REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

SOUTH SUDAN GRF PROGRESS REPORT

2024 – 2025

By The National Technical Committee (NTC) On Durable Solutions in South Sudan
Co-Chaired by Commission for Refugee Affairs and Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
Led by Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management

THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE SOUTH SUDAN GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM PLEDGES

Compiled by the South Sudan Global Refugee Forum Working Group

Validated By

The National Technical Committee (NTC) On Durable Solutions in South Sudan

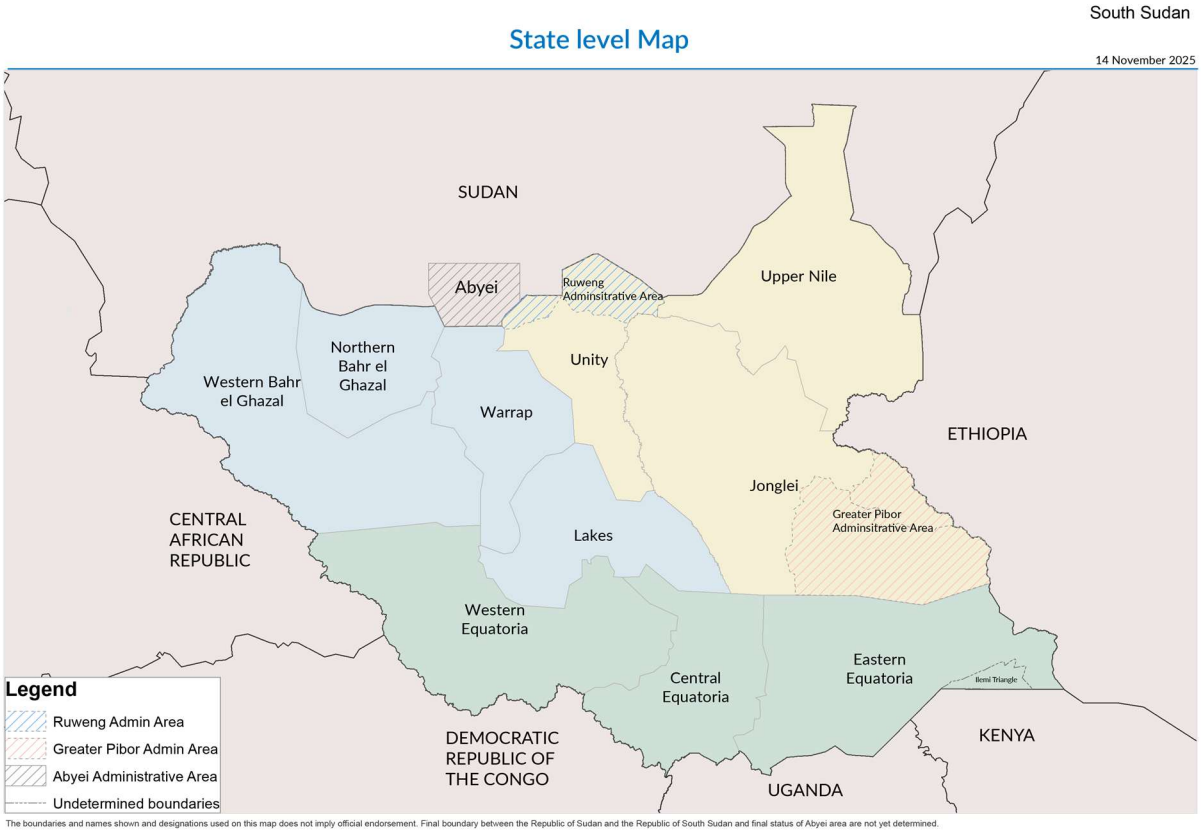
On 5 November 2025

Approved by

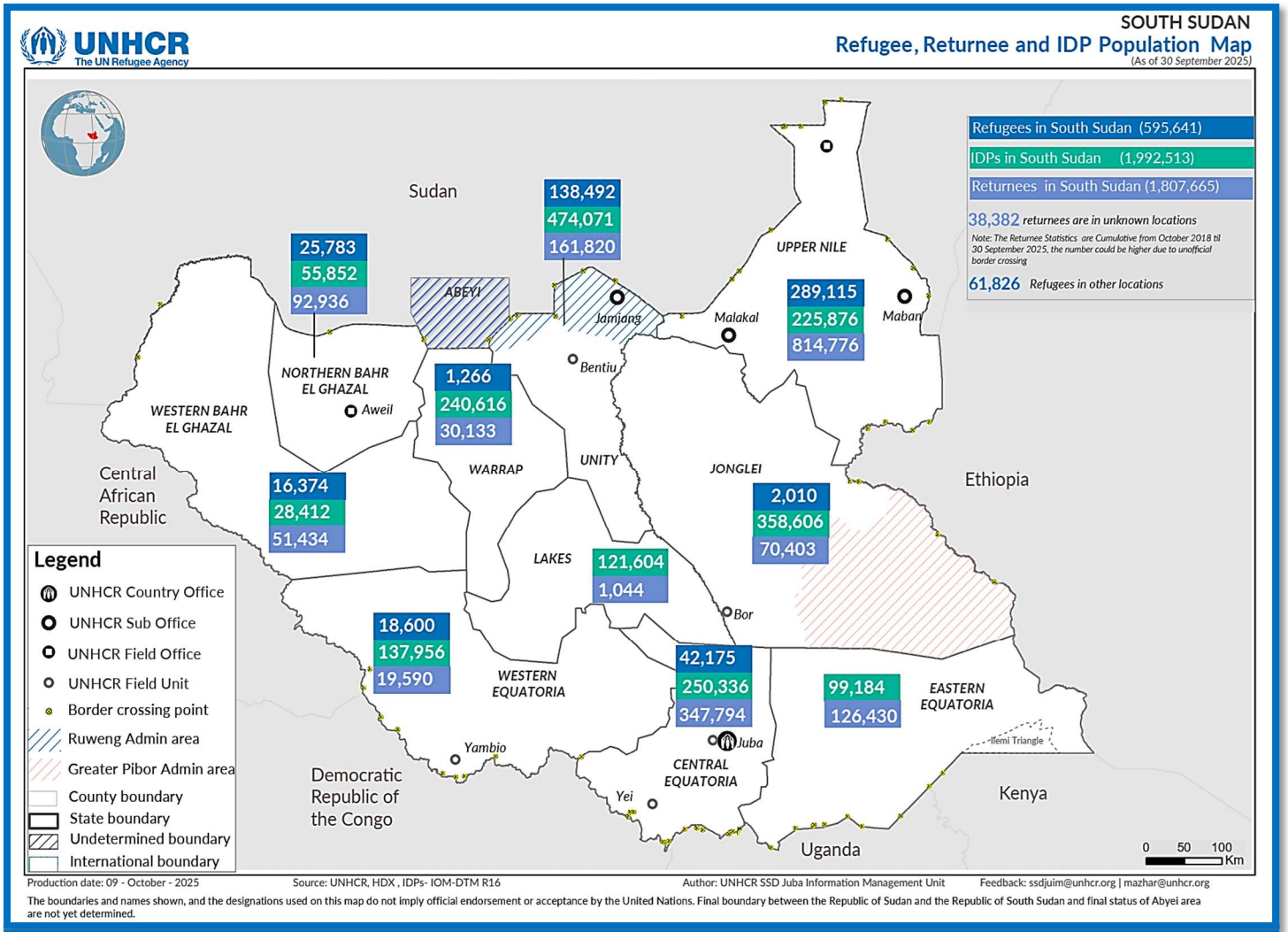
The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management

Published on December 12, 2025

Map of the Republic of South Sudan: states and Administrative Areas



With support from the Mastercard Foundation, over 200 refugee and returnee students from Sudan graduated from a 3-month-long English Language Skills course in Juba. *Feb, 2025 - UNHCR/Reason*



Civil Documentation Processing by DCRNPI in South Sudan, pioritizing returnees in Wau and Raja with EU support – 2024

CONTENTS

FOREWORD ..... **vi**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ..... **vii**

TABLE OF FIGURES ..... **ix**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... **x**

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND ..... **- 1 -**

1.1. Introduction to the GCR Framework ..... - 1 -

1.2. Displacement Contexts in South Sudan ..... - 2 -

1.3. Frameworks Shaping GCR in South Sudan ..... - 3 -

1.4. South Sudan GCR Commitments at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) ..... - 4 -

2. METHODS AND LIMITATIONS ..... **- 5 -**

2.1 Methodology ..... - 5 -

2.2 Limitations ..... - 6 -

3. POLICY ENVIRONMENT, STRATEGY, AND COORDINATION ..... **- 7 -**

3.1 South Sudan Integrated Solutions Framework ..... - 7 -

3.2 Coordination and Development Partnership ..... - 8 -

4. GRF Commitments and Progress in South Sudan ..... **- 10 -**

4.1 Solutions and Peacebuilding ..... - 10 -

4.2 Education ..... - 14 -

4.3 Jobs and Livelihoods ..... - 18 -

4.4 Climate and Environments ..... - 22 -

4.5 Statelessness ..... - 25 -

4.6 Protection Capacity – Strengthening the Asylum System and Documentation ..... - 29 -

5. LESSONS LEARNED, BEST PRACTICES, AND OPPORTUNITIES ..... **- 32 -**

5.1 Lessons learned and Best Practices ..... - 32 -

5.2 Opportunities ..... - 33 -

5.3 Recommendations and Plans of Action ..... - 35 -

6. CONCLUSIONS ..... **- 37 -**

FOREWORD

Hon. Albino Akol Atak, Minister of HADM

South Sudan remains firmly committed to the principles of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). Our commitments are fully reflected in national policies and frameworks, including the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) pledges and the establishment of the National Technical Committee on Durable Solutions. Through the Durable Solutions Strategy and Plan of Action, as well as other key policies and legal instruments, we continue to advance the inclusion of displaced persons and those at risk of statelessness into national systems and programmes.

Despite persistent economic constraints, climate shocks, and the complex dynamics of displacement, South Sudan—together with its partners and donors—has taken bold and concrete steps to turn pledges into action across all six thematic areas of the GCR. Guided by the National Durable Solutions Strategy, the Government has expanded access to education, enhanced livelihood opportunities, and strengthened protection systems for refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and host communities.

Since the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, the country has launched and advanced numerous commitments in the areas of education, jobs and livelihoods, climate action, statelessness, asylum capacity, civil documentation, and comprehensive solutions and peace building. These achievements—realized within just two years—are a testament to collective effort. They have been made possible through the collaboration of government institutions, humanitarian and development partners, peace actors, civil society organizations, and the generosity of host communities. I extend my deepest gratitude to each of you.

Yet, significant challenges remain. Funding gaps, infrastructural limitations, and the urgent need to address statelessness continue to impede progress. Many individuals still lack essential civil documentation, including refugee identification and machine-readable travel documents, which are critical to advancing the broader inclusion agenda. Overcoming these obstacles requires renewed commitment, strengthened partnerships, and shared responsibility.

To donors and development partners, I urge you to align your resources with your pledges so that we may sustain momentum and accelerate progress. I also call upon the private sector to invest in livelihood and market opportunities that empower displaced populations while strengthening local economies. Together, we must scale up integrated, community-driven solutions that ensure no one is left behind.

It is my honour to present the Progress Report on the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) Pledges: 2024–2025. This report is not only a record of achievements; it is a testament to resilience, solidarity, and the enduring spirit of humanity in the face of adversity. I reiterate my call for solidarity, responsibility sharing, and sustained support for South Sudan as we work to meet the needs of every displaced person—refugee, returnee, person at risk of statelessness, and member of host communities.

Let us continue to join hands and pursue durable solutions for displacement in our time.

Hon. Albino Akol Atak Mayom (MP)

Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management

Republic of South Sudan

Juba

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The **National Technical Committee on Durable Solutions (NTC-DS)** wishes to express its sincere appreciation to all stakeholders who contributed to the preparation of the *South Sudan Global Refugee Forum (GRF) Progress Report 2024–2025*. This report reflects the collective commitment of government institutions, development partners, humanitarian actors, and civil society to advance the pledges made under the **Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) framework to achieve solutions and inclusion of displaced persons in national systems and programmes.**

The journey has not been easy, as the impact of the Sudan conflict has not been huge on South Sudan, with both returning population and the refugees' influx, as well as the border situation and fear of any spill-over of the conflict. However, with the leadership of the **Government of the Republic of South Sudan**, particularly the **Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management**, and the Ministry of Interior who have led the government efforts to the response and contain the situation, the reception and forward assistance to the returnees have been made possible, reception, registration and settling of refugees achieved successfully including the setup of the Wedwil settlement and support in existing refugee hosting locations.

Furthermore, the guidance provided during the period that enables the NTC-DS to oversee the implementation of the pledges and the Ministries' efforts in collaboration with developmental and humanitarian partners to implement key pledges outputs has been remarkable. On behalf of the NTC-DS, our gratitude extends to the Office of the President of the Republic of South Sudan, Office of the Vice President and chair of Humanitarian Affairs and Youth Cluster, and to Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, the IGAD, Office of Commissioner for Refugee Affairs (CRA) and the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) and UN Resident Coordinator for their unwavering support, and technical oversight in ensuring that refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons, and host communities are included in national planning and development frameworks as well as provided with basic services from the onset of crisis.

We further recognize the invaluable support and continued efforts of our partners, including **UNHCR**, **UNDP**, FAO, UNEP, UNOPS, WFP, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, ILO, UNESCO, UNECA, **IOM**, **UNMISS**, and the NGOs (Represented by NGO Forum), just to mention a few. Thanks to the great financial and technical contribution from the multilateral development banks (World Bank, AfDB), the donor countries, and bilateral donors (EU, KOICA, GCF, Japan, US, Germany). Your technical expertise and financial contributions have been instrumental in achieving the milestones leading to the advancement of the GCR in South Sudan.

Finally, we commend the efforts of the NTC-DS members, the technical support of partners, and the resilience and active participation of refugees, returnees, and host communities whose voices and experiences will continue to shape the inclusion processes and the GCR implementation. Your courage and determination inspire our continued efforts to build a South Sudan where the displaced and stateless persons find solutions, become resilient and contribute to economic development alongside the host community.

Hon. John Dabi
NTC-DS Co-Chair | Deputy Commissioner
Commission for Refugee Affairs (CRA)

Hon. Makuch Makuch Ngongdit
NTC-DS Co-Chair | Deputy Chairperson
Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC)

List of Abbreviations

GRF WG:	Global Refugee Forum Working Group – in South Sudan
NTC-DS	National Technical Committee on Durable Solutions
GCR:	Global Compact for Refugees
GRF:	Global Refugees Forum
CRA:	Commission of Refugees Affairs
RRC:	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
MHADM:	Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management
MoI:	Ministry of Interior
CSO:	Civil Society Organizations
DCRNPI:	Directorate of Civil Registry, Nationality, Passport and Immigration
DRC:	Danish Refugee Council
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organization
IDP:	Internally Displaced Persons
IRC:	International Rescue Committee
LWF:	Lutheran World Federation
MoEF:	Ministry of Environment and Forestry
MAFS:	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
MoL:	Ministry of Labor
SSDSS:	South Sudan Durable Solution Strategy
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
NRC:	Norwegian Refugee Council
RoSS:	Republic of South Sudan
R-NDS:	Revised National Development Strategy
SSP:	South Sudanese Pounds
SSPRC	South Sudan Peace & Reconciliation Commission
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IOM:	International Organization for Migration of the UN
WB:	World Bank
WFP:	World Food Programme
IOM:	International Organization for Migration
RCO:	Resident Coordinator Office
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
UNSCDF	United Nations Sustainable Cooperation Development Framework

TABLE OF FIGURES

TABLE 1: SOUTH SUDAN GRF PLEDGES AND THE THEMATIC AREAS - 5 -
TABLE 2: PRIMARY DATA SOURCES (FGDS, INSTITUTIONAL AND PARTNERS REPORTS) - 6 -
TABLE 3: SOLUTIONS AND PEACEBUILDING PLEDGE KEY HIGHLIGHTS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES - 13 -
TABLE 4: EDUCATION PLEDGE KEY HIGHLIGHTS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES - 16 -
TABLE 5: JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS CRITICAL HIGHLIGHTS - 21 -
TABLE 6: CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT PLEDGE: CRITICAL HIGHLIGHTS - 24 -
TABLE 7: STATELESSNESS PLEDGE HIGHLIGHTS - 28 -
TABLE 8: PROTECTION CAPACITY AND DOCUMENTATION HIGHLIGHTS - 31 -

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Republic of South Sudan has made significant strides in implementing its commitments under the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) made at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in 2019 and 2023 respectively. The pledges made in six thematic areas outline key outputs and actions to be taken by South Sudan over the course of four years to promote the inclusion of refugees and other displaced persons in national systems and programs. The thematic areas include Solutions and Peacebuilding, Education, Jobs and Livelihoods, Climate and Environment, Statelessness and the Protection Capacity.

This progress report, compiled by the South Sudan GRF Working Group and validated by the National Technical Committee on Durable Solutions (NTC-DS), outlines achievements, challenges, and opportunities across these six thematic pledges, with key outputs achieved successfully and others ongoing. The critical achievements including the completed outputs, are below with some critical challenges as well as opportunities indicated.

Key Achievements

- Durable Solutions Strategy and The Action Plan (2024–2028) were launched and are being rolled out across states, guiding reintegration and resilience-building for refugees, IDPs, returnees, and host communities.
- Education: Over 269 refugee students enrolled in national universities; 65 teachers trained; digital learning centers established in Maban and Jamjang, providing digital learning to youth and students.
- Livelihoods: over 600 youth trained in vocational skills; 76 agricultural cooperatives registered; 17,100 individuals supported through microloans and business development.
- Climate Action: 40,000 trees planted; 485 households received clean cooking technologies; early warning systems and flood preparedness plans developed.
- Statelessness: South Sudan acceded to the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions; over 21,000 individuals documented; Civil Registry Framework and Nationality Act 2011 under review.
- Protection Capacity: Refugee ID and MRCTD processes initiated, awaiting production; over 1,100 law enforcement officers trained; refugees included in national statistics for the first time through the household budget survey (HBS).

Challenges

- Funding constraints delay implementation of key activities, including Refugee ID and Machine-Readable Travel Documents production and flood preparedness activities.
- Weak infrastructure, limited access to agricultural inputs, and inconsistent legal frameworks in key sectors hinder service delivery.
- Risk of Statelessness remains a challenge due to cross-border identity issues, delayed operationalization of the civil registry system and unclear provisions in nationality laws.

Opportunities

- Strong government commitment and favourable policies, including an open-door policy.
- Skilled returnees and refugees from Sudan offer potential for economic transformation.
- Growing local markets and agricultural potential can be leveraged for development.

The report calls for enhanced donor support, policy harmonization, and private sector engagement to sustain the momentum gained. Emphasis is on the need for integrated planning, inclusive service delivery, and continued investment in durable solutions to ensure protection, dignity, and self-reliance for displaced populations and host communities.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction to the GCR Framework

The Global Compact on Refugees was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 17 December 2018, stemming from the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) initiatives that started in 2016. The GCR provides a paradigm shift in international refugee policy to build a more predictable and responsible framework that addresses the displacement challenges faced by those forced to flee their homes in the wake of persecution. It provides a blueprint for governments, international organizations, and other stakeholders to ensure that host communities get the support they need and that refugees can lead productive lives. It further provides a unique opportunity to transform the way the world responds to refugee situations, benefiting both refugees and the communities that host them. South Sudan has domesticated the GCR and has since adopted its policies to align with the principles set therein, including its regular participation in the Global Refugee Forum with concrete commitments to promote the inclusion of refugees in its national planning and policies.

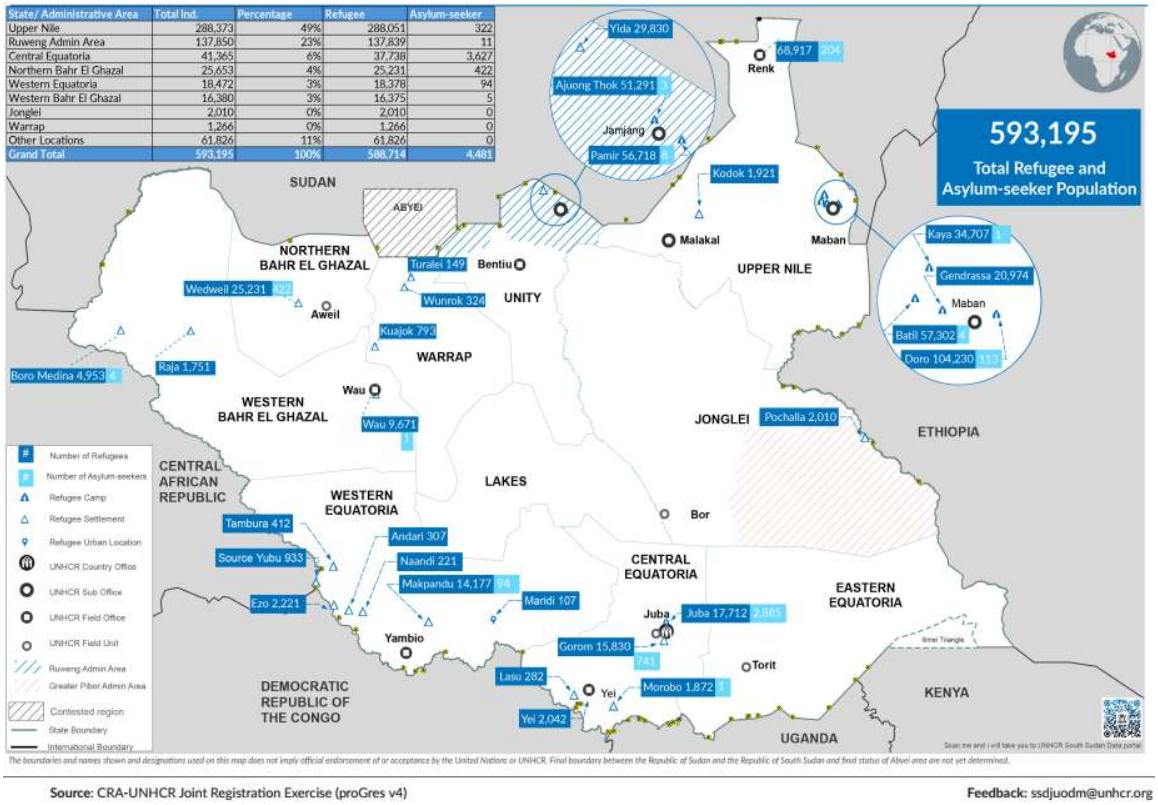
South Sudan maintained an open-door policy to refugees and asylum-seekers[1]. The South Sudan Refugee Act, 2012 stipulates the rights and protection principles for the refugees in the country, and together with its Refugee Regulations, 2017 provides a framework for asylum system management, including guiding integration of the refugees in national planning, abiding by the principles of the international legal framework. South Sudan has ratified international legal conventions, including the 1951 Geneva Convention, and its 1967 Protocol and the Conventions on Statelessness, among others. This enables South Sudan to provide the legal protection and promote the welfare of the displaced persons, including ensuring the socioeconomic empowerment, self-reliance, and access to a wide range of services for the refugees.

The Government of South Sudan through the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, and Commission of Refugee Affairs and Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, leads the initiative and advancement of the GCR and GRF pledges in South Sudan in collaboration with partners including development actors, Multilateral Development Banks, Regional Economic Communities and Bilateral donors with technical and programs supports from the UN and NGOs among others. The approach is inclusive, using the government ministries and an all-society approach with participation from civil society groups, refugees, internally displaced persons, stateless persons, and host communities, with critical policy issues led by the sectoral government bodies such as the ministries, states, and county levels.

[1] For more information on the South Sudan crisis go to: South Sudan Information Sharing Portal

1.2. Displacement Contexts in South Sudan

South Sudan faces a complex situation with displacement leading to both protracted caseloads, fluid internal displacement, risk of statelessness, and continues inflow of the refugees from the neighboring countries, notably the Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Central African Republic, and DR Congo, among others, with Sudan leading at 95 percent of the refugee population. Internal displacement is characterized by patterns of conflict and natural disaster situations, where the initial political conflict contributes greatly.



State/ Administrative Area	Total Ind.	Percentage	Refugee	Asylum-seeker
Upper Nile	288,373	49%	288,051	322
Ruweng Admin Area	137,850	23%	137,839	11
Central Equatoria	41,365	6%	37,738	3,627
Northern Bahr El Ghazal	25,653	4%	25,231	422
Western Equatoria	18,472	3%	18,378	94
Western Bahr El Ghazal	16,380	3%	16,375	5
Jonglei	2,010	0%	2,010	0
Warrap	1,266	0%	1,266	0
Other Locations	61,826	11%	61,826	0
Grand Total	593,195	100%	588,714	4,481

The boundaries and names shown and designations used on this map does not imply official endorsement of or acceptance by the United Nations or UNHCR. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan and final status of Abyei area are not yet determined.

Source: CRA-UNHCR Joint Registration Exercise (proGres v4) Feedback: ssdjuodm@unhcr.org

As of August 2025, South Sudan hosted a total of **593,195 refugees and asylum-seekers (156,454 households), comprising 588,714 refugee individuals (155,193 households) and 4,481 asylum-seeker individuals** (**3,261 households**) across 29 locations. The Sudanese refugee population remains the largest, with **559,643 individuals** (**95%** of the total). This is followed by **14,461** refugees from the **Democratic Republic of Congo (2%), 6,328 from Ethiopia (1%), 4,198 from Eritrea (1%)**, and **4,084** from other nationalities **(1%).** Women constitute **22%** of the refugee population, with women and children together making up **77%**. Regarding age distribution, **55%** of the refugees are aged 0–17 years, **42%** between 18-59 years, and **3%** are aged 60 and above. Approximately **83%** of the refugees are hosted in the Upper Nile and Ruweng Administrative Areas (Formerly Unity State).[2]

In response to the ongoing conflict in Sudan, the Government of South Sudan continues to grant prima facie refugee status to those fleeing the country. The government works collaboratively

[2] *Situation South Sudan*. (n.d.). Retrieved September 12, 2025, from https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/southsudan

with UNHCR and IOM to receive and support the people fleeing the conflict in Sudan, including the South Sudanese returning to the country, as well as the refugees. In addition to these dynamics, South Sudan hosts over 2 million internally displaced persons, most of whom are fluidly moving or staying within host communities. Over 2 million others are displaced and seeking refuge in the neighboring countries, with the majority in Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia, as well as Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo, among others.

Aside from the persistent displacements and fluid context of the conflict, South Sudan presents an opportunity for growth amidst the challenges. Its open-door policy not only presents a positive protection environment but equally translates into the policy environment, including the country's policies and overall frameworks that intend to address critical challenges, including the situation of refugees, IDPs, returnees, and host communities through its ambitious policies and plans, including the GRF commitments, country durable solutions and development plans, among other policies.

1.3. Frameworks Shaping GCR in South Sudan

In line with the international and regional instruments and policies, including the IGAD Platforms and East African Community (EAC) and Great Lakes Region, South Sudan is committed to key commitments including; Nairobi Declaration on finding durable solutions to refugees, Djibouti Declaration on mainstreaming of Refugees education, Kampala Declaration on Jobs and Livelihoods, the African Union's 2009 Kampala Convention as well as the UN's 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement[3]. These regional and international frameworks, alongside the GCR and 1951 Convention, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), among others, provide a guiding framework that South Sudan is advancing in the country through domestication and policy legislation. The South Sudan framework for achieving solutions and sustainable development for the refugees, returnees, IDPs, and host communities is anchored on the legal framework of the country, notably the following.

- **The Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan**
- **The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCISS)**: addressing root causes of displacement is an integral part of Chapter III, and other provisions of Chapters IV, V, and VI cover the need for inclusive participation and engagement of the displaced population as well as inclusion in economic planning.
- **Refugee Act 2012 and its 2017 Regulations** provide the framework for the protection and management of refugee affairs, including the rights of refugees and asylum seekers.
- **The NGO Act 2016** provides a framework for NGOs and humanitarian intervention, guiding the delivery and coordination.
- **Revised National Development Strategy (R-NDS) 2021 – 2024 (extended to 2025):** The country's strategic document, which sets the goals and objectives to

[3] The potential of South Sudan's national law on protection and assistance to IDPs Chaloka Beyani, Gatwech Peter Kulang and Rose Mwebi

achieve the R-ARCISS with an overall aim to **consolidate peace** and **stabilize the economy** through key development and peacebuilding milestones.

- **The South Sudan Development Plan (SSDP) – 2026 – 2036**: Launched on 10 September 2025, under the theme, **Transforming South Sudan: Building Resilience, Prosperous and Inclusive Future,"** intends to address the socioeconomic shortfalls, help the country into a more resilient and thriving country. This includes addressing displacement issues, integrating services, and socioeconomic empowerment of all population groups.
- **South Sudan Durable Solutions Strategy (SSDSS) 2024:** The main strategy approved by the government in October 2023, alongside the R-NDS, addresses the specific challenges of the displaced population. It advances Chapter III, GRF Pledges and SDGs.
- **The Action Plan on Returns, Reintegration and Recovery 2024 –** 2028: In line with the Durable Solution Strategy, the Action Plan outlines critical areas of focus on reintegration, addressing key challenges, services, and enhancing the coordinated approaches in humanitarian responses to the displaced persons and returnees.
- **The IDP Protection Bill** is a work in progress pending final approvals and enactment.

In line with the implementation modalities and policy formulation as committed at the GRF, South Sudan, since then, has added its critical policies to enhance the work of national institutions in addressing critical issues, including displacement, reintegration approaches guided by the above legal frameworks and the constitutions, among others. In addition, the **National Bureau of Statistics Act 2024**, the **Compensation and Reparations Authority Act 2024**, and the **Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing Act 2024** were signed into law to govern specific issues, including addressing the key challenges identified under Chapter III and Chapter V of the Agreement (ARCISS) and the South Sudan Durable Solution Strategy.

1.4. South Sudan GCR Commitments at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF)

South Sudan, being one of the states that adopted the GCR framework in 2018, has continued to participate in its coordination mechanism, the Global Refugee Forum that sits every four years, where states come to pledge their commitments to advancing the principles of GCR in either formulating polices or programs that provide empowerment and integration of refugees and other displaced persons in the services.

Through the first Global Refugee Forum (GRF 2019), South Sudan made its first pledges in the **Education**, **Jobs and Livelihoods**, **Energy and Environment**, **Statelessness**, and **Solutions** sectors to enhance the inclusion of displaced persons in national planning and development. South Sudan has committed to implementing the principles of the regional declarations (Kampala, Nairobi, and Djibouti) by developing Action Plans and frameworks aligned to the GCR principles and solution initiatives. This includes the **South Sudan Durable Solutions Strategy and Action Plan for Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons, Returns, and Host Communities**.

Guided by the lessons learned, new influx of refugees into the country and growing needs among the displaced population including policy issues, South Sudan at the second GRF (2023) further

reformulated its initial pledges, including adding other key pledges, on the inclusion of refugees and other **displaced populations in National Statistics**, the Provision of refugees with **digital IDs and Passports** as well as enhancing **integration activities including housing land and property rights**, **access to financial inclusion and jobs** among others. The reformulated and integrated pledges are below.

Table 1: South Sudan GRF Pledges and the thematic Areas

THE THEMATIC AREA	COMMITMENT AND DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PLEDGE
SOLUTIONS AND PEACEBUILDING	Creating enabling conditions for sustainable returns of South Sudanese, enhancing peacebuilding, and provision of basic services through inclusive re/integration and participation of refugees, returnees, IDPs, and host communities, removing access to justice barriers for women and other vulnerable groups. Including the operationalization of the Durable Solution Strategy and the Plan of Actions, HLP rights and governance policies among others.
EDUCATION	Increasing access to inclusive quality education for refugees and host communities, enhance access to tertiary education, and reduce the out-of-school children by 2027, including improving 300 schools' infrastructure, training 1400 teachers in refugee hosting locations, strengthening and harmonizing EMIS and ensure enrollment of over 700 refugee students to national universities among others.
JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS	Expanding economic opportunities and equitable economic development in refugee-hosting areas through refugee-friendly policies and empowerment/social protection schemes by 2027. Including vocational skills training for 10,000 refugee and host community youth, access to arable land for refugee farming, inclusion of refugees in Agricultural TVET programs, financial inclusion, building market linkages through promotion of value chain development and facilitation private sector growth including creation of agricultural cooperatives to boost resilience and self-reliance.
ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY	Enabling access to sustainable and green energy solutions for refugees and host communities and strengthen the climate resilience of refugees' host communities, and other displaced persons by 2027. Including promoting environmental protection through agroforestry and afforestation, green energy solutions and inclusion of refugees in early warning systems.
STATELESSNESS	Adopt into its national laws, policies, and operational practices, all international standards relevant to the prevention of statelessness. Including accession to statelessness conventions and amendment of laws/policies to conform to international standards, operationalization of Civil Registry and Vital Statistics and improve access to nationality documentation.
PROTECTION CAPACITY- Strengthening Asylum System and Documentation	Strengthen the capacity of South Sudan's National Asylum Processes including operationalization of Appeal process, interoperability between systems, issuance of recognized digital refugee IDs and Machine-Readable Convention Travel Document (MR-CTD) and inclusion of refugees in national statistical systems among others.

2. METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

2.1 Methodology

Through the stocktaking exercise, the South Sudan GRF Progress Review has been conducted through broader stakeholder consultations and in-depth analysis of the progress made, including

policies developed, activities conducted both at national, state, and settlement levels, as well as regional engagements among others. The report captures critical achievements with milestones highlighted per pledge area, challenges and gaps, as well as through lessons learned and consultations, it provides recommendations and a way forward on key areas.

Through a rigorous process led by the GRF Working Group with overall oversight from the National Technical Committee on Durable Solutions (NTC-DS), existing reports, studies, data collections, and assessments from various stakeholders have been reviewed and analyzed, highlighting critical achievements, challenges, and recommendations, mostly on those that align with the advancement of GRF pledges. The processes include Stakeholder Consultations with Ministries, Development Actors, and RLOs, as well as Stakeholder workshops with NTC and all members involved to review inputs and validate the findings. The primary data sources, as captured in Table 2 below, include government, development actors, donors, including MDBs, and the community, among others.

Table 2: Primary Data sources (FGDs, Institutional and Partners Reports)

Reports (Institutions and Partners)

- National ministries reports
- **DONORS PROGRAMS (AFDB, WB, EU, MCF, ETC.)**
- **THE UN (UNDP, UNHCR, IOM, UNMISS, UNESCO, ETC.)**
- NGOs ' field-level reports
- RLOS and others

Consultations and Workshops

- Refugees, returnees, and host representatives – RLOs
- NTC-DS members
- GRF WG members

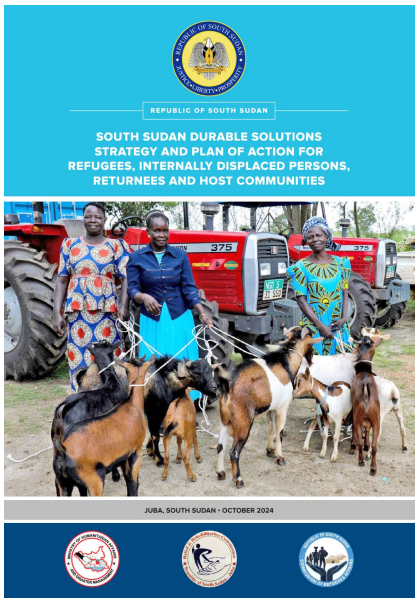
2.2 Limitations

While there were extensive consultations and reviews of reports, including stakeholder engagement, the stocktaking exercise was conducted mostly from desk reviews and national level consultations, including consultation with the national technical committee on durable solutions, and partners but the not extensively at the grassroot as the reports from partners and ministries at the national level were deem sufficient for the report taking into account the high-level report. However, a deeper consultation with the communities, refugees, returnees and IDPs, as well as the host communities, is needed to register more successes at the local levels and to highlight pending challenges contextual to particular areas.

3. POLICY ENVIRONMENT, STRATEGY, AND COORDINATION

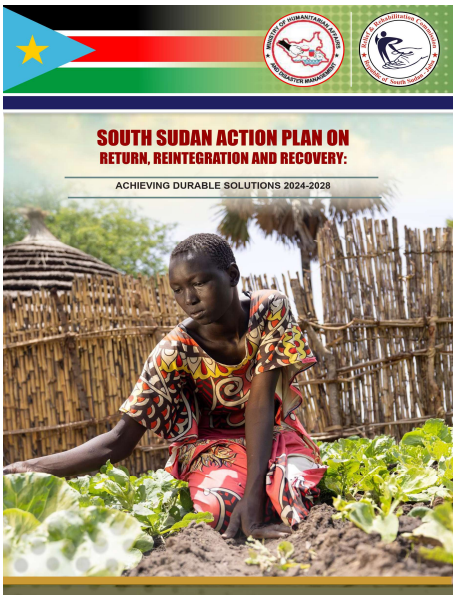
3.1 South Sudan Integrated Solutions Framework

The GCR principles, like any other international covenants and treaties, are incorporated into the legal framework and policies of the Republic of South Sudan. The Solutions architecture and development framework of the country aligns seamlessly with the Global Compact on Refugees, the Sustainable Development Goals, and other international covenants, including the Climate Action and Migration Compact, among others.

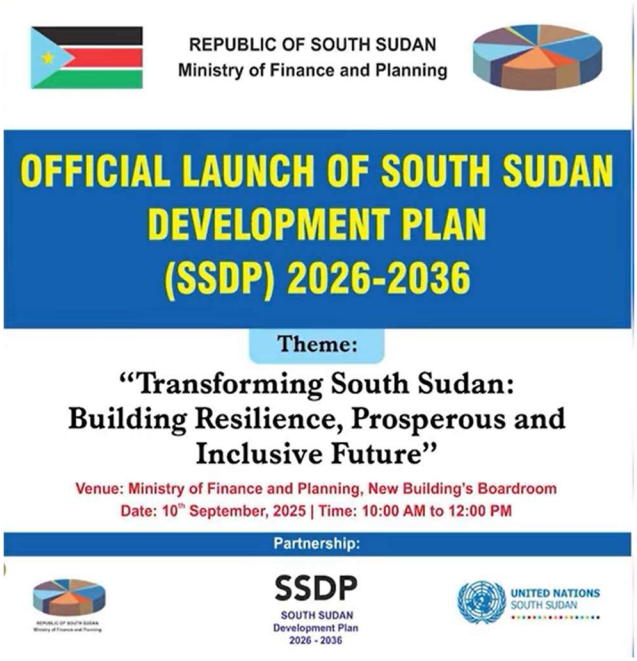


The South Sudan Durable Solutions Strategy and Plan of Action, adopted by the South Sudan Council of Ministers in 2023 and launched in 2024, serves as the cornerstone for guiding national and international efforts to address the needs of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, and host communities in South Sudan. Developed through a consultative process led by the **National Technical Committee on Durable Solutions (NTC-DS)**, co-chaired by the **Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC)** and the **Commission for Refugee Affairs (CRA)**, the strategy builds on the 2019 National Framework for Return, Reintegration and Relocation. It promotes a transition from humanitarian aid to sustainable development through the **Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus**, emphasizing voluntary return, local integration, and resettlement in safety and dignity. The strategy anchored on the Transitional Constitution, the Revitalized Peace Agreement (R-ARCISS), and the Revised National Development Strategy and its subsequent South Sudan Development Plan (SSDP) recognizes and prioritizes addressing root causes of displacement, fostering community resilience, and ensuring burden and responsibility sharing, echoing the principles of International and regional instruments.

The Core Principles of the Durable Solutions Strategy and the Action Plan on Returns and Reintegration 2024 – 2028 address critical areas and promote inclusive planning, engagement, and collective efforts to find solutions for the displaced population and their host communities through, (1) Voluntary, safe, and dignified return or relocation, (2) Local integration and community cohesion, (3)Participation of displaced populations in decision-making, (4) Equity and inclusion across gender, age, and vulnerability, (5) Government ownership and institutional strengthening, (6) Multi-stakeholder coordination and partnership, and using (7) Area-based and development-oriented approaches in providing fundamental services, strengthening communities resilience and enhancing institution frameworks as well as building lasting solutions.



The Durable Solutions Strategy is not only coherence with the Development Strategies but equally with the other legal frameworks including the country's vision 2040, the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) Bill of 2019, the Refugee Act 2012, and the NGO Act 2016, National Bureau of Statistics Act 2024, Compensation and Reparations Authority Act 2024 and the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing Act 2024, most of which are addressing critical challenges affecting the displaced communities, stateless persons and host communities. The policy coherence continues to be a work in progress as the country continues to formulate and enact policies and legislations to address specific issues pertaining to its population, both in humanitarian service, peacebuilding, and sustainable economic development, as well s community empowerment and resilience as key.

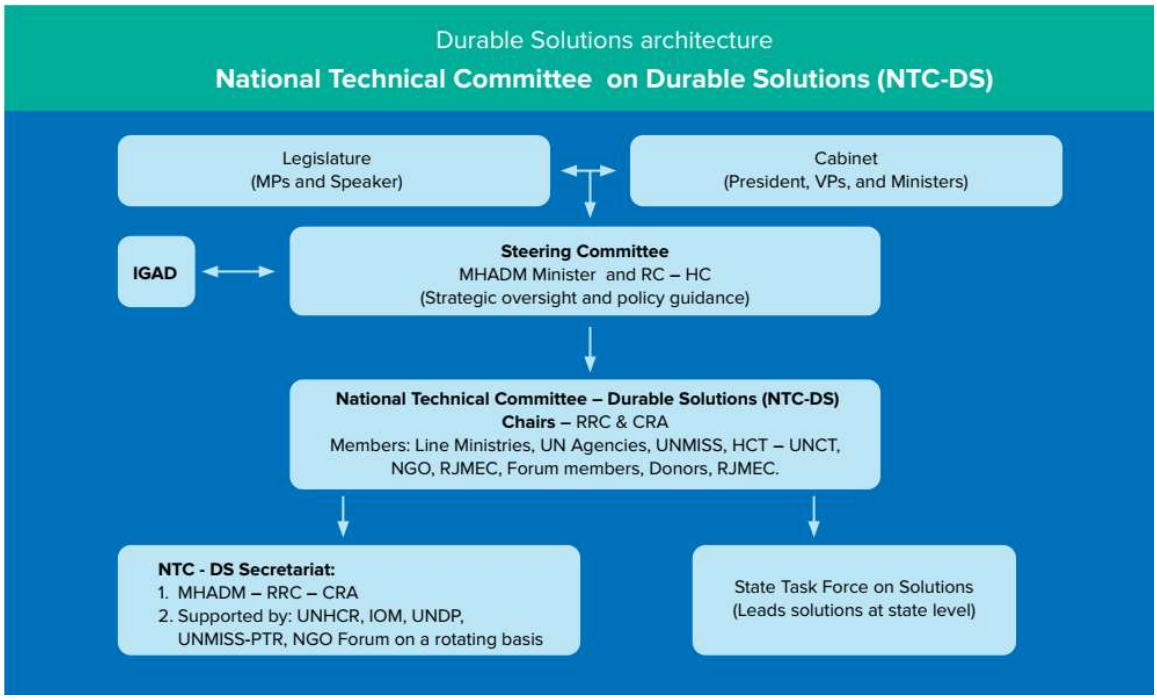


In line with the country's development framework, the Solutions Strategy is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the humanitarian development and peace nexus operational through the **United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF)**, which defines the collective vision and response of the UN Country Team in South Sudan. This includes the promotion of localization through community-based and area-based programming, as well as state-led interventions with the transitional model from humanitarian programming to sustainable development and solutions.

3.2 Coordination and Development Partnership

The Durable Solution Strategy, in conjunction with the national development strategy and polices, outlines the clear need for transition from humanitarian and emergencies to sustainable programming, peacebuilding, and Development. This transition is not only critical but the most required move to build resilience and sustainability among the displaced persons, returnees, and host communities. Development partners assume a pivotal role in actualizing this strategic programming and response, including through technical capacity development, economic transformation, and infrastructural development, among others.

This includes strengthening accountability, coordination, and oversight frameworks such as the National Technical Committee on Durable Solutions (NTC-DS), the National Operation Center (NOC), the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC), and the Commission for Refugee Affairs (CRA), being the key pillars of Durable Solutions coordination and response.



Hosted by the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management with strong backing of the Ministry of Interior through its Commission for Refugee Affairs, the solutions architecture as enshrined in the Durable Solutions Strategy and the Action Plan, clearly provides the national and state-level coordination structures that are inclusive and engaging, including with development actors, Peacebuilding partners, and other stakeholders. In addition to the leading Ministries, UNHCR, UNDP, IOM, UNMISS, and NGO Forum provide technical support in collaboration with key IGAD, as well as engaging the international organizations such as GIZ, JICA, Donor countries, among others. This is mainly to ensure the development partnership is enhanced and development programming from the onset of the crisis becomes a norm.

Additionally, in line with the principles of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and its frameworks, the NTC-DS has a subgroup, the GRF Working Group, that coordinates and monitors the progress of the pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF), mainly by the South Sudan government. GRF Working Group has a critical role of tracking activities, reporting, and helping the government formulate policies related to the realization of pledges and advancement of the GCR in order to achieve lasting solutions for displaced persons.

4. GRF Commitments and Progress in South Sudan

South Sudan has made tangible progress throughout the two years, not only in the implementation of the pledges but equally in the increased efforts in development partnership, strengthening the intervention in refugee hosting areas, and the inclusion of refugees in national planning through the various sectors. The government efforts and leadership are being felt across the board as the key initiatives are taken by respective ministries to deliver services and provide for the refugees' hosting locations, as well as engagement with urban refugees, IDPs, and returnees, among others.

During the period, the government of South Sudan, through the NTC-DS, Ministries and Subnational governments, has engaged collectively and worked with the partners to ensure the services and sustainable programs reached the refugees, returnees, IDPs and host communities. Notably, at the onset of the Sudan crisis in 2023, the government activated a national task force, including providing funding to respond to the situation, including reception, granting access to all those fleeing the conflict, receiving the returning population and ensuring safety en route to their states and counties of origin. This was achieved with the help of many humanitarian, peace and development partners.

Furthermore, partnerships with development partners such as the multilateral development Banks (MDBs), the European Union, Germany Development Cooperation, JICA, KOICA, GCF, GPE, MCF, UN Peacebuilding Funds, among other international partners have made possible to deliver on critical areas of the pledges and fulfil the needs of the displaced population, despite continued challenges including new arrivals and economic situation of the country. The achievements include the capacity development and technical assistance to the government ministries, in terms of training, policy formulation and management systems.

It is important to highlight that most of the pledges are progressing well, as many of the activities are an integral part of what was planned by the relevant ministries. However, some of the pledges' specific outputs are delayed due to a lack of funding and technicalities that are being fast-tracked with support from the partners. The pledges are discussed in detail in this report with key achievements, challenges and plans highlighted.

4.1 Solutions and Peacebuilding

The Government of South Sudan pledges to establish conducive conditions, provide protection and enhance access to various services, intensifying peacebuilding, access to the rule of law and integration activities for the refugees, returnees, IDPs, and host communities. The commitment has its anchor in operationalization of the South Sudan Durable Solutions Strategy, the solutions initiatives such as the Pockets of Hope and Area-Based Leadership approaches, among other community-based mechanisms.

Led by the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management and the Ministry of Peacebuilding, the pledge has critical outputs implemented through other institutions, including the Rule of Law and Access to Justice under the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, youth engagement in peacebuilding activities spearheaded by the Ministry of Peacebuilding in collaborations with Ministry of Youth and Sports, whereas Inclusive planning on housing landing property rights spearheaded by Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development with both Relief and rehabilitation Commission (RRC and the Commission for Refugee Affairs (CRA) as catalyst and facilitators of these programming, coordinating all efforts in displacement areas, refugee hosting areas and returnees locations

among others.

During the period, the following milestones were achieved.

Durable Solutions Architecture: South Sudan adopted and launched the South Sudan Durable Solutions Strategy for Internally Displaced Persons, Refugees, Returnees, and Host Communities, 2024, and the South Sudan Action Plan on Return, Reintegration and Recovery 2024-2028, operationalizing the strategy. The launch was presided over by H.E. Mama Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior, Vice President of the Republic of South Sudan, with support and participation of the partners, including IGAD, UNHCR, and the UNCT in Juba.

The Strategy and the Action Plan offer an updated solutions architecture and strategies to address the displacement crises, facilitated transition, and enhance solutions activities in the country, including through Area-Based and community-based approaches to enhance social integration and inclusion of the displaced population and stateless persons in national systems and development programmes. The rollout led by the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management and coordinated by the Commission for Refugee Affairs and the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, with support from partners such as UNDP, UNHCR, IOM and UNMISS, among others, is ongoing at the state and county levels.

Sudan Crisis Response: The country has been responding to the Sudan crisis led by the Ministry of Interior (Commission of Refugees Affairs/CRA) and Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (Relief and Rehabilitation Commission) in collaboration with partners through the establishment of transit center, reception centers, providing basic services, facilitating onward movement to states for returnees and camps for refugees, setup of Wedweil integrated settlement from the onset.

World Bank Programmes: As part of the World Bank's initiative in collaboration with the government of South Sudan, the Bank launched the Window for Host and Refugees to target the refugee hosting areas in its programming. By enhancing integration and community infrastructure, the WB-funded Enhancing Community Resilience and Local Governance Project (ECRP) has included funding from the Window for Host and Refugees (WHR) of the Bank to include refugees in the programming and provide for integrated approaches in refugee-hosting areas, starting with the two largest areas (Jamjang and Maban). It is a vision of the government that all refugee hosting locations will be covered in the near future.

Sustainable Development Goals: The country submitted its first Voluntary National Review Report on the progress of sustainable development goals, reflecting on the peace processes, socio-economic empowerment, and inclusion of the forcibly displaced population in planning, among others.

Brick-Making Machine for Durable Shelters: South Sudan's RRC and Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, with support from UNDP, launched a brick-making project on August 7, 2025, that will support refugees and returnees in building sustainable shelters. The heavy-duty brick-making machine was provided by UNDP as part of efforts to create sustainable solutions for displaced

Concrete Shelter under Construction in Wau, Khar Malang suburb for IDP returnee household

persons and returnees.

Durable Solutions Project in Wau: The government, in collaboration with IOM, with support from the Norwegian Government, launched in 2023 a project to help former IDPs achieve long-term reliance, including through integration. The project focuses on housing, land ownership, jobs, and access to basic services, including providing sustainable shelters through a community-based approach. This has seen the lives of many IDPs and returnees transformed, with many households getting a roof over their heads and access to jobs and land ownership in Wau town.

Peacebuilding Policy and Peacebuilding Strategic Framework: The Ministry of Peacebuilding in South Sudan has developed a comprehensive National Peacebuilding Policy and a Peacebuilding Strategic Framework aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict through coordinated peacebuilding, reconciliation, and conflict transformation efforts. This policy focuses on creating an institutional framework that promotes collaboration among government, international partners, civil society, and community-based organizations to build sustainable peace, prevent violence, and foster social cohesion. The policy is structured around five strategic pillars: enhanced political cooperation, improved public safety and security, reconciliation and justice, promoting conflict prevention, peace and social cohesion, and addressing cross-cutting issues.

Engagement with the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission: Under the leadership of the Ministry of Peace Building, the South Sudan government has actively engaged with the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), recognizing its role as a key component of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. The United Nations and the Government of South Sudan launched the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Joint Steering Committee (JSC) in February 2023. Co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and the Minister of Peace Building, the JSC plays a pivotal role in guiding the planning and implementation of PBF Funds allocated to South Sudan. It ensures alignment with national priorities, effective management of PBF investments, and fosters partnerships among national authorities, UN agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders.

Youth for Peace: A National Strategy on Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) was developed and validated as part of the UNESCO/UNFPA "Youth Leading Peace" PBF Project. This project aims to promote and institutionalize youth participation in peacebuilding processes by facilitating the involvement of young women and men in designing the costed National Strategy on YPS.

Combating Hate Speech: The Ministry of Peace Building, in collaboration with the National Media Authority and other stakeholders, developed a National Strategic Action Plan to address hate speech in the country. This plan aims to prevent hate speech and incitement, strengthen systems to mitigate its impact, and create a coordinated approach to standardize interventions and build capacities. Both the Ministry and the Media Authority continue to conduct hate speech awareness raising with support from partners, including UNMISS.

Community Dialogues and Engagements: In line with the National Peacebuilding Policy's vision of a peaceful, democratic, stable, and diverse society that guarantees human rights, social justice, and freedom for all, the Ministry of Peace Building at both the national and state levels continues to establish platforms for community dialogue. These platforms have been crucial in promoting reconciliation and addressing the causes of conflict, thereby preventing their escalation into violence. Successful dialogues have been implemented in various states such as Unity, Jonglei, Eastern Equatoria, Western Equatoria, and Western Bahr El Ghazal. This includes the Twic-Ngok Dinka Communities Peace Dialogue and Reconciliation, Upper Nile State Peace

Dialogue Initiative, among others with support from partners including UNHCR, UNMISS, IOM, and UNESCO. Hitherto, the Ministry, in collaboration with Community Empowerment Peace Organization (CEPO) and Coventry University, launched the documentation and tracking of local peace processes and conflict resolutions to establish a comprehensive database for local peace initiatives.

Table 3: Solutions and Peacebuilding Pledge Key Highlights, Challenges and Opportunities

	Key Highlights
ACHIEVEMENTS & TARGETS MET	• South Sudan launched the rollout plan for the Durable Solution Strategy and the Action Plan on Returns and Reintegration across the states. Supported by UNHCR, the launch kicked off in Western Bhar El Ghazel and Upper Nile States and is expected to reach main refugee-hosting locations by the end of the Year 2025. • On 7 August 2025, MHADM and RRC, and Collaboration with UNDP, launched a brick-making machine production to enhance durable shelter for refugees' returnees, skill and livelihoods empowerment in Malakal as part of the Durable Solution Project in the area that was launched by the Ministry and State government. • The UN Peacebuilding Fund has been launched in South Sudan, coordinated by the Ministry of Peacebuilding and implemented by key actors, including UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, among others, aiming at addressing conflicts through dialogue and local-level reconciliation activities as well as capacity development of local authorities. • Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development commenced the Land Policy Review to align it to the current realities, international and regional frameworks, and in compliance with the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan as amended. • RRC and MHADM, with support from UNDP, **provided a Brick-making machine** to support refugee returnees and IDPs in brick-making and building sustainable shelters. • Durable Solution Project for Sustainable Shelters and job creation launched in Wau and has since benefited over 460 IDP households with land ownership, sustainable shelters, and job creation. The joint initiative between the government of South Sudan and IOM was supported by the Norwegian Government.

GAPS & CHALLENGES	• Peacebuilding in South Sudan requires a comprehensive approach that emphasizes convergence across various sectors. Establishing and strengthening local peace structures alone is insufficient; there is a need for a solid foundation for peace and reconciliation by addressing both immediate needs (basic services) and long-term stability (development priorities and reintegration). • The existing peace infrastructures in South Sudan, including early warning and early response systems, are weak and require strengthening. Support is essential to build robust systems and enhance institutional capacities, enabling more effective and sustainable peace efforts. • South Sudan faces high climate risks, evidenced by droughts, prolonged dry spells, and severe flooding. These risks pose significant challenges to peacebuilding and development programmes. Mitigating climate risks and ensuring climate security are crucial to preventing conflicts arising from environmental stress. • Land Sector Management Difficulties including fragile land administration system, as the land policies are sectoral management systems are not in place. • Institutional Issues (Weak linkages; Institutional shortcomings; Out-dated laws and regulations; weak land dispute resolving mechanisms; weak land governance). • Land Tenure Insecurity; overlapping and conflicting land rights; and markets (unsafe); accessibility difficulty Poor survey and mapping; shortage of feasibility studies; corruption and lack of awareness; and increasing population.
Opportunities	• Generation of National Land Reform Agenda: the agenda presents an opportunity to enhance land policy reforms and systems enhancement, including harmonization at the state and local levels. • Regional Frameworks: Adopt best practices and regional initiatives such as EAC, IGAD, and the African Union in facilitating solutions and peacebuilding activities and policies. • Good international practice: Agriculture; Natural Resources exploration (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiatives 'EITI'); Green Investment (biodiversity and ecosystem).

4.2 Education

In the education sector, the Government of South Sudan made a series of commitments under its education pledge, "Increase access to inclusive quality education for refugees and host communities." This includes enhancing opportunities for tertiary education and significantly reducing the number of out-of-school children, ensuring enrollment of over 700 refugee students in higher education, provision of educational materials, and the training of approximately 1,400 teachers in refugee-hosting regions, and construction or renovation of around 300 educational facilities for learning. The commitment further seeks to strengthen the Education Management Information System (EMIS), ensuring harmonization of the refugee school data with the national system as part of enhancing system integration.

The Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MOGEI) and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MOHEST), as key sectoral leads, ensure the implementation and monitoring of the commitment's outputs with technical support from UN partners, regional

entities, and GRF Working. The commitments are in line with the South Sudan Education Sector policies, the IGAD Djibouti Declaration, and the international frameworks. To integrate the needs of refugees into the national education system and implement the commitments, the education sector has achieved the following.

School Infrastructure improvement: The government has initiated the improvement of 200 school infrastructures across the country through its World Bank-funded (WHR Component) project, Building Skills for Human Capital Development (BSHCD -P178654). Largely, the targeted schools are mostly going to support the host communities and urban refugees in the locations' priorities.

Teacher Training in Refugee-Hosting Areas: Under the same WB project, the Ministry will assess 10 National Teacher Training Institutes (NTTIs) to be renovated. Under the Inclusion of Refugees in the National Education System of South Sudan (INSPIRE) project, technical assistance is being provided by the bank to design an evaluation of socioemotional training and support for teachers. Through the Ministry's leadership in partnership with Finn Church Aid (FCA) and collaboration with UNHCR, 11 (6 male, 5 female) refugee teachers have enrolled for a 2-year preservice teacher training at Maridi National Teacher Training Institute (MNTI), whereas the University of Juba in partnership with UNHCR and Ministry of Higher Education has trained and graduated 65 (9F; 56M, 92.3% Refuges) successful pre-service teacher trainees.

Strengthening Education Management Information System (EMIS): To strengthen the system and enhance the inclusion of refugees into national education systems, the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) is undertaking a consultative process with education stakeholders to integrate all data systems into the national Education Management Information System (EMIS) and harmonize all data collection and school statistics. The Ministry is leveraging the World Bank (WB) support through the South Sudan Multi-Donor Transition Trust Fund to conduct a detailed diagnostic evaluation of the current EMIS to provide a roadmap for improvement and optimization of the EMIS and education sector decision-making within the education sector. In 2024, the EMIS department conducted training for data management staff in Jamjang and Maban. A total of 105 refugee schools benefited from the training, with 47 schools in Jamjang and 59 in Maban. The training was fully funded by the government. Both female and male participants attended the sessions. The aim of the training was to improve teachers' data collection skills. The Education Management Information System supports the education sector by collecting and analyzing educational data to enhance decision-making.

Enrollment of Refugee Students in National Universities and Access to Scholarships: Initiatives have led to the enrollment of 15 refugee students who were medical students at different stages of their studies in national universities; however, this is constrained by the fact that the students could not afford the tuition fees of 1,500USD per year. Through the Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Juba and UNHCR in collaboration with the Commission for Refugee Affairs, the Center of Excellence for Migration and Refugee Studies was established to spearhead the training, including capacity development and offer courses on Refugee and Migration Studies. As part of scholarships with support from Mastercard Foundation Scholars program and the DAFI in partnership with UNHCR and the Education sector, 90 refugee students have been enrolled in different courses, with 71 (39F, 32M) enrolled at the University of Juba and 19 (2F, 17M) enrolled for 2 years pre-service teacher training at the Maridi National Teachers Training Institute, while **269(124,145M**) students have been enrolled, with **219(96F,123M)** on **full** scholarships, **31(15F,16M)** on **connected** scholarships and

19(13F,6M) on **partial** scholarships in various national universities. Most of the students come from Juba (Urban and Gorom), Maban, Jamjang, Yambio, Yei, and Aweil, and an additional 10% returnees. About 5 other refugee students are accessing scholarships in third countries, including Kenya and Ghana.

Increasing Access to Digital Learning: Steps have been taken to increase access to digital learning for refugees and host communities, with continued support from the Instant Network Schools (INS) and the African Development Bank. In Maban and Jamjang, Digital Innovation centers have been established to provide digital learning and access to digital connectivity for the refugees and the host community youth. The government, through the National Communications Authority (NCA), has launched an ICT 4 Development initiative in Gorom camp as a pilot project (phase 1). The project aims to empower the refugees in the camp with connectivity, digital literacy, vocational training, and access to information.

Improving Availability of Educational Materials: Efforts have been made to improve the availability of educational materials, including the printing and distribution of educational materials and textbooks to schools. Measures are being taken to ensure all schools have the resources to effectively support learning. As part of efforts to ensure the quality of education through the implementation of the South Sudan Competency Based Curriculum, the Ministry of General Education and Instruction developed, printed, and distributed Islamic Religious Education (IRE) and Arabic textbooks, which had been pending since the launch of the new curriculum. However, the textbook gap in refugee-hosting areas remains significant, with a current ratio of 1 textbook per 12 students, especially considering the ongoing situation in Sudan.

National Qualification Framework: The Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MoHEST) and other line ministries, in partnership with UNESCO, UNHCR, IGAD, EAC, NGOs, are working towards developing a national qualifications framework for the Republic of South Sudan.

Table 4: Education pledge key highlights, challenges and opportunities

	Key highlights
ACHIEVEMENTS	• Through the grants by AfDB to the government of South Sudan, implemented by UNHCR, two digital centers have been established, equipped, and are providing digital skills training and access to online learning in Maban and Jamjang refugee hosting locations. • Through Mastercard Foundation Scholarships, in partnership with UNHCR, Finn Church Aid (FCA), 90 refugee students have been enrolled in different courses, with 71 (39F, 32M) enrolled at the University of Juba and 19 (2F, 17M) enrolled for 2 years pre-service teacher training at the Maridi National Teachers Training Institute. • Through the partnership between the Ministry of General Education and Instructions and UNHCR and its partners, the University of Juba trained and graduated 65 (9F; 56M, 92.3% Refugees) teachers, most of whom came from the Sudan. • Through the DAFI scholars program led by UNHCR in collaboration with the education sector and national universities, **269(124,145M**) students have been enrolled, with **219(96F,123M)** on **full** scholarships, **31(15F,16M)** on **connected** scholarships and **19(13F,6M)** on **partial** scholarships. Most of the students come from Juba (Urban and Gorom), Maban, Jamjang, Yambio, Yei and Aweil, and an additional 10% returnees. • Refugees continue to go for third-country scholarships with support from UNHCR in

	partnership with the education sector. During the period, 5 (4 M, 1F) Sudanese refugees were awarded a Mastercard Foundation Scholarship, with 4 (male) admitted at the United States International University (USIU) Africa and 1 (female) joining Ashesi University in Ghana.
GAPS & CHALLENGES	• Refugee students face challenges with the travelling documents as the Manual CTDs are no longer accepted in other countries, and South Sudan is still in the process of producing its MRCTD to be used by refugee students when traveling for third-country scholarships. • Due to higher fees and economic situation, the number of students to be sponsored was limited due to budget constraints. • Despite efforts to provide education materials to schools, limitations are in place due to the availability of resources, and this still leaves a gap, with only a current ratio of books to students standing at 1:12. • Transport means and road infrastructure are major obstacles in reaching most schools at the grassroots, including transportation of rehabilitation/construction materials and scholastic materials, among others.
Opportunities	• Presence of national universities and institutes, including newly established Torit University and Private institutions that are accessible. • Availability of digital centers in Maban and Jamjang that would offer more chances for many refugees and host community youth to go for digital learning and gain skills.

4.3 Jobs and Livelihoods

Livelihoods are the backbone of every community, whether displaced, stateless, returnees, or host communities. In this regard, the government of South Sudan pledged to expand economic opportunities and equitable economic development in refugee-hosting areas through refugee-friendly policies and empowerment, including scaling social protection schemes across the board. The pledge's key outputs includes the expansion of economic opportunities, enabling access to certified market-driven vocational skills including to over 10,000 refugee and host community youth at 50/50 ratio, promoting refugee inclusion in agricultural TVET opportunities and access to arable land and ensuring refugee access to financial inclusion through engagement with private sector, providing digital solutions and promoting value chains development as well as agricultural cooperatives growths to enhance self-reliance and jobs creation in South Sudan. The commitments are reflected in the regional IGAD's Kampala Declaration on Jobs, Livelihoods, and Self-Reliance, where South Sudan is a party.

Led by the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security with a policy backing on Social Protection from the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare (MGCSW) and oversight of the Ministry of Finance and Planning (MoFP), the pledge has critical outputs that been achieved to date with special support from the donors and MDBs such as the European Union, World Bank and African Development Bank among others. Both the Ministries of General Education (MoGEI), Land Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD), Trade and Industry (MoTI), and the Information, Communication Technology and Postal Services (ICT&PS) played a significant role in supporting the livelihoods pledge, as provided in this report.

Vocational Skills Training: The Ministry of Labour has been leading the vocational training and skills development, including providing modules and curriculum for training and guiding on the quality assurance. With funding from the African Development Bank (AfDB) implemented by UNHCR in Maban and Jamjang, 467 (204 female, 263 male, 86% refugees, 14% host) youth have been trained in various trades including welding and fabrication, Baker and catering services, Plumbing and piping, Electricals and Solar PV systems installation, Hairdressing, Tailoring and Business Management, among others. Through EU funding implemented by IOM, the Ministry of Labour graduated 156 (96 male, 60 female) youth from the Malakal Vocational Training Center after completing their training in various trades including Welding, building and construction, carpentry and joinery, automotive technology and Computer Applications.

Connectivity and Digital Skills: On digital skills, 192 (56F, 136M, 80% refugees) were trained in Maban and Jamjang. Two digital centers were established with equipped computer labs of 30 computers in each location, a printer and a projector with internet connectivity. The centers also provide digital connectivity and solutions to the youth including the secondary school students in both practices and research as well as online learning platforms. During the period, the National Communication Authority (NCA) under the Ministry of ICTS conducted the launch of the Information, Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) initiative in Gorom refugee settlement, an initiative funded by the World Bank to enhance digital connectivity and solutions to the community. The initiative has the funding from the Window for Refugee and Host Communities that integrates the refugee needs in national development programs.

Market and Value Chain Development: During the period, with funding from the AfDB, Co-financed by the EU INTPA, UNHCR conducted a countrywide Market Assessment and Value

Chain Analysis to provide a clear understanding of potential value chains to be developed and supported in various programs, including national projects. This assessment complemented the scope of the Regional Assessment on Investment Climate 2024. Major value chains identified and the opportunities are presented below in summary.

4

Agricultural Cooperatives Development: As identified in several assessments and studies, the agricultural cooperatives development, especially at the rural levels, has become a driving force of community resilience and livelihoods. As part of promoting agricultural cooperatives development and inclusion of refugees, including through small business enterprises, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, through its state-level Cooperatives and Rural Development Department, has legally registered 76 Agricultural Cooperatives in Jamjang and about 44 will be registered soon in Maban, most of whom are graduating from the rural VSLA initiatives after the capitalization and training by UNHCR through support of AfDB and the government of South Sudan. Similar initiatives are supported by the AfDB across the country, targeting different population groups. In the high returns areas, Agricultural Cooperatives have been supported

[4] *Market assessment and value chain analysis in South Sudan Refugee hosting Areas - May 2025 - South Sudan*. (2025, June 2). ReliefWeb. Retrieved October 14, 2025, from https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/market-assessment-and-value-chain-analysis-south-sudan-refugee-hosting-areas-may-2025

through the funding from EU INTPA mainly in Torit, Magwi and Yei region as well as Raja and Wau.

Financial Inclusion and Jobs Creation: the refugee inclusion in the financial and private sector has been key and prioritizes engagement to ensure self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods. As part of private sector inclusion of refugees, INKOMOKO supported 5000 Refugee and host community micro and small businesses receive business training, advisory services, and market linkages, 1000 refugee and host community entrepreneurs in the form of affordable loans and alleviated over 7000 individuals out of poverty with improved livelihoods through training, mentoring, and business support. Over 1200 jobs were created by SMEs, and women's businesses were supported. Additionally, through the AfDB support, over 2900 jobs were created by SMEs and VSLA groups, including through seasonal activities that contribute to the better the income levels among the refugees and host families. In Jamjang, the income levels increased by 69% from 27% among the families supported by the project to establish businesses and agricultural cooperatives. This is expected to increase as the savings have also increased by 84% among the families supported from the initial 12% in the previous year.

Social Protection: The World Bank's window funding for refugee-hosting communities (WHR) on Social Protection and Safety Net Project (SNSOP) covers the largest refugee hosting locations of Maban and Jamjang with the target of over 31,000 individuals to be supported through unconditional cash grants and labor-intensive civil works.

Climate-Smart Agriculture techniques and training: To enhance the implementation of the Comprehensive Agriculture Master plan, the government allocated farming lands in the refugee hosting areas and is working with partners like FAO and UNHCR to promoting refugee self-reliance and resilience with a planned focus on supporting access to arable land for agricultural production for food security, access to faming inputs and tools to support 5500 refugee small holder farmers and train households on climate-smart agriculture to increase production and post-harvest handling with a view to mitigate the chronic food insecurity across the country and in refugee hosting communities. Furthermore, the government is working with partners including FAO to facilitate the development of a Seed policy and seed bill to enhance agricultural production and seed production.

Private Sector investment and refugee inclusion policies: with the support from ILO, the Ministry of Labour has initiated the employment policies including Labour Migration Policy, Employment Policy and Minimum Wage policy which are key determinants policies in integrating displaced persons and migrants in national employment and jobs markets. The Employment Policy is in last stages review with the Ministry of Justice Constitutional Affairs. As part of the policy leverage, Ruweng Administration has provided a **temporal tax waiver** to the refugee small businesses and women enterprises to enable them grow and sustain their income levels for six months of their start. The waiver that covers July – December 2025 has a potential of being extended further should the assessment show that the growth of businesses has not improved. The government is committed to facilitating these efforts which can significantly aid access to jobs and demonstrate government policy in empowering local leaders who understand the unique challenges and needs of their communities but also directly improves their employability and helps build their capacity to deliver services and advocate for their communities. These partnerships signal a government’s commitment to inclusive development and support for marginalized groups.

Land allocation to refugees: The government is working with UNHCR and partners to map and demarcate agricultural land in the refugee locations. In Maban agriculture land for Batil, Gendrassa and Kaya equivalent to 21,813 acres is mapped while plans are underway to map the allocated land in all locations including Aweil, Jamjang and Yambio. UNHCR has completed a feasibility assessment for rice production in Bentiu that will inform evidence-based investment in the rice production and development of the rice value chain to diversify the livelihoods and food production technologies of the local community.

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Common challenges faced by refugees in South Sudan include language barriers, the absence of established networks, and difficulties in having their skills and qualifications recognized in their new country.

Table 5: Jobs and Livelihoods Critical Highlights

	Key highlights
ACHIEVEMENTS	• Government of Ruweng Administrative Area **granted temporal tax** waiver to Refugees small businesses and agricultural cooperatives covering July – December 2025 with potential for extension depending on growth levels and other dynamics. • Over 600 refugee and host community trained on various vocational skills including welding and metal fabrication, carpentry and joinery, tailoring, hairdressing and bakery among others. • Over 76 Agricultural Cooperatives legally registered in Jamjang and capitalized with financial grants to improve their businesses and create more jobs for refugees and host members. • About 17,100 individuals benefited from the market-based business supports, including microloans, jobs creation schemes and entrepreneurship mentorships. • Through the Market Assessment and Value Chain Analysis 2025, critical value chains were identified including on-farms and off-farms productions such as sesame, blacksmithing, vocational industries such as welding and fabrication, local produce and high demands for fresh produce in the local and urban markets, with growing population demanding staple food such s maize and sorghum

GAPS & CHALLENGES	• Limited access to quality inputs (seeds, tools, fertilizers). • High transport costs due to poor infrastructure, Insecurity, conflict, and climate-related disruptions. • Lack of structured market systems and financial constraints including limited urban integration for refugees. • Low literacy levels affecting financial and business skills. • Weak implementation of policies • Lack of documentations including refugee ID that is not recognized by financial institutions. • Lack of harmonize tax system that affects the small businesses and cooperatives. • Critical service disruptions reducing household consumption and entrepreneur capacity: 30% cut in food rations; 25% clinics closed; 25% of education projects suspended due to partner exits • Loan stress: Clients increasingly using loans to meet basic needs, affecting repayment and sustainability • Self-repatriation: Due to political instability and funding cuts reducing access to basic services, many entrepreneurs and refugee cooperatives are gambling on improving their quality of life by returning to their country of origin
Opportunities	• Committed leadership of the Ministry of Labour in skills development • Presence of recognized facilities in Jamjang and availability of training materials in Maban for training and skills development • Availability of instructors in all vocational training centers • Presence of development partners like UNDP and World Bank in the area of skills development. And the Relief International Organizations.

4.4 Climate and Environments

The Climate pledge is critical in the context of South Sudan as the Ministries responsible continue to work with partners to address the challenges of climate shocks, natural disasters and environmental programs. The commitment to **enable access to sustainable and green energy solutions for refugees and host communities and strengthen the climate resilience of refugees' host communities, and other displaced persons by 2027** was launched in 2019 and revised in 2023 to reflect concrete actions to be taken by South Sudan in refugee hosting locations. The main outputs includes Promotion of environmental protection and rehabilitation through agroforestry and afforestation,

Creating access to sustainable green energy solutions, and inclusion of displaced persons in early warning systems, including data collection, and risk assessments, among others.

The Ministry of Environment and Forestry, in collaboration with the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management as leading institutions, work closely with the CAMP ministries including the Energy and Dams (MoED), the Water Resources and Irrigation (MWRI) and the Finance and Planning (MoFP) as well as with key partners such as FAO, UNEP, WFP, UNHCR, and UNDP among others. These efforts are also financed by key entities, including the Global Climate Fund (GCF), the Government of Japan, the European Union and the African Development Bank as well as the World Bank, among others.

In addition to the already existing policies, The Government of South Sudan has developed more policies and plans during the period, including the National Forest Policy under review and amendment, South Sudan Early Warning for All has been developed and validated to enhance the Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems (MHEWSs) including its National Multi-Hazard EW Bulletin that the Ministry established to provide weekly updates on climate hazards and climatic conditions. The government, in partnership with the World Bank, has rolled out key projects, including the *Regional Climate Resilience Program for Eastern and Southern Africa Project,* implemented by the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation in climate fragile locations, including the Maban refugee hosting area. The project focuses on the management of climate and disaster risk, infrastructure investments for climate resilience, and enhancing its institutional capacity for long-term climate risk management. Additionally, the *Water at Heart of Climate Action project* implemented through the partnership of the World Meteorological Organization, UNDRR, and other partners in South Sudan has enhanced risk knowledge and governance through institutional capacities building in preparedness and response to climatic shocks, risk communication, and early warning disseminated through different modes to the masses across the country. The project implementation cut across the sectors, with Pillar 1 implemented by MHADM, Pillar 2 by MWRI and South Sudan Meteorological Services, whereas IFRC and South Sudan Red Cross implement Pillars 3 and 4, including supporting institutional capacity building. The major activities include, but are not limited to, enhancing flood preparedness with communities with timely alerts from the ENTRO Flood Forecasting and Early Warning in the Baro Akobo Sobat sub-basin that covers Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Eastern Equatoria states on the forecasted rainfall, flood forecasted catchment runoff, flow, and water Level for preparedness and early warning.

To enhance access to clean cooking fuel, the government collaborates closely with partners, particularly UNHCR, in refugee-hosting locations to promote alternative cooking fuels and green energy. Over 485 households were supported to access clean cooking technologies in refugee camps across South Sudan. As part of promoting environmental protection and rehabilitation through agroforestry and afforestation, over 40,000 tree seedlings were distributed, and 500 refugees and host communities engaged through cash for work initiatives engaging in tree planting, flood mitigation, and adaptation activities.

To improve climate resilience, the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management is developing a Flood Preparedness and Response Plan as an advocacy tool and policy guidance for the management of the seasonal floods across the country with special attention to the refugee hosting areas. The over 269 million dollars costed Plan aims to invest in climate action targeting over 240,000 refugees and millions of Host Communities in response. This will include the National Coordination and Operation Center (NCOC) enhancing its analysis of early warning data with the inclusion of data for forcibly displaced persons as well as the Institutional framework for capacity development on disaster risk management.

As ongoing activity, the Ministry has already taken steps in establishment of Disaster Risk Management Committees to support promotion of Early Warning Systems coordination mechanism as well as planning for the institutional capacity development.

Table 6: Climate and Environment Pledge: Critical highlights

	Key Highlights
Achievements and Plans	• South Sudan Early Warning for ALL Roadmap developed and validated to enhance Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems. • Water at Heart of Climate Action project implementation in South Sudan has enhanced risk knowledge and governance through institutional capacities building in preparedness, and response to climatic shocks, risk communication and early warning disseminated through different modes to the masses across the country • Continuous production of climate services and dissemination of early warning advisories for all hazards, through the National Multi-Hazard EW Bulletin • Establishment of Disaster Risk Management Committees Ongoing. • South Sudan Flood Preparedness and Response Plan Costed at 269 million Dollars to reach over 240,000 refugees and Millions of Host communities with IDPs and returnees included. • Over 450 refugee households provided with clean cooking technologies. • Over 40,000 tree seedlings were distributed and planted through cash for work that benefited over 500 individuals in the refugee locations.
Gaps & Challenges	• Lack of enough funds to finance the Flood Preparedness and Response Plan that would help millions build resilience and mitigate flood disasters across the refugee hosting areas and lowlands. • Critical needs for capacity development and institutional strengthening, including the capacity for continued monitoring, data collection and analysis and dissemination of early warning and hazards. • Need for more resources to develop localized energy-saving and green technologies for cooking to safeguard the deforestation and pollution.
Key Asks	• **Need to step up on pledge matching and responsibility sharing on climate action** • **Support in terms of flood control and sustainable measures, including the utilization of water resources to benefit the communities.** • **Technical capacities and strengthening of the institutional framework.**

4.5 Statelessness

The Republic of South Sudan, since its independence, has continued the efforts to address the risk of statelessness through ensuring nationality documentation and formulation of policies, laws, and regulations to guide the processes, adhering to the international legal frameworks and standards. As part of these efforts in 2019 at the first GRF, South Sudan made critical pledges to eradicate and prevent statelessness, including the accession to the two statelessness (1951 & 1964) conventions, scaleup the mobile registration activities to provide civil documentations at the rural and border areas, Development of the National Action Plan to guide the activities and to ensure the Civil Registry Act 2020 is rollout to support the documentation of new born babies within the territory of South Sudan. At the 2023 GRF, the pledge was further revised to reflect the new realities including additional outputs added such as harmonization of policies and national laws in compliance with the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions, Completion of the Civil Registration Legal/Policy Framework including the Regulations, and ensure adequate funding to the Directorate of Civil Registry, Nationality, Passports and Immigration (DCRNPI) to enhance access to civil documentation and national identity as part of overall statelessness risk prevention.

Through the leadership of the Ministry of Interior, its Directorate (DCRNPI) and the Commission for Refugee Affairs (CRA), in collaboration with partners such as UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, UNMISS and UNDP, among others, the government has ensured the success of critical outputs to create a meaningful impact by striving toward a country free from the risks of statelessness through step-up approaches in providing nationality documentation and enhancing registration at the states and counties levels across the country. The following achievements were registered.

Accession to the Conventions: On 4th November 2024, South Sudan formally deposited the instruments of accession to the treaty Office acceding to both the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. These accessions were duly recorded in the UN Treaty Collection (C.N.452. 2024.TREATIES-V.3 for the 1954 Convention and C.N.453. 2024.TREATIES-V.4 for the 1961 Convention). The Conventions entered into force on 2nd February 2025, following the 90 days after the instruments of accession were deposited South Sudan has then commenced critical activities to align its policies and laws to the conventions in order to address the risks of statelessness for all.

Compliance with the Conventions: In July 2024, the government began revising the **Nationality Act and its Regulations (2011)** and the **Civil Registry Act (2018)**. The amendments aim to: Introduce clear and transparent procedures for nationality applications, particularly for cases under dispute; Guarantee every child born in South Sudan including those born to refugee or stateless parents the right to nationality at birth;

Strengthen the system for registering births, deaths, marriages, and divorces; and Reconstitute fully the Eligibility Committee, which has already processed **9,031 applications** for Nationality Certificates and Passports since the Sudan crisis, disaggregated as **5,719 women** and **3,312 men**.

Civil Registry Framework: Reviewing Civil Registry and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Regulations; Completed in September 2024, these regulations provide the legal and institutional basis for registering all vital events. They enable individuals, particularly children, marginalized groups, and small cross-border communities to secure proof of legal identity. The framework also support timely and universal birth and death registration. Enhancing government capacity to plan health, education, and social protection programs through reliable data.

In September 2024, South Sudan participated and finalized a comprehensive national and regional assessment on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, with the regional report pending validation. The review highlighted strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities while integrating gender considerations, and prioritized registration of all vital events by 2027.

With UNECA's support, South Sudan concluded and validated its **CRVS National Strategy and Action Plan** 2025 – 2030 in February 2025. While this represents a significant step forward, the strategy is yet to be fully operationalized.

Capacity development and Institutional Strengthening: Training programs have been conducted in Juba for Civil Registry and Nationality officials alongside community leaders with focus on International standards on reducing statelessness and upholding nationality rights under the international and regional legal instruments and approaches to handling vulnerable groups, critical cases and the principle of respecting and applying the principle of the **"*best interest of the child*"** as outlined in the Child Act (2008), particularly in disputed nationality cases. The continued support by partners, including the partnership with UNHCR on nationality documentation and processing, has been critical for DCRNPI activities, though this remains a drop in the ocean as many technical and institutional needs such as the issue of consumables and new devices, remains largely a challenge alongside the lack of institutional budget to operationalize the CRVS and Civil Registry Framework across the nation.

Access to Documentation: Through the EU-INTPA National Project, 15,000 persons at risk of statelessness will be supported with Nationality Certificates for a period of 3 years (2023 to 2025). Advocacy is already ongoing for the scalability of the nationality documentation support to other persons at risk of statelessness across different locations within the country. Finalizing the 8000 targets of issuing national Identity cards for individuals at risk of Statelessness with DCRNPI. Challenges such as the government's inability to attain required consumables to print the necessary cards are being addressed, with ongoing discussions on how to enhance the current printing solution.

Awareness initiatives are being carried out by the Directorate of Civil Registry, Nationality, Passports and Immigration in partnership with UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF,

World Bank, the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, CRA, and NGOs on the risks of statelessness, the importance of documentation, including birth and death and nationality documentation processes. Major outreach is targeting the border communities such as the Lango and Acholi, Returnees and pastoral communities, as well as remote locations.

These milestone underscores the government's commitment to addressing nationality concerns, ensuring universal registration of births and deaths, protecting stateless persons, and preventing future statelessness in the country.

The following challenges continue to face the Ministry in its advancement of the pledge and refugee inclusion in policies.

Cross-border population distribution: South Sudan continues to face significant challenges in reducing statelessness, particularly among cross-border populations and individuals affected by unresolved nationality questions originating from the separation from the Sudan and unfair international boundary demarcation. For example, many people residing along border areas across South Sudan, such as border tribes, returnees, pastoralist communities, and families of mixed heritage, often struggle to prove their citizenship.

T**he lingering South/North Sudan Nationality Disputes** remain a major challenge that has left thousands without recognized legal recognition, thus limiting their access to basic rights and services. These gaps highlight the need for coordinated efforts between South Sudan and Sudan to resolve the nationality claims of the border communities in dispute.

A fragmented Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system, coupled with inconsistent data management systems, limited coverage, especially with relation to births and deaths and other vital events' registration, and weak coordination across government institutions, undermines the government's ability to effectively identify, register, and document individuals at risk of statelessness. The operationalization and harmonization of the Civil Registry System is highly dependent on financial resources that the Ministry lacks.

Ambiguous and inconsistent proof-of-identity and inadequate documentation: Paragraphs (22, 23, 24, and 25–26 [1–7]) of the Nationality Regulations, 2011 outline procedures for proving nationality claim; however, the provisions remain vague and inconsistently applied. The Nationality Regulations permit subjective and discretionary forms of evidence, such as oral declarations from community leaders, demonstrations of ethnic belonging, proficiency in Juba Arabic, and even assessments based on physical appearance, which undermine fairness during the verification process. These ambiguous standards often disadvantage individuals of mixed heritage, cross-border or nomadic pastoralist groups, and communities like the Falata, Ngok Dinka, Kakwa, Madi, and Acholi, making it particularly challenging for them to secure nationality documentation and full legal recognition as South Sudanese. **The delayed process of reviewing the Act**

and Regulations due to financial constraints continues to make this challenge a setback.

Opportunities: South Sudan is presented with important opportunities, including the regional integration (IGAD, EAC, ICGLR, etc) and presence of key partners that would provide technical assistance for the policies to be enhanced. Besides this, the accession into the conventions and initiation of the review process on the Nationality Act 2011 and its regulations, among other key frameworks, continue to be a building block for possible reforms and entry points for South Sudan to achieve a greater integration and harmonization of its civil registry and nationality documentation frameworks when supported.

Table 7: Statelessness pledge highlights

	Key Highlights
Key Achievements	• South Sudan acceded to the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions; formal deposit of instruments done on 4 November 2024. Conventions came into force in February 2025. • Nationality Act 2011 and its Regulation are undergoing amendments to comply with the conventions and the National Action Plan • Civil Registry Framework under review with Civil Registry Regulations 2024 adopted. • **CRVS National Strategy and Action Plan** 2025 – 2030 validated in February 2025 with support from UNECA. • Capacity Development, including participation in regional and international sessions, is ongoing, though with limitations. • Over 21000 reached with nationality documentation since 2023 with support from the EU, individual enrollment and other donor support.
Gaps and Challenges	• Limited coverage by the DCRNPI and a lack of funding to cover remote areas through mobile enrollment. • Cross-border communities and the challenge of identification, verification and access. • Lack of a harmonized civil registry system that makes it hard to identify or verify identity. • Sudan/South Sudan non-demarcated borders make it difficult for the population to obtain nationality on either side. • Ambiguous processes to prove identity that require review, but due to funding, the Nationality Act 2011 and its regulations have not been finalized.

Key Areas for Support	
	• Funding to operationalize the civil registry framework across the states and counties. • Ensure to complete the amendment process and review of nationality regulations • Funds the continued nationality documentation process across the areas • Strengthen the technical capacity of the Ministry to operationalize and roll out the civil registry across the country. • Support the establishment of state-level structures for the civil registration and the DCRNPI offices in most towns to deliver the highly needed services. • Enhance the capacity of DCRNPI on nationality certificate production, machines, and consumables to enable its delivery timely.

4.6 Protection Capacity – Strengthening the Asylum System and Documentation

The Government of South Sudan's commitment to strengthening its asylum system and documentation is part of the integral asylum and refugee management, as it adds to the open-door policy in the Refugee Act 2012. The This pledge commit the government of South Sudan and partners to improve the asylum system and refugee documentation including through interoperability between asylum case management systems and refugee identity processing resulting into issuance of refugee digital IDs, Machine-readable Conventions Travel Document (MR-CTDs), enhancing effectiveness and efficiency in the refugee management system including through digital solutions for reception, identification, registration and scheduling as well as inclusion of refugees into national statistical systems such as surveys, census among others statistical data collections.

Led by the Ministry of Interior with the Commission for Refugee Affairs, Directorate of Civil Registry, Nationality, Passports and Immigration, and the National Bureau of Statistics as key executing agencies with support from partners, the pledge, though newly established, has made significant progress from 2024 to date, including the following.

Development of Interoperability between asylum case management and refugee documentation (ID and MRCTD). The Commission for Refugee Affairs (CRA) continued its engagements with relevant government authorities to implement the transition to digital refugee ID cards and the issuance of Machine-Readable Convention Travel Documents to align with the pledges made by South Sudan at the second Global Refugee Forum (GRF). In November 2024, the Minister of Interior issued a ministerial order amending some sections of the 2017 Refugee Status & Eligibility Regulations by extending the validity of the refugee ID card to 5 years and allowing the renewal to be done by South Sudan authorities abroad. South Sudan has initiated engagement with an Austrian-based company (Austrian Printing House – OSD) to produce digital IDs and MRCTD for the refugees in the country.

National Statistical Inclusion: In line with the inclusion of the forcibly displaced and stateless persons in its national statistics systems, the government of South Sudan, through its National Bureau of Statistics, has started updating its EAs and data collection tools to roll out data collection and surveys that are inclusive of the displaced population and stateless persons. UNHCR and partners such as the ILO are closely working with the bureau and concerned ministries to support the government's capacity in this aspect. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) continues to engage with EGRISS, JDC and UNHCR as part of enhancing the capacity for the inclusion of refugees in national statistics, including on support to conduct a household budet

survey that is inclusive of refugees. UNHCR continues to support the Ministry of Interior and NBS on the technical aspect of the implementation of pledges.

Supported by the Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement (JDC), UNHCR, and the World Bank, the National Bureau of Statistics has just concluded data collection for its 2025 Household Budget Survey (HBS), which, for the first time in the country's history, includes refugees. This exercise represents a landmark step in fulfilling the Government's Global Refugee Forum (GRF) pledge on statistical inclusion. The survey integrates dedicated refugee samples and includes EGRISS-aligned identification questions to accurately capture IDPs and returnees within the national sampling frame. This will enable the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) to generate robust, comparable data across displaced and host populations, filling a critical evidence gap for inclusive policy and planning. Analysis of the data will begin shortly, providing an unprecedented evidence base to inform poverty reduction, livelihoods, and basic service delivery, while embedding the inclusion of forcibly displaced populations in national statistics and long-term development planning.

Operationalization of the Refugee Appeals Board (RAB). South Sudan achieved a major milestone in operationalizing the appeal board and updating the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC) and the development of rules of procedures for the RAB as stipulated in the Refugee Act 2012.

Promoting Consistent Accessibility of the National Asylum Procedures by 2025: The Ministry of Interior, its Directorate (DCRNPI) and the Commission for Refugee Affairs in partnership with UNHCR developed a capacity development plan for the relevant law enforcement agencies as well as security actors to improve the management of refugees and the asylum system in the country, including enhanced service delivery in a dignified manner. The following milestones have bene achieved as part of capacity development: -

- The CRA trained over 1,000 law enforcement agents in 2024 across various locations, including Maban, the Renk border, Nimule border, Juba International Airport, Wau, and Aweil. The curriculum encompassed critical topics such as asylum procedures, national and international refugee laws, refugee rights and obligations, access to employment, and the freedom of movement.
- DCRNPI, in partnership with UNHCR, trained over 100 law enforcement police officers in May 2024 on refugee and asylum seekers' rights and protection. This training led to an improved understanding and management of asylum and immigration frameworks, including reception, registration, and documentation procedures for refugees. The training included practical case study exercises to improve the identification and screening of refugees and asylum-seekers and facilitated the sharing of lessons learned and best practices, thereby enhancing overall refugee protection in South Sudan.
- Joint Border Monitoring Activities: CRA and UNHCR are implementing this initiative at 6 main borders (Pagak, Aweil, Maban/Renk, Nadapal, Nimule and Wau) with the aim of training and creating awareness on access to asylum, non-refoulement, rights of refugees and asylum seekers, referral mechanisms, and how to mitigate the issue of smuggling and extortion.
- Enhance Detention Monitoring across the Country: This will is done with direct support of UNHCR to track refugee/AS detainees and that those who require representation are granted that service, including those who require other forms of assistance.

South Sudan has extended the registration of refugees to the states hosting these individuals by increasing the number of registration officers. Additionally, mobile registration services have been expanded to urban centers accommodating urban refugees, specifically in Wau and Boro Badina in Western Bahr el Ghazal State, Kuajok and Wunrok in Warrap State, and Juba in Central Equatoria State.

Table 8: Protection Capacity and Documentation highlights

	Key Highlights
Achievements & Targets Met	• Appeals Established by Ministerial Order in October 2023 • CRA and UNHCR trained more than 1,100 Law enforcement agents in 2024 at different locations across South Sudan. • Work on production of Refugee ID cards and Machine-readable travel documents. MR-CTD is progressing well; the contract has been signed with the supplier and is awaiting funding by the donors and the government. • Ministerial Order issued to amend key sections in Refugee Regulations, extending refugee IDs for 5 years and allowing refugees to apply for IDs and MRCTDs at Consular Areas abroad. • South Sudan extended refugee registration of refugees to the state level. • NBS rolled out the statistical inclusion of forcibly displaced and stateless persons in national statistics. The Household Budget Survey (HBS) for 2025 has been completed with refugees included for the first time in the country.
Gaps & Challenges	○ Funding remains a major constraint to start the production of MRCTDs and Refugee IDs. ○ Humanitarian fund cuts impacting on refugee management system and operations of partners such as UNHCR to provide technical capacity to the MOI
Key Asks	• Donor support to produce the refugee IDs and MR-CTDs for the refugees. • Pledge matching to enhance delivery of the needed support to the refugees.

5. LESSONS LEARNED, BEST PRACTICES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

South Sudan, despite the challenges and economic situations amidst the continuous displacement patterns, has continued to present opportunities and good lessons in the management and response to a range of issues, including the influx of refugees and returnees from Sudan as a result of the conflict that erupted in April 2023 in Khartoum.

Additionally, the climate-induced challenges that resulted in displacement internally, coupled with internal conflict and economic hardships, have always contributed to the mix of challenges the country faced. However, this has not prevented progress in addressing critical issues, including exceeding expectations in the refugee situation as well as other complex matters. There are both lessons learned and best practices to present as well as opportunities for possible integration, private sector engagement, and growth in South Sudan.

5.1 Lessons learned and Best Practices

South Sudan has an open-door policy that allows asylum seekers and refugees into the country with no major restrictions. Sudanese fleeing the conflict to South Sudan were given Prima facie recognition with more integration in various sectors, including the private sector, where their expertise contributes not only to their livelihoods and wellbeing, but equally to situations of South Sudanese, including the economy through their services. Key lessons and best practices registered during the period are below.

Refugees' integration into jobs: over 80 professors and lecturers displaced from Sudan have been absorbed at the University of Juba, offering their professional services and equally gaining through jobs. Over 50 medical personnel/doctors have been absorbed in the health sector, including those given licenses to operate their clinics. Most of the urban refugees are running small and medium enterprises, including joint ventures with the host, to make a living, and are protected by the government to run their businesses. This approach has so far yielded fruit with refugees becoming productive and contributing to the national economy in various ways and saving lives through the health sector.

Enterprise Development Loans Scheme: Refugees, IDPs, and Returnees, together with the host communities, are receiving mentorship, training, and entrepreneurship skills building alongside the loan scheme to help them establish sustainable businesses as part of enhancing sustainable livelihoods. With the help of partners such as INKOMOKO, UNHCR, UNDP, and FAO, among others, the growth in small businesses and medium enterprises has increased in refugee-hosting and returnee locations in the past two years. Those opening small businesses and cooperative societies are provided a temporary tax exemption by the government to help them grow their business within a grace period of six months. However, the exemption is not uniformly applied and requires some efforts in advocacy and justification, which is a concern that still requires more efforts in unifying the model for the country to help boost the growth of small and medium enterprises.

Vocational Training and SMEs Development: targeting youth mainly, the vocational and skills development has been instrumental in uplifting the youth and creating small enterprises that are able to grow into better business models. The skills gained by the youth in the refugee camps are translated into practical work that gives back to the community in terms of products such as construction and concrete works, carpentry and joinery, bakery and catering services, as well as hairdressing and tailoring, welding and metal works, among others. Through the AfDB financing instruments, South Sudan has been able to provide cash grants for the youth who complete the course to procure materials for the startup of business, a model that has been very productive in sustaining the youth and promoting resilience.

South Sudan Durable Solutions Architecture and Strategy: The establishment of the National Technical Committee on Durable Solutions (NTC-DS) has not only become a great tool of advancing the GCR principles but equally contributed largely to achievements of the SDGs, the country's rapid accession to international and regional instruments and the development of critical policies needed to guide service delivery and planning for the population, not only for the host but mainly the displaced persons including refugees, IDPs and returning that requires integration. The role of the Solution Architecture is therefore trickled down to the states and counties levels where service delivery and response are coordinated effectively, and collective advocacy is done.

5.2 Opportunities

While the situation continues to be complex with serious economic indicators, there are opportunities for growth and development that could be tapped into to build sustainable livelihoods and economic transformation for the refugees, IDPs, and returnees who have acquired various skills and are ready to start making a living as well as contributing to the overall production and economic development. The following opportunities have been identified during the period.

Government Commitment: this is a crucial aspect of the inclusion, not only from the Ministry of Interior side, but the whole government approach to ensure, the refugees are included in all sectors. This commitment is seen in the ongoing redesigning of the new IDs for refugees that will enable all refugees access wide range of services, including banking, loans, SIM registration, and mobile money, as well as register businesses with no further restrictions. Supporting this initiative will be a great investment that would see all refugees benefiting from various services and private sector development.

Favorable Policies: the open-door policy, coupled with a lot of other favorable policies in the country, makes it easier to drive the change needed if the private sector is engaged in the integrative and production activities, such as agribusiness and agricultural cooperatives development, to increase food production. More could be done in terms of Cooperative Regulation and policies, including on harmonized taxes, unified exemptions to certain levels of growth.

Welcoming and hospitable Host Community: beyond the government initiatives and legal frameworks lies the hospitable and welcoming host community that is the primary recipient of the refugees and IDPs across the country. An integrated planning and urbanization plan, including through private sector development in areas like Renk, Jamjang, Aweil and Yambio, would not only contribute to the economic development but would equal reinforce the hospitality given by the host community through establishing programs that benefit both the forcibly displaced persons and host communities through equal and integrated growth.

Growing local sectors and strong demand for supplies: As reported in the regional Climate Investment Report and the Market Assessments and Value Chain analysis conducted in South Sudan, the local demands have continued to grow with the population increase and the need for local produce in the market. The agricultural production is gearing up with support from partners since, in 2024, when WFP procured over 10,000 tons of grain in Upper Nile's Renk region alone, fruits and local production increased in the Equatoria's Yei and Yambio corridors as well as the Ruweng region in the north. This presents a great opportunity to support the local production and market supply, including building on export potential.

Skilled Refugees and Returnees from Sudan: The Sudanese refugees and the South Sudanese who returned after the war broke out in Khartoum have a great socio-economic profile that would be tapped into to stimulate production, service delivery and economic transformation. The Sudanese are skilled in business, private sector activities, including agriculture, irrigation schemes and other productions. These skills are also carried by some of the returnees from Sudan. This makes both the opportunity to develop better integrative programs in collaboration with host communities to transform production, service delivery and contribute to the economic growth of the country while building resilience and job creation for both groups.

5.3 Recommendations and Plans of Action

The following recommendations and action points are drawn to address the challenges and accelerate the implementation of South Sudan's GRF pledges to enhance durable solutions for refugees, returnees, IDPs, stateless persons, and host communities in the country with a focus on inclusion and integrated approaches:

5.3.1. Cross-Cutting Recommendations

- **Strengthen Government Ownership**: Institutionalize the GRF Working Group within the National Technical Committee on Durable Solutions (NTC-DS) and ensure regular budgetary allocation for its operations. This includes assigning a secretary or a partnership officer who would follow up monthly and coordinate the monthly forum for the Working Group.
- **Enhance Coordination**: Establish/Strengthen state-level Taskforces on Solutions and county-level Solutions Working Groups to localize implementation and improve coordination between national, subnational, and local actors. This includes conducting monthly GRF-WG meetings to consolidate the progress and updating the NTC-DS a quarterly meeting.
- **Sustain Multi-Stakeholder Engagement**: Deepen collaboration with civil society, private sector, faith-based organizations, and displaced populations in planning and implementation of the durable solutions activities and pledges.
- **Promote Area-Based Approaches**: Scale up integrated programming in refugee-hosting and return areas using the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus model, promoting the Pocket of Hopes model to support reintegration and sustainable integrated settlements.

5.3.2 Thematic Recommendations and Action Plans

A. Solutions & Peacebuilding

- Finalize the rollout of the Durable Solutions Strategy and Action Plan coordination architecture and systems in all states.
- Expand peacebuilding platforms and local reconciliation initiatives to all the localities.
- Accelerate land policy reform and harmonization of land governance systems in South Sudan with the inclusion of refugees at urban and rural levels.
- Invest in early warning systems and local peace infrastructures.

B. Education

- Scale up teacher training and recruitment in refugee-hosting areas.
- Increase investment in school infrastructure and provision of learning materials.
- Expand scholarship programs for refugee and returnee students.
- Fully integrate refugee data into the national Education Management Information System (EMIS).

C. Jobs & Livelihoods

- Expand vocational training and skills development to reach 10,000 youth by 2027 in refugee hosting locations.
- Support the growth of agricultural cooperatives and value chains development.

- Facilitate access to microfinance and business development services, building linkages with the private sector to promote entrepreneurship development.
- Harmonize tax policies and provide incentives for refugee-led enterprises.

D. Climate & Environment

- Mobilize funding to implement the $269 million Flood Preparedness and Response Plan.
- Scale up clean energy solutions and climate-smart agriculture in refugee-hosting areas.
- Strengthen institutional capacity for disaster risk management and early warning dissemination.
- Finalize and implement the National Forest Policy framework.

E. Statelessness

- Complete the review and amendment of the Nationality Act and Civil Registry Act in compliance with the international legal frameworks
- Operationalize the CRVS Strategy in all states, counties, and expand mobile registration units to reach all population groups.
- Establish and equip state and county-level Civil Registry and Nationality Enrolment offices, and provide capacity development to local officials.
- Advocate for bilateral dialogue with Sudan to resolve cross-border nationality disputes.

F. Protection Capacity & Documentation

- Secure funding for the production of the refugee identity documents and machine-readable Convention Travel Documents to allow refugee access to a wide range of services without hindrance, hence promoting inclusion at all levels.
- Institutionalize refugee inclusion in national statistics and surveys, mobilizing resources to enable the NBS to conduct relevant surveys and inclusive national statistics..

5.3.3 Monitoring and Accountability

- Develop a **GRF Monitoring Dashboard** to track progress on each pledge. The GRF WG secretariat at the CRA should prioritize the monitoring tools to monitor the monthly progress.
- Conduct **annual stocktaking reviews** with stakeholders and publish progress briefs and quarterly updates.
- Align GRF implementation with the **South Sudan Development Plan (2026–2036)** and the **UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF)**.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The *South Sudan Global Refugee Forum (GRF) Progress Report 2024–2025* demonstrates the country's steadfast commitment to the principles of the **Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)** and the pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum in 2019 and 2023, respectively. The pledges expand from the advancement of Solutions and Peacebuilding efforts, promoting access to education and higher learning opportunities for displaced populations, enhancing jobs and livelihoods, responding to the climate shocks and environmental programming, as well as addressing the risks of statelessness and contributing to effective asylum systems management, documentation, and protection of refugees' rights through an inclusion agenda and integrative planning.

Despite economic constraints, climate shocks, and the complex dynamics of displacement in South Sudan, including the impact of the Sudan crisis, South Sudan has achieved significant milestones in advancing the GCR and implementing the pledges made at the GRF on enhancing solutions as guided by the country's durable solutions framework with support from partners and bilateral donors. These achievements reflect the strength of partnerships between the government of South Sudan, the development partners, humanitarian agencies, and private sector actors, as well as the civil society and the host and displaced communities.

The journey toward achieving comprehensive solutions is, however, ongoing and yet to be completed as challenges persist, including the lack of financial resources to address critical issues such as infrastructure limitations, digital connectivity, and value chain development. The legal and policy harmonization requires sustained investment to address pending issues such as tax system harmonization, land governance issues, as well as national states' resource allocations. This calls for continued and **enhanced donor support**, **private sector engagement**, and **integrated planning** to ensure that progress is not only maintained but accelerated beyond the current level.

South Sudan stands ready to deepen collaboration with all stakeholders to transform pledges into tangible outcomes and create meaningful impact. Together, we can build a future where displacement no longer means despair, but opportunity—a future anchored in peace, resilience, and inclusive development for all.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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