Thank you once again for your dedication, and I look forward to our continued collaboration in the year ahead.

Our continued success has been driven by a collective approach, with strong engagement from government ministries, development partners, civil society, the private sector, and, crucially, the refugees themselves.

Rt. Hon. Robinah Nabbanja, Prime Minister of Uganda after meeting with the UNHCR High Commissioner for Refugees and Dr. Thomas Bach, IOC President, at the Office of the Prime Minister.

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The GCR and the CRRF in Uganda

The year 2024 marked another significant phase in Uganda's efforts to strengthen its refugee response, following the co-convenorship of the 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF). Uganda's commitment to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) remains steadfast, underscored by active collaboration, continued dialogue, and the prioritization of refugee inclusion and support within both national and local contexts.

The CRRF Uganda Steering Group, a high-level decision-making body, played a crucial role in steering and coordinating activities that align with the country's refugee management framework. The Steering Group meetings held in 2024 helped to ensure that key stakeholders, including government ministries, development partners, civil society, and the private sector, remained engaged and aligned in delivering tangible outcomes for refugees and host communities. These meetings served as platforms for reviewing progress, addressing emerging challenges, and fostering greater synergy among the different actors involved in refugee response.

Specifically, the decisions resulted in the implementation of the REF-DEF Interface as a mechanism for promoting peaceful co-existence between refugees and host communities, the development of a Transition Strategy, the adoption of the Private Sector Engagement Strategy, and the integration of the sector response plans for refugees in the fourth local and national development plans.

In parallel, regular inter-sector meetings were convened to improve coordination across various sectors and ministries in service delivery for refugees and host communities. These platforms provided essential opportunities for stakeholders to discuss issues like access to education, healthcare, and livelihoods, ensuring that refugee and host community needs were met in a holistic manner. Additionally, they facilitated the timely integration of refugee needs into broader national development plans and policies.

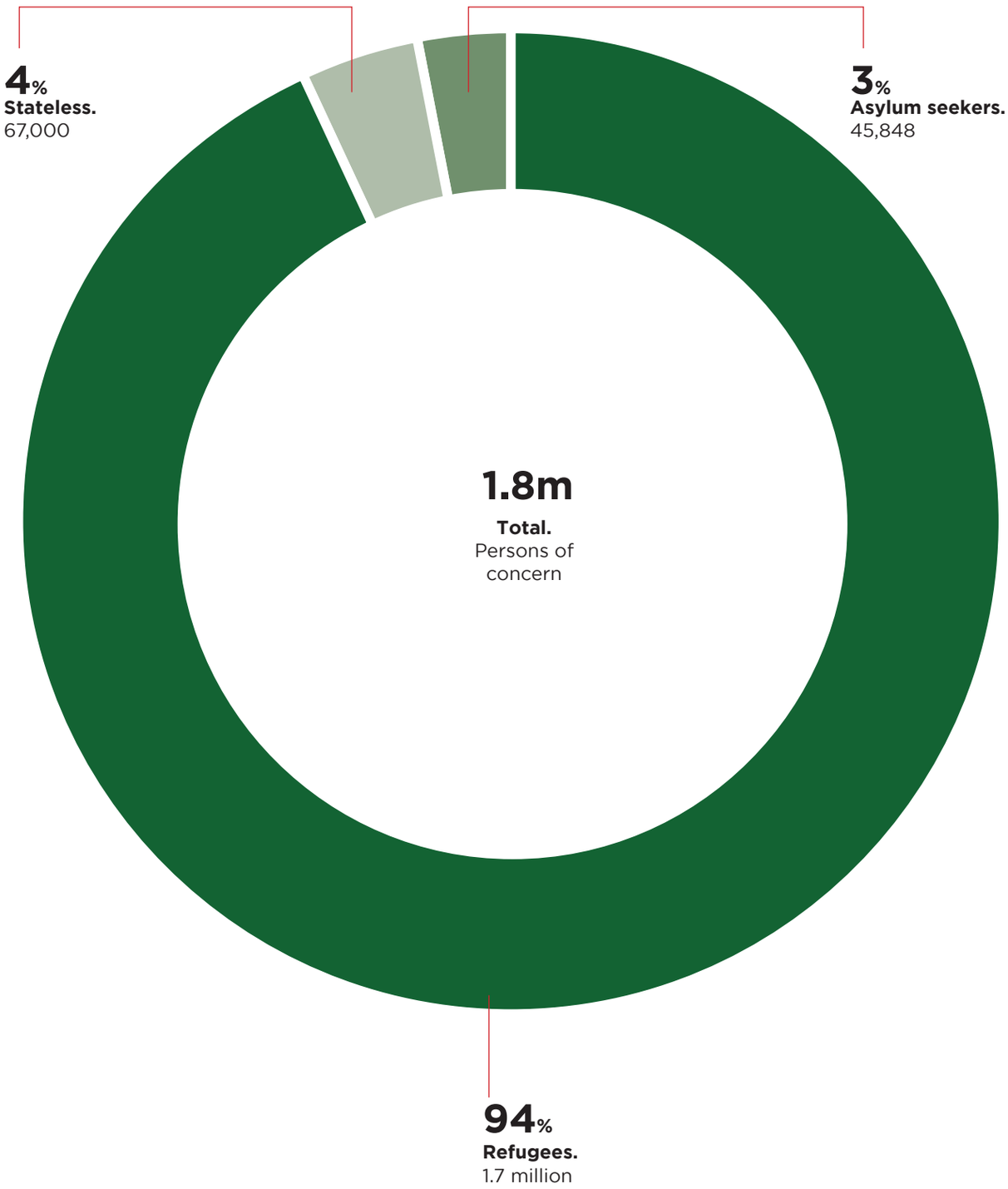
The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) convened the Inter-Ministerial Meeting on Refugees as a key milestone to improve service delivery coordination and address high-level policy issues raised by Steering Group decisions. The meeting brought together ministers in charge of delivering services to refugees and host communities. Key agreements included holding a quarterly Inter-Ministerial Meeting on Refugees. To ensure an effective and efficient response, the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development will be responsible for tracking development partner funding and coordinating government contributions. Assigning OPM with the task of mapping development partners in the refugee space to identify overlaps. Directing line ministries to coordinate all NGOs carrying out sector-specific activities. Furthermore, the meeting emphasized the importance of addressing climate challenges in refugee-hosting districts, stating that climate adaptation and mitigation measures should be designed using a business model approach.

The year saw a continuation of the Refugee Engagement Forum (REF), which accords refugees a voice in shaping response mechanisms. This forum empowered refugees to raise issues, provide feedback, and actively participate in decisions that affect their lives. The District Engagement Forum (DEF) also gained momentum, strengthening communication between local authorities and refugees, while ensuring that district-level responses to refugee challenges were tailored to the specific needs of the region.

The year also provided an important opportunity for follow-up on Uganda's pledges made during the 2023 GRF. The pledges focus on strengthening refugees' resilience and self-reliance, finding durable solutions for refugees, addressing the challenges of environment, climate change and energy, strengthening the role of local and national responders and integrating service delivery for refugees in the health, water and education management through transition management. The government, together with partners, worked diligently to implement and track progress on these pledges, while also identifying areas that required additional support and action.

In summary, the 2024 CRRF Uganda Annual Report reflects the continued collaboration and progress made across multiple sectors to ensure that Uganda's refugee response remains robust and resilient. The engagement with diverse stakeholders, the deepened dialogue between refugees and host communities, and the active follow-up on the GRF pledges signify Uganda's ongoing commitment to the protection and well-being of refugees and host communities alike.

Refugee Facts and Figures



2.0 CRRF-IMPLEMENTATION IN UGANDA

2.1 CRRF national coordination arrangements

The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) represents a transformative global approach to managing refugee crises, as established in the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. Rooted in the principles of inclusion, equity, and sustainability, the CRRF promotes a whole-of-society approach to refugee management, and adopts the Humanitarian, Development and Peace (HDP) nexus to foster durable solutions for refugees and enhancing the resilience of host communities. The diverse stakeholders include government institutions, development partners, civil society organizations, private sector actors, host communities and refugees themselves under a unified platform. These arrangements aim to align resources and interventions with national development priorities such as the national development plans. In Uganda, the CRRF coordination arrangement is government-led, superintended by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), facilitated by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and guided by the participation of a wide range of stakeholders.

The current spectrum of CRRF stakeholders:

2.1.1 CRRF Steering Group

The CRRF Steering Group (CRRF SG) is the highest multi-stakeholder decision-making body guiding the implementation of the CRRF and other refugee-related policies in Uganda. Since its establishment, the CRRF SG has convened 22 times, including two meetings in 2024. The first meeting took place on April 8, 2024, at Protea Hotel Kampala, followed by the second on September 19, 2024. Both meetings were chaired by the Honorable Minister for Local Government and the Honorable Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness, and Refugees. The CRRF fosters collaboration among diverse actors to provide sustainable refugee solutions while strengthening host communities. The major decisions included:

- Organizing resources to hold a Regional Inter-Ministerial Meeting with neighbouring countries to advance the Munyonyo Declarations on durable solutions.

- Using the Aid Management Platform (AMP) to track both on-budget and off-budget development funding, while ensuring compatibility with URRMS and Activity Info Uganda Refugee Response Plan Monitoring.

- Providing guidance to partners to align with the Global Refugee Forum's (GRF) thematic areas, even if they have not made financial commitments.

- Local Government Coordination: Extending the REF-DEF Interface rollout to South-Western Uganda, building on previous successes in the West Nile and North.

- Refugee Policy Finalization: Obtaining funding for a consultancy to complete the Refugee Policy, which includes stakeholder input, GCR, and CRRF provisions. A validation meeting will be held before the policy is presented to Cabinet.

2.1.2 Inclusion of refugees in decision-making processes through the Refugee Engagement Forum:

The Refugee Engagement Forum (REF) plays a crucial role in ensuring refugee voices are heard in decision-making processes. Over the years, the platform has strengthened accountability and transparency by integrating refugee perspectives into high-level discussions, including the CRRF Steering Group and district-level coordination mechanisms. Refugees actively contribute to designing and implementing solutions that promote self-reliance, social cohesion, and sustainable development in Uganda's refugee-hosting regions.

With support from UNHCR, OPM, and other partners, the REF held two engagements in 2024, bringing the total to 22. In 2024, REF members focused on providing timely feedback to their communities. The Forum also elected a new female representative to the CRRF Steering Group. Additionally, the REF expanded its membership from 37 to 46 members to include Eritrean, Somali and Sudanese representatives, ensuring broader participation and improved representation from refugee settlements. The CRRF fosters collaboration among diverse actors to provide sustainable refugee solutions while strengthening host communities.

At the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, in line with the Government of Uganda pledges on environment and climate change and self-resilience and reliance, refugees committed to plant 7.5 million trees around households and woodlots by 2027. They also pledged to support the enforcement of environmental protection laws and by-laws to promote restoration and conservation in refugee-hosting areas. Additionally, they affirmed their dedication to advocating universal school enrollment among refugee children and championing self-reliance and resilience within their communities.

The major decision and issues raised by the refugee leaders during the two REF meetings were predominantly on their inclusion into local service delivery mechanisms, good governance and the implementation of the commitments and pledges. These issues include the following:

- REF members committed to raising awareness on Uganda's 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF) pledges, focusing on their commitments and working with communities, government, and stakeholders to promote these pledges. This includes championing mindset change, advocacy for funding, tracking progress, and participating in implementation efforts.

- REF members resolved to hold regular community feedback and consultation meetings to ensure broad and adequate representation.

- During the 22nd REF meeting on September 19, 2024, REF members pledged to support transition efforts by mobilizing for upcoming field consultations and conducting sensitization across refugee settlements. This commitment followed a Focus Group Discussion led by consultants developing the National Transition Strategy

- REF members committed to work with community leaders to promote adherence to Ugandan laws among refugee populations.

Stakeholders during the 2024 REF and DEF Interface in Kamwenge District Local Government.

2.1.3 Inclusion of refugee-hosting districts in decision making

Refugee-hosting districts play a critical role in transition management and the localization of humanitarian and development responses in Uganda. The District Engagement Forum (DEF) is a key platform that fosters collaboration and dialogue among refugee-hosting districts. Anchored within the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), the DEF ensures that district governments actively shape policies and programs affecting their populations.

In 2024, the DEF convened twice, bringing the total number of meetings to five. Discussions focused on integrating refugees into local service delivery mechanisms, alleviating the service delivery burden on local governments, implementing the 2023 Global Refugee Forum pledges, and managing the national transition framework.

Key DEF issues and major decisions included:

- The DEF called for increased human resources, healthcare supplies, and educational facilities in refugee-hosting districts (RHDs) to address the growing refugee influx. They also urged the government to allocate a special wage bill for these districts and advocated higher indicative planning figures for health, education, and water to meet the needs of the expanding refugee population.

- The DEF played a key role in advocating a clear roadmap and framework to transition from a humanitarian to a development-based approach. The forum emphasized the need for an expedited process to guide local governments in managing this shift effectively.

- To enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the DEF, members called for increased funding to support field-level activities, including peer-to-peer learning and exchange visits. These initiatives facilitate cross-learning among refugee-hosting local governments as they navigate the transition from humanitarian aid to development-focused approaches.

2.1.4 Inter-Sector Dialogue

In Uganda, the Inter-Sector Dialogue is a key platform for strengthening the connection between the humanitarian and development pillars under the HDP nexus. It facilitates experience-sharing, lesson-learning, and joint problem-solving to address challenges in implementing Development-Oriented Sector Response Plans (SRPs), the Government of Uganda's Global Refugee Forum (GRF) pledges, and the Uganda Comprehensive Refugee Response Plan (UCRRP), among other policies.

The Inter-Sector Dialogues have led to improved coordination, reduced duplication of efforts, better alignment with national development plans (NDPs), and increased collaboration in implementing government-led refugee response programs in 2024.

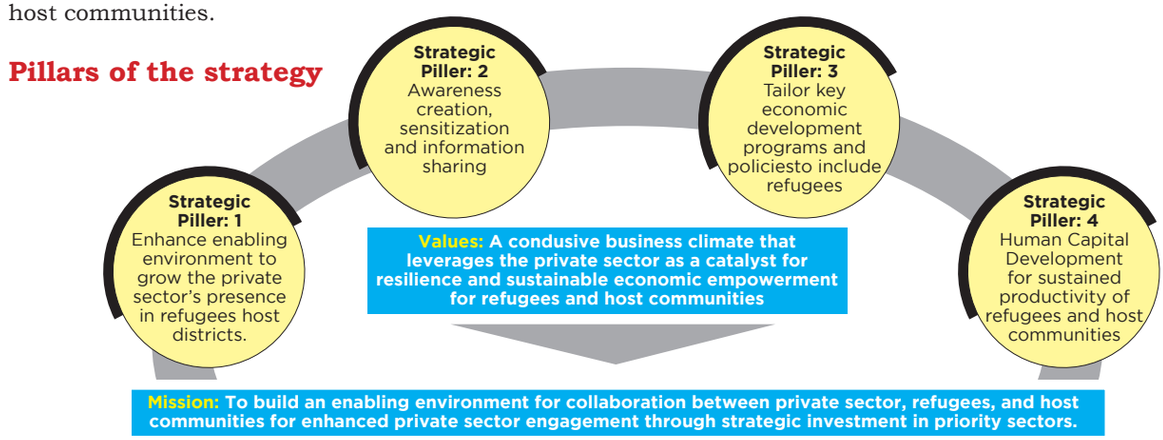
The CRRF Secretariat organized two Inter-Sector Dialogue meetings in 2024. The first meeting, held on May 6-7, focused on aligning Sector Response Plans with National Development Plan IV (NDP IV) programs. The second meeting, held on December 2-3, aimed at harmonizing the reporting frameworks.

Key outcomes of the meetings:

- Draft implementation roadmaps for the 2023 GRF pledges were developed by government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) alongside matching entities.
- The implementation of Refugee Response Plans was reviewed in both the May and December meetings, identifying challenges and agreeing on joint actions for sustainable solutions.
- During the second dialogue, six MDAs, including three new focal persons, were trained to report using the Uganda Refugee Response Monitoring System (URRMS).

2.1.5 Engagement of the private sector in the refugee response

The CRRF Steering Group developed and adopted the Private Sector Engagement Strategy for Uganda's Refugee Response in 2024. The strategy seeks to identify and capitalize on investment opportunities within Refugee-Hosting Districts (RHDs). It outlines key sectors for private sector involvement, including agriculture (value addition, inputs, commercial farming, warehousing, transportation), tourism and hospitality (capacity building, cultural centres, hotel/lodging), financial services (mobile money, microfinance, fintech, agent banking, forex, remittances), energy (solar solutions, clean cooking, biogas, briquettes, waste-to-energy, alternative fuels), and human capital development. By focusing on these areas, the strategy hopes to promote inclusive economic growth, improve service delivery, and foster long-term development in both refugee and host communities.



NEXT STEPS

- The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) plans to launch the Private Sector Engagement Strategy (PSES) at the national level in 2025, followed by a series of kick-off workshops with various stakeholder groups to initiate implementation planning.

- The implementation of the PSES is estimated to cost approximately UGX 320 billion, with the bulk of the funding required to ensure its full rollout. To this end, MoFPED intends to actively engage in resource mobilization efforts throughout 2025.

- Additionally, the strategy will be disseminated at the regional level, with targeted events planned in Isingiro and Madi-Okollo districts.

2.1.6 New innovations under the CRRF coordination arrangements

The CRRF Secretariat initiated two new innovations in the coordination and management of refugee response in Uganda.

2.1.6.1 The Inter-Ministerial Meeting on Refugees (IMCR)

The first Inter- Ministerial Meeting on Service Provision for Refugees was convened on September 17, 2024, with the aim to strengthen coordination among the various ministries to improve service delivery in the refugee-hosting areas. Ministers and technical staff from the Ministry of Health, (MoH), Ministry of Education and Sports, (MoES), Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development (MoFPED), Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), Ministry of Gender Labor and Social Development (MoGLSD) and Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives (MoTIC) attended the IMCR. The following were the decisions of the meeting:

- The Inter-Ministerial Meeting on Refugees to convene on a quarterly basis to address strategic and coordination issues in the refugee response and GRF pledge implementation.

- A multi-sectoral Technical Committee be formed to support preparations for the quarterly meetings.

- Government to engage development partners, including the World Bank to address the identified challenges to the implementation of projects; advocacy for funds.

- MoFPED to spearhead the tracking of development partner resources and coordination of government funding for efficiency and effectiveness, while the Aid Management Platform was to tag refugee funds.

- OPM should undertake Development Partner Mapping to track implementation, avoid overlaps and ensure that resources are used for the intended purpose. Specifically, hire a consultant to develop a dashboard to consolidate on and off budget activities.

- The Meeting also agreed that Interventions on climate change adaptation and mitigation in refugee-hosting areas should be designed using the business model, and Uganda should position itself to take charge of carbon emissions.

In 2025, one of the primary focuses will be on formally integrating the Inter-Ministerial Meeting on Refugees as a dedicated committee under Cabinet. This transition aims to institutionalize high-level coordination on refugee-related matters, ensuring that refugee response strategies are aligned with national policies and priorities.

2.1.6.2 REF and DEF Interface: Strengthening localized engagement

The second key innovation under the CRRF coordination framework was the interface between the Refugee Engagement Forum (REF) and the District Engagement Forum (DEF). This initiative stemmed from a decision made during the 20th CRRF Steering Group Meeting to promote localized interactions between the two forums.

The REF-DEF interface was designed to enhance refugee integration, strengthen dialogue between national and local CRRF structures, and foster social cohesion between refugees and host community leaders, thus contributing to the peace aspect in the HDP nexus. Two interface meetings were held in 2024: the first took place in West Nile on September 9 – 10, focusing on northern Uganda. The second was held in the southwest region on December 16 – 17, 2024.

This initiative has become a vital platform for bridging refugee and host community perspectives at both the local and national levels. Its positive outcomes include:

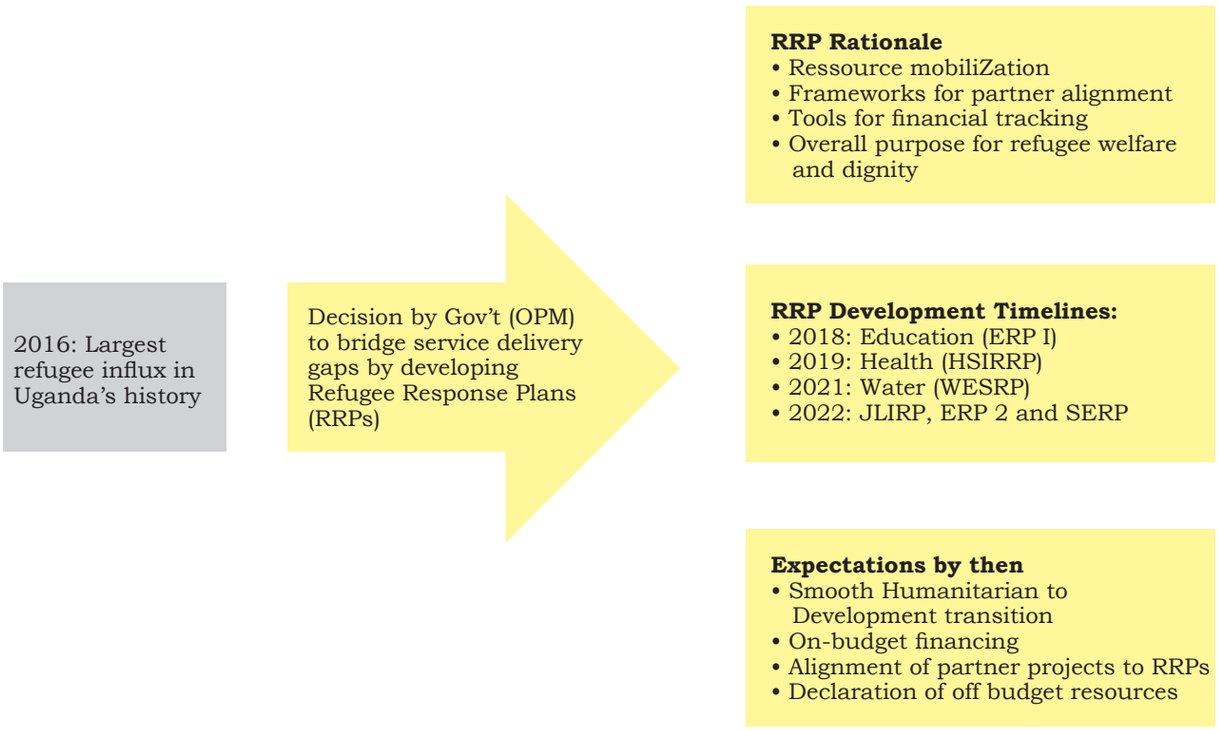
- A localized platform for open communication between the refugee and host community leaders, and the technocrats from both the non-governmental organizations and the local governments on the service delivery gaps that exist in the refugee hosting districts. Discussion on the service delivery gaps were based on trust and solidarity between district authorities and refugee representatives that fostered a sense of belonging and mutual respect.

- The refugee and hosting community leaders and technical personnel provided an update and made commitments on the fulfilment of their 2023 Global Refugee Forum pledges on environmental protection and climate resilience, education and the inclusion of refugees into the local government development plans.

2.2 INCLUSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY THROUGH THE WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH

The implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in Uganda follows a multi-faceted, whole-of-government approach that integrates strategic planning, sectoral coordination, and international commitments. At the core of this effort are the Refugee Sector Response Plans (SRPs), which provide detailed, sector-specific strategies to address critical areas such as education, health, livelihoods, energy, water, and the environment.

The Response Plans for Refugees and Host Communities serve as key frameworks for guiding interventions that promote sustainable development and strengthen the Humanitarian-Development nexus. Five line ministries (Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD), Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), Ministry of Health (MoH) and Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development (MEMD)) have developed and are implementing Sector Response Plans.



Relevant ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) have taken steps to integrate these plans into the Fourth District Government Development Plans (DDP IVs) that are under development, strengthening coordination between MDAs and local governments. This integration ensures sustainability, local ownership and effective service delivery for both refugees and host communities. Below is a snapshot of the progress made in implementing the Sector Response Plan.

2.2.1 Education Response Plan (ERP II)

The 450 million US dollar plan aims to reach an average of 674,895 refugees and host communities annually. The ERP II is completely aligned with the Human Capital Development program of the National Development Plan IV. The plan's overall goal is to provide equitable and inclusive quality education to refugee and host communities, as well as to strengthen systems overseen by the Ministry of Education and Sports. The ERP II is a follow-up of the to the ERP I. It addresses the gaps identified in the first plan. The ERP II will come to an end by June 2025. Below is a reflection on the 2024 status of the implementation of the plan.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

(infrastructure, enrollment (retention and completion), policy changes, financing):

a. **Policy improvements:** Several policies were approved by Cabinet to enhance access, equity, and quality of education, including the Technical Vocational and Educational Training (TVET) and the Physical Education and Sports policies.

b. **Increased enrolment in vocational and alternative education:** 2,261 learners were enrolled in vocational skills training, including 535 learners in informal training, 1,726 learners in non-formal training, 13,663 learners in the Accelerated Education Programme (AEP), of which 6,935 (51%) were female and 6,728 were male.

c. **Transition from Humanitarian to Development approach:** The Government of Uganda grant-aided 51 primary schools, increasing the total number of government-supported primary schools in refugee-hosting sub-counties to 68. This transition improves access to education for both crisis-affected children and host community learners.

d. **Infrastructure development:** Schools benefited from improved sanitation facilities, laboratories, libraries, classrooms, fences, and furniture. Eight Early Childhood Development (ECD) centers, 10 primary schools, and three secondary schools were established. Access roads and bridges were constructed, reducing travel distances for students. Efficiency ratios improved: Primary Pupil-to-Classroom Ratio (PCR) improved from 154 in 2017 to 135 in 2021 and Secondary PCR improved from 143 in 2017 to 87 in 2021.

CHALLENGES

- **Inadequate funding:** 42% of the ERP II budget remains unfunded, affecting the quality of education and training. Limited funding impacts access to ICT resources, science laboratories and school libraries, electricity supply in schools, as well as school feeding programs. It also affects teacher motivation and retention, particularly those previously supported by humanitarian partners.

- **Shortage of teachers and overcrowding:** High student-to-teacher ratios persist due to overpopulation in schools. Critical shortages include pre-primary level, where there is a deficit of 2,395 teachers. The primary level deficit stands at 1,416 teachers. There are also shortages of desks, classrooms and latrines, all of which affect learning conditions.

- **Low enrolment and retention in primary schools:** Dropout rates remain high, particularly among girls due to teenage pregnancies, lack of sanitary facilities and peer pressure, as well as children with disabilities dropping out due to inadequate support services. Transition rates to secondary education remain low due to high failure rates and limited access to secondary schools.

2.2.2 Health Sector Integrated Refugee Response Plan (HSIRRP)

The end of the implementation of the first HSIRRP led by Ministry of Health ended in 2024. The main objective of the plan was to ensure a coordinated, integrated district-led provision of health services for refugees and host communities. The primary objective of the plan was to increase equitable access to and

The 3rd Deputy Prime Minister Rt Hon. Rukia Nakadama presiding over a meeting between the UNHCR High Commissioner for Refugees and ministers on October 22, 2024. The meeting called for increased development funding in grants rather than loans, and called on donors and partners to adopt a Humanitarian Development Programming Hybrid for refugees to suit the protracted refugee situation in Uganda.

utilization of quality health services, mobilize and manage health resources towards the building of health systems to the scope of the increased demand and strengthen governance, coordination, leadership and management integrated health services to both refugees and host communities.

The plan achieved the following during 2024:

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

- The health response plan successfully integrated the refugee population into the Primary Health Care (PHC) allocation formula, ensuring equitable resource distribution.

- Health infrastructure worth UGX 9.84 billion was constructed and improved under Development Response to Displacement Impact Project (DRDIP), including the establishment of a blood bank at Arua Regional Hospital through the Uganda Support to Municipal Infrastructure Development Project.

- 15 health facilities were transitioned from partner support to full government management, enhancing sustainability.

- Staffing levels in health facilities improved from 78% to at least 95% of the required staffing norms, strengthening capacity to manage the refugee influx.

- Over 3,000 health workers, including facility-based and community health workers, were trained to enhance disease surveillance and emergency response.

- Adequate medicine and health supplies were distributed across districts through national and UNHCR supply chains, ensuring consistent access to essential health commodities.

- Over 30 new Health Centre (HC) III facilities were constructed and equipped in refugee-hosting sub-counties that previously lacked them.

- 29 HC II facilities were upgraded to HC III, and Yumbe Hospital was upgraded to a regional hospital to better support the growing demand for refugee health services.

- Coordination was strengthened through the establishment of the Health Sector Integrated Refugee Response Plan (HSIRRP) Steering Group, improving multi-stakeholder engagement and policy implementation.

CHALLENGES

- The unpredictability of funding streams has resulted in the continued reliance on temporary facilities to serve both refugees and host communities, impacting the sustainability and quality of service delivery.

2.2.3 Water and Environment Sector Refugee Response Plan (WESRRP)

The water and environment sector has played a pivotal role in advancing development initiatives under the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus in Uganda, particularly through its Sector Response Plan. This plan is aligned with the Water and Environment Sector Development Plan (SDP) and aims to integrate refugees into the ministry's planning processes while supporting its mission to promote the sustainable utilization and management of water and environmental resources in refugee-hosting districts. Furthermore, efforts to incorporate refugees into the next SDP of the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) will continue, ensuring alignment with Uganda's National Development Plan (NDPIII) for 2020/21-2025/26.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER THE WESRRP PLAN INCLUDE

- Water supply in refugee settlements currently stands at about 14 litres per capita per day. In host communities across the 12 refugee-hosting local governments, safe water coverage averages 56%, with Madi Okollo having the lowest access at 36%. There has been a significant improvement from previous levels.

- The Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) developed a Transition Framework and an Operator Model to guide the shift from a humanitarian approach to a utility-based service delivery model in the water sector. This initiative is being implemented in West Nile settlements.

- To meet service delivery standards in refugee settlements, the MWE, alongside development and humanitarian partners, rehabilitated and optimized 40 water supply systems to enhance productivity and water production.

- Access to sanitation services was improved through the construction of faecal sludge treatment facilities and the provision of sanitation facilities, including latrines, for refugees and host communities.

- 23 water supply systems (including 225 water supply schemes and over 1,200 boreholes) have been handed over to the MWE for utility management by the Northern Umbrella for Water Supply and Sanitation. This was accompanied by the development of a uniform tariff system for water services.

- The water and environment sector is currently reviewing its response plan to further strengthen service delivery and sustainability.

CHALLENGES

- Decreased funding for the operation and maintenance of water supply schemes has impacted service sustainability and efficiency.

NEXT STEPS INTO 2025

- Signing the tripartite MoU for the transition between UNCHR, OPM and MWE to enhance the transition from the Humanitarian to the Utility approach in the water sector.

- Continue with the optimization of the water supply schemes to enhance their management within the utility approach.

- Continue to build the capacity of the MWE water utilities to enhance the management of the systems under the utility approach.

2.2.4 Sustainable Energy Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities

The Ministry of Mineral and Energy Development (MEMD) runs the Sustainable Energy Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities (SERP). The plan aims to support the implementation of emergency response and longer-term interventions towards achieving CRRF's national service delivery system. It is fully integrated into government plans, strategies, and systems, with objectives, outcomes, and activities in line with the SEDP Implementation Action Plan. The strategic objectives of the SERP is to develop sustainable and effective energy solutions that lead directly to increased access to clean, affordable and reliable energy for refugee and host communities and to enhance the capacity, mobilize resources and strengthen systems for effective coordination and management of the energy programmers targeting refugee and host communities in line with national, multi-stakeholders policies, strategies and plans. During 2024 MEMD achieved the following:

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Access to clean and reliable energy in refugee settlements and host communities has increased by 5%, from 67% to 72%. Over 100 households have benefited from the distribution of 1,000 clean energy products.

- There has been a reduction in the reliance on biomass for cooking, contributing to more sustainable energy practices.

- Refugee and host communities have seen greater involvement in program design and implementation, with a strong focus on monitoring, evaluation, learning, and ensuring diversity.

- Access to flexible financing has expanded for both consumers and businesses, fostering affordable, gender-sensitive market development opportunities.

2.2.5 Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities (JLIRP)

With the vision of ensuring that refugees and host-communities are secure, self-reliant and resilient. The specific objectives of the plan include: enhancing peaceful co-existence and the socio-economic interaction between the two communities, promoting the creation of economic opportunities in the 13 refugee-hosting districts for improved competitiveness and inclusive growth, improved food, nutrition and income securities for refugees and host communities, skilling refugees and host communities to enhance employment creation and ensuring the communities actively participate in local development initiatives. Implementation of the JLIRP is led by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, (MoGLSD). In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives (MTIC), Ministry of Education and Sports (Uganda Business and Technical Examination Board) are directly responsible for the implementation of different pillars of the response plan.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

- Conducted three workshops to disseminate the JLIRP in refugee-hosting districts and provided technical guidance to six districts for integrating the JLIRP into their development plans and budgets, including self-reliance strategies.

- Integration of Jobs and Livelihoods programs in the National Development Plan IV.

- Conducted mapping of livelihood and resilience actors aligned with JLIRP pillars and produced a detailed report showing over 250 projects contributing to the JLIRP. The mapping exercise was supported by Uganda Learning, Evidence, Accountability and Research Network (ULEARN).

- Conducted one quarterly JLIRP National Steering Committee meeting.

- Completed the development of the National Self-Reliance Index for refugees and host communities. The index is a national benchmark for measuring household progress towards self-reliance. It evaluates key factors like economic independence, food security, nutrition, health, shelter, social services, WASH, and resilience. By providing a standardized measurement, the index will ensure that all programs aimed at fostering self-reliance are guided by a unified measurement approach, allowing for effective decision-making and targeted interventions. The Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development (MGLSD) led the development of the index in collaboration with the relevant government ministries, departments, and agencies such as the CRRF Secretariat (OPM), Department of Refugees (OPM), Uganda Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, Uganda Business and Technical Examination Board, Directorate of Industrial Training, and National Planning Authority. World Food Programme provided strategic and technical leadership to the self-reliance reference group that steered this initiative. The following partners participated in the self-reliance reference group discussions to develop the index: UNHCR, AVSI, BRAC, FRC, DRC, World Vision, Village Enterprise, Trickle-Up, IPA, and Mercy Corps. The development of the index went through an extensive consultative process, including pretesting and settlement-wide data collection. This provided a solid foundation for establishing key thresholds and refining the final index. It will be launched and fully operationalized in early 2025.

NEXT STEPS

- Launch and operationalization of the self-reliance index

- Review and extension of the JLIRP beyond 2025

- Integration of the JLIRP into District Development Plans IV (DDP IVs)

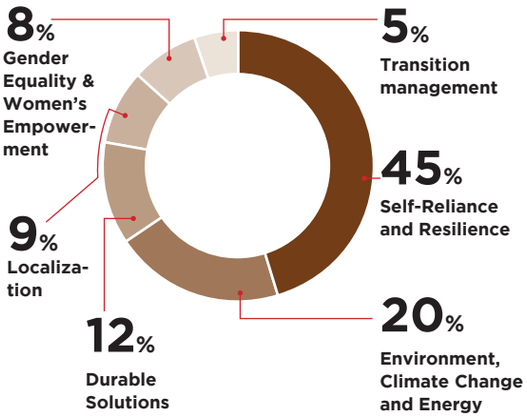
Hon. Minister for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, UNHCR High Commissioner and UNHCR Country Representative pose for a photo during their visit to Uganda.

2.3 2023 GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM PLEDGES AND IMPLEMENTATION IN UGANDA

2.3.1 Tracking of Partner Matching Pledges

The Government of Uganda through the OPM-CRRF Secretariat with technical support from UNHCR and partners developed a comprehensive tracker for tracking the pledges made during the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in December 2023. Bilateral engagements have been held with several pledging entities, with the currently identified financial volume of matching pledges amounting to 240.7 million.

Thematic areas of pledges



The majority of pledges made fall into the thematic area of Self-Reliance and Resilience (45%), followed by Environment, Climate Change and Energy (20%), Durable Solutions (12%). Localization (9%) and Transition Management (5%), while 8% relate to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

2.3.2 Progress on the Implementation of Government Pledges

The line ministries leading the policy pledges on Resilience and Self-Reliance, Transition Management, Localization, Climate Change, Energy and Environment and Durable Solutions are in the process of developing roadmaps for the implementation and monitoring of their pledges.

Several partners who did not make pledges at the GRF are still aligning with the government's thematic priority area. This is being tracked through the CRRF Development Partners Group as part of a broader mapping of development partners' contribution to the Ugandan Refugee Response. According to the mapping, 48 projects with a total financial volume of 897 million US dollars were contributing to the thematic area of Resilience and Self-Reliance in 2024, 17 projects with a total volume of 323 million US dollars were contributing to Energy, Environment and Climate Change, 16 projects with a total volume of 98 million US dollars to Localization and 22 projects with a total volume of 319 million US dollars to Transition Management.

PROGRESS REGISTERED IN 2024

Transition Management: Led by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) and supported by the CRRF Secretariat, a National Transition Strategy has been developed for the integration of services in the health, education and water sectors into national systems. The focus in 2025 will be on implementation of the strategy, including the set-up of the proposed governance structure and financing mechanisms.

Localization: Similarly, a short-term consultancy is being set up to finalize a strategy for strengthening the role of local and national responders in the Refugee Response (Localization), led by the Ministry of Local Government. A roundtable to validate the strategy and bring together partners working on Localisation is planned for May 2025.

The Inter-Ministerial Meeting on Refugees held at the Sheraton Hotel Kampala, with the aim of fostering a coordinated approach to service delivery by government entities.

Self-Reliance and Resilience: The process of developing a standardized self-reliance measurement framework (Self Reliance Index) has been finalized, with a tentative launch and roll-out planned for April 2025.

Addressing Environment, Climate Change and Energy Challenges: A partnership has been set up between MEMD, MWE and UNEP/Last Mile Climate for the implementation of the multi-stakeholder pledges Solar-Electric Cooking Partnership for Displacement Contexts (SOLCO) and EcoAdapt, which focuses on climate adaptation through nature-based solutions in refugee-hosting areas.

Durable Solutions: UNHCR and OPM have been facilitating the voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees and are issuing Conventional Travel Documents.

2.3.3 UN Common Pledge 2.0

The UN Country Team in support of the UN Common Pledge 2.0 in Uganda committed to:

- Support the Government of Uganda to advance dialogue on durable solutions for identification of solutions and pathways to achieve them, including by strengthening national capacity for applying the Humanitarian Development (and peace) nexus approach.

- Work with development and social partners to further strengthen integration of refugees and climate change actions in development programs for sustainable solutions, including the resilience and self-reliance, access to labour market, and economic inclusion of refugees and host communities.

- Support the Government of Uganda on advancing localization for enhanced SADD data, evidence and analysis around refugee movements and intentions for credible solutions.

- Promote cross-border UN approach to better forecast/assess needs and accordingly, advocate for actions.

Eleven UN agencies – FAO, ILO, IOM, UNCDF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, WFP and WHO –specifically pledged to provide specific assistance within their program framework and mandates.

In September 2024, a UN inter-agency workshop was held on the UN Common Pledge 2.0 implementation in Uganda, with the objectives to a) take stock of UN agencies' progress in the implementation of their specific commitments and b) develop a UNCT joint action plan, including resource mobilization, to advance the implementation and follow up the common pledge implementation in Uganda.

3.0 CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Continued influx of refugees

The continued and expanding influx of refugees into the country presents substantial concerns. This growth is being driven by a combination of regional conflicts, economic insecurity, and climate-related displacement. The growing refugee population places a burden on the host country's infrastructure, resources, and services, making it increasingly difficult to provide adequate shelter, food, healthcare, and education. As the refugee population grows, there is an urgent need for improved coordination, increased humanitarian assistance, and long-term measures to provide sustainable solutions, such as refugee integration into local communities and economies.

Dwindling resources (financial and human)

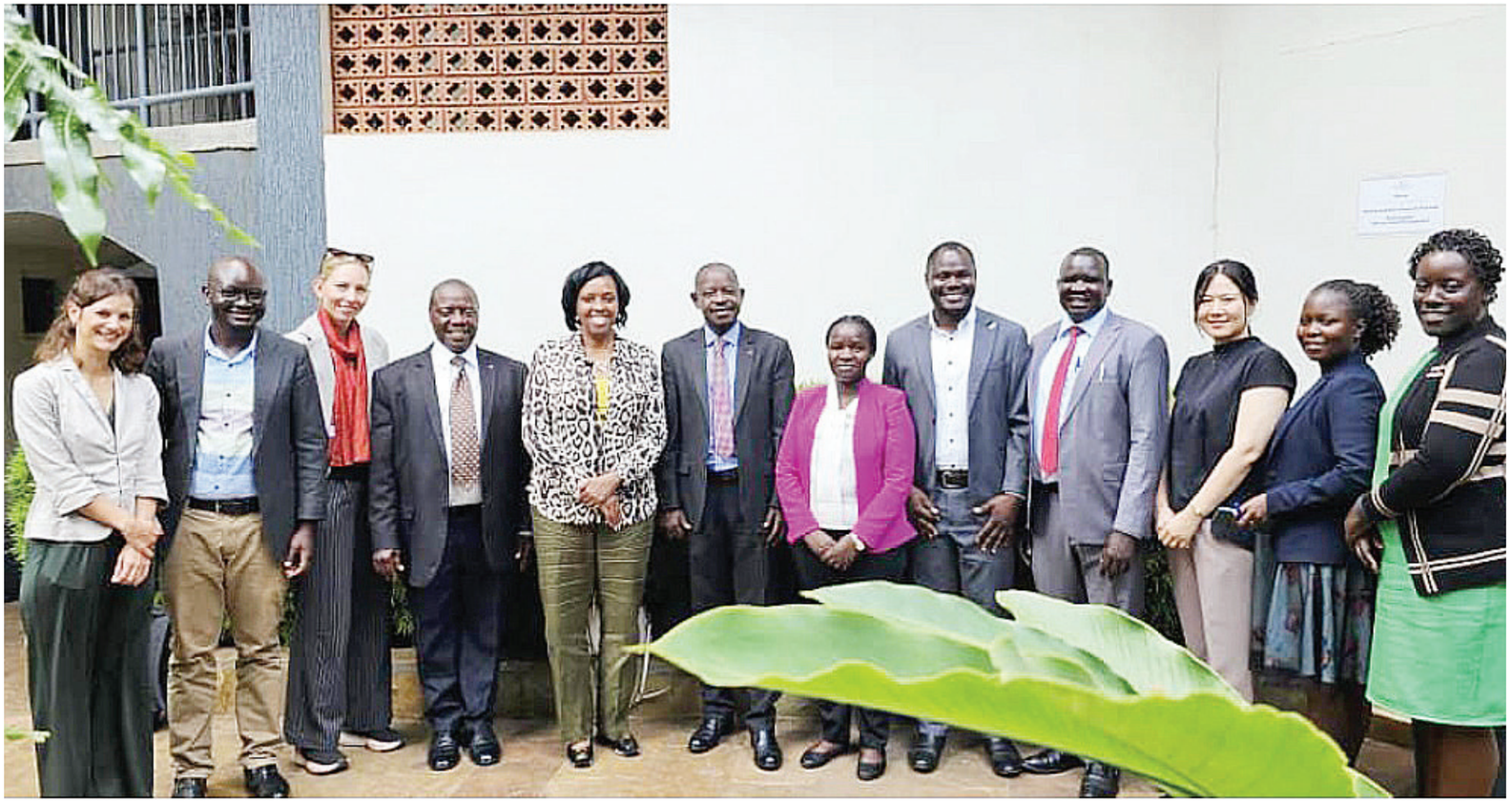
The ability to respond to the refugee crisis is being hampered by depleting financial and human resources. On the financial front, existing financing for refugee support services is not keeping up with rising demand, resulting in resource shortages and an inability to meet the requirements of both refugees and host communities. Furthermore, there is a major shortage of competent human resources needed to manage and administer successful initiatives. This includes a shortage of skilled personnel in critical industries including healthcare, education, and infrastructure development. The limited availability of resources means more innovative and efficient techniques to managing aid and services are required, including through strengthening government-led coordination, integrating service provision into national structures and promoting the localization agenda. Additionally, Uganda needs to continue showcasing its model internationally and advocate financing and capacity-building efforts, including from non-traditional donors.

4.0 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

4.1 Overview of funding sources (2024):

UNHCR, development partners and non-governmental organizations provided most of the funding for the CRRF Secretariat's coordination efforts during the 2024 calendar year, including on and off-budget support, as well as staff secondments to Secretariat. The Office of the Prime Minister recognizes and appreciates the contributions of CARE International Uganda, CRS, GIZ, IGAD, JICA, Red Cross, RELON REWON, ULEARN, UN Women, UNHCR, World Food Programme, and other stakeholders to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).

5.0 STRATEGIC OUTLOOK FOR 2025



Joint meeting between the new Commissioner for Refugees and CRRF Secretariat.

The Strategic Outlook for 2025 outlines a forward-looking plan to advance refugee response and integration, building on past achievements while emphasizing inclusive development and sustainable solutions. Aligned with the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and Global Refugee Forum (GRF) pledges, it focuses on implementing commitments, promoting localization, engaging stakeholders and showcasing the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus.

1) Strategic Framework Development and Implementation

In 2024, Ministries, Departments and Agencies spearheaded the implementation of the GRF commitments against which matching pledges of partners are to be assessed. Three strategic outputs were developed namely: the Draft National Transition Strategy, the Localization Strategy and the Self-Reliance Measurement Index. In 2025, the CRRF Secretariat will support the finalization, launch and rollout of the National Transition Strategy under Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED), the Localisation Strategy led by Ministry of Local Government, and the Self-Reliance Measurement Index led by Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. In addition, MoFPED supported by the CRRF Secretariat in consultation with key stakeholders developed the Private Sector Engagement Strategy. This will be launched and rolled out in 2025. The rollout of all the above will provide guidelines and areas of alignment to the various actors in the refugee response.

2) Tracking of GRF pledges

This will involve reaching out to all partner pledging entities through bilateral engagements, and reporting through the GRF portal. Given that 2025 is the mid-term period of the 2023 pledges, the Secretariat will convene pledge specific roundtables and multi-stakeholder engagements to assess the level of pledge realization by pledging entities and also prepare a report to the High-Level Officials Meeting in December 2025.

3) Governance, Coordination and Networking at National and Regional Levels

At national level, the CRRF Secretariat will convene the Inter-Ministerial Meeting on Service Provision. The Steering Group meetings chaired at ministerial level will be convened with inputs from the Refugee Engagement Forum, District Engagement Forum, DEF/REF Interface, Inter-Sector Dialogues, the Development Partners Group, HINGO and the UN Family among other platforms. At regional level, the CRRF Secretariat will support the operationalization of the IGAD Regional Refugee Engagement Forum, which was launched in 2024, as well as the Regional SUIDAC project implemented by Cities Alliance in Ugandan and five other neighbouring countries which are refugee origins.

4) Closer Collaboration between Refugees and Hosts

Following the innovation of the face-to-face engagement of refugee leadership in the structure of the REF and the host community in the structure of the DEF, the joint REF/DEF interfaces will be organized on a rotational basis for the leaders of the refugees and host districts to assess the impact of various interventions to the affected populations. This will enhance peaceful co-existence and voicing of issues that impact them. Reports from the interface engagements will be used as input into high-level meetings of government.

6.0. CONCLUSION: STAND WITH UGANDA, THE BIGGEST REFUGEE HOST COUNTRY IN AFRICA

Distinguished CRRF stakeholders, achieving the aforementioned milestones in 2024 was because of your collective generosity in financial, technical and other resources. The new year is even tougher as we estimate the number of refugees to clock two million by the end of 2025, against a trend of declining funding. We believe that we can achieve a lot within the available resources if we jointly point in the same priority direction, become efficient and devise new ways of working.

The year 2025 is the midterm for assessing and reporting the implementation of our GRF pledge commitments at the High Level Officials Meeting in Geneva. This process requires collaborative partnerships to realize our GRF dreams. We ask you to stand with Uganda, the biggest host of refugees in Africa so that we can graduate a bigger number of sisters and brothers and the host communities into the self-reliant and resilient bracket of the economy.

For God and our country.

THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)

The CRRF is a multi-stakeholder coordination model on refugee matters focusing on humanitarian and development needs of both refugees and host communities.The CRRF in Uganda encompasses five mutually reinforcing pillars as outlined by the global objectives: (i) Admission and Rights, (ii)Emergency Response and Ongoing Needs, (iii) Resilience and Self-reliance, (iv) Expanded Solution and (v) Voluntary Repatriation.

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