

UNHCR's engagement in the Grand Bargain SUMMARY OF THE PROGRESS MADE PER WORKSTREAM

At the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in May 2016, major donors and aid organizations, including UNHCR adopted the Grand Bargain to improve aid effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian response. This external update captures the progress made by UNHCR since the WHS towards implementing the Grand Bargain commitments, including significant achievements, changes in working practices and policies. The update also provides information on UNHCR's COVID-19 response, described using the Grand Bargain terminologies.

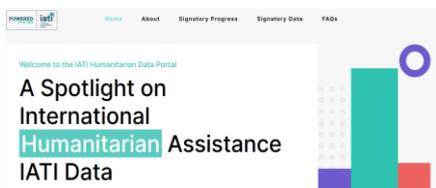
1. Greater transparency

UNHCR's commitment at the WHS:

- Publish open-data allowing traceability of donors' funding throughout the transaction chain.



Since it started to publish data in accordance with the standards of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) in September 2018, UNHCR has worked closely with partners under the transparency workstream, including towards the development of the IATI [Humanitarian Data Portal](#). In doing so, UNHCR has met this commitment. Since March 2019, UNHCR provides data in an automated manner, to increase the availability and the quality of data.



In May 2020, UNHCR provided the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) with a dedicated staff member to assist the [Financial Tracking Service](#) (FTS) with the increased demand for financial data entry in the context of the COVID-19 response.

UNHCR's COVID-19 related funding information is now fully reflected in this data portal.



2. Support and funding tools for local and national responders

UNHCR's commitments at the WHS:

- Minimize the links in the humanitarian funding chain and transfer at least 25% of programme expenditures to local and national responders;
- Expand its investment in institutional capacity building of national partners, and to support effective emergency preparedness and response by engaging proactively with first responders at the local level as leaders and equal partners and fostering their participation in the coordination mechanisms.



A new policy adopted on 1 June 2019 redefines UNHCR's contributions towards partner integrity capacity and support costs. The changes comprise a contribution of 4% for national partner indirect support costs, and greater discretion in the way in which partners make use of this additional resource.

In 2019, UNHCR allocated \$1.376 billion to over 1,100 partners, including national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), governments and United Nations agencies. Of this, \$752.6 million was allocated to local responders, national NGOs and governments, including \$575 million to over 700 national NGOs. As a result, UNHCR met its target by transferring 25.8 % of its annual programme expenditure to local and national responders.

The [UN Partner Portal](#) launched in November 2018 by UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP, was expanded in 2019 with the inclusion of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as well as the addition of French and Spanish versions. By mid-2020, some 12,000 partners had been registered on the portal.



3. Increase the use and coordination of cash-based programming

UNHCR's commitment at the WHS:

- Double the amount of funds programmed for cash-based interventions in aid delivery by the end of 2020.



During 2019, UNHCR delivered \$646 million in cash-based interventions (CBI), representing 22% of its overall programme expenditure. With this, UNHCR met its commitment to double cash assistance from the 2015 baseline (\$303 million) and exceed in-kind assistance and services.

Since 2016, UNHCR has delivered \$2.9 billion in cash assistance. To provide beneficiaries with the choice of how best to meet their needs, 95% of UNHCR's cash assistance is broadly unrestricted, while one third is programmed to meet protection needs. About 80% of UNHCR's cash assistance is distributed through banks and mobile money transfers, contributing to financial inclusion.

More than 5,000 UNHCR staff have received training on CBIs and joint cash transfer mechanisms with partners are now in place across 25 operations, following the [joint cash assistance statement](#) amongst OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP.

In the seven focus countries under the statement (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Niger and Yemen) collaborative cash context-specific arrangements are being pursued bringing efficiencies to the humanitarian response.

UNHCR Strategy for the Institutionalisation of CBI 2016-2020 is now extended until October 2021. The greater focus will be made on quality, protection, risk management, innovation and partnerships. Whenever feasible, UNHCR will work through and link vulnerable populations to existing national systems under the leadership of the host governments.



In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 65 operations launched or expanded CBIs using a range of approaches, including the increased use of digital payments and monitoring, the frontloading of payments and the testing of new technologies (such as contactless biometrics).

4. Reduce duplication and management costs

UNHCR's commitments at the WHS:

- Use technology and innovation to reduce the costs of delivering assistance;
- Expand the use of biometrics for refugee registration to a total of 75 country operations;
- Reduce the costs of procurement and logistics by 10% by the end of 2020 through the use of shared services with partner agencies.



The use of biometrics in refugee registration continued to be expanded in 2019, reaching 69 operations (compared to 62 in 2018). An additional 1.7 million refugees were biometrically registered by UNHCR and government partners, bringing the total to 8.7 million individuals. As a result of these efforts, 8 in 10 refugees over the age of five who have been registered now have a biometric identity.

Due to the increase in the number of persons of concern and rise in requirements, the relative procurement cost of goods and services decreased by 10 per cent in 2019, compared to the 2016 baseline.

Effective January 2020, UNHCR reduced its indirect support cost from 7 per cent to 6.5 per cent against all voluntary earmarked financial contributions, with the exception of those for the operational reserve and Junior Professional Officers (JPOs).

In July 2020, UNHCR established the Global Mobility and Infrastructure Service, which will focus on implementation of the [Business Innovation Group's \(BIG\)](#) work within UNHCR.

In early 2020, UNHCR commissioned with the support of the Government of Japan an independent review of individual donor assessments to capture the extent of their impact on operations. The review will be used as a reference to explore ways to reduce individual donor assessments.



For the COVID-19 response, UNHCR has been coordinating with the UN Task Force and working closely with WFP and UNICEF to procure and deliver personal protective equipment (PPE) and other relief items to affected operations.

The COVID-19 response accelerated the ongoing process aimed at simplifying UNHCR's NGO partnership arrangements. Adjustments include flexibility for NGOs to make greater discretionary budget reallocations and the acceptance of electronic signatures.

5. Improve joint and impartial needs assessments

UNHCR's commitment at the WHS:

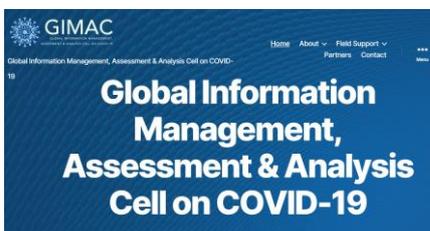
- Undertake coordinated joint needs assessment and continue sharing evidence-based needs assessment data.



In 2020, UNHCR and WFP established a Joint Programme of Excellence and its Targeting Hub to strengthen joint programming and better meet the needs of vulnerable populations. The hub, composed of a remote joint expert team, will assist operations in conducting assessments that will feed into joint targeting strategies.



UNHCR has played a key role in establishing the [COVID-19 Global Information Management, Assessment and Analysis Cell \(GIMAC\)](#), which is co-led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), OCHA, UNHCR and the World Health Organization (WHO). With a dedicated inter-agency multifunctional team to respond to requests for multisectoral humanitarian needs assessments and situation analyses, the GIMAC has customized the Joint Intersectoral Analysis Framework (JIAF) for the COVID-19 response, optimizing it for the analysis of risk, protection concerns, health needs and the impact of government measures.



In Colombia, UNHCR took part in a joint rapid multisector needs assessment in May 2020 to inform the revision of the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Venezuelans (RMRP) and carried out a second round in June to inform the COVID-19 response in this operation. In Turkey, UNHCR led the development of a harmonized, inter-agency comprehensive needs assessment tool to understand the impact of COVID-19 on refugee access to services, information and coping mechanisms. In Lebanon, UNHCR conducted two multisectoral assessments, with the support of its partners, to the impact of the deteriorating economic conditions linked to the pandemic.

6. A participation revolution

UNHCR's commitments at the WHS:

- Ensure equal (50%) and meaningful participation of women and adolescent girls in all decision-making processes and structures in forced displacement contexts by 2020;
- Continue to strengthen the engagement with and accountability to the communities affected by crisis.



Guided by the five updated commitments to women and girls, as outlined in its 2018 policy on age, gender and diversity, UNHCR continued to promote and strengthen gender equality in its operations. Progress made until the end of 2019 towards the policy's implementation was documented in the UNHCR Age, Gender and Diversity Accountability Report 2018-2019 "[Putting people first](#)" report. Efforts to strengthen communities have been further enhanced by the release of [Accountability to Affected Populations Operational Guidance](#).

UNHCR promoted global-level participation and leadership by supporting a [gender audit of the Global Refugee Forum \(GRF\)](#). Led by refugee women from different backgrounds and regions, the audit drew attention to gender-equality related challenges in refugee situations, ensuring the commitments made to refugee women and girls in the Global Compact on Refugees were reflected concretely within the GRF pledging process. Throughout the preparatory meetings and the GRF in December 2019, the audit team documented the ways in which gender equality; age, gender and diversity; and gender-based violence were addressed by different stakeholders. The team also provided specific recommendations on how to ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of pledges focusing on these areas.



In the context of COVID-19, UNHCR has supported displaced communities to empower them in leading prevention and responses to the pandemic. In Nepal, the number of female community workers was increased to facilitate case referral and to provide continuous hotline access to survivors of gender-based violence. In Cameroon, a network of 110 community focal points supported social workers to provide remote gender-based violence case management. In Mauritania, community volunteers helped UNHCR reach refugees with specific needs and those in remote areas. In Lebanon, more than 450 refugees with a medical background were mobilized to work as community health volunteers. In India, enterprises run by refugee women are producing cloth masks to be used in UNHCR operations. Further examples can be found in UNHCR's [Communities Getting Involved: COVID-19](#)

7. Increase collaborative humanitarian multi-year planning and funding

UNHCR's commitment at the WHS:

- Pursue the institutional changes needed to facilitate multi-year protection and solutions strategies and programming in partnership with humanitarian and development actors.



Building on the lessons learned from the multi-year multi-partner (MYMP) strategies piloted in 22 operations, UNHCR will move to a multi-year planning approach as of 2022. This will be rolled out incrementally over three years and will become UNHCR's default planning process. As part of this approach to results-based management, UNHCR will apply a new global results framework accompanied by a new information technology tool.

UNHCR operations will develop costed three to five-year strategies that connect better to country level planning. Operations will develop a multi-year vision with a diverse range of actors, including humanitarian and development actors, government at all levels and people of concern.

Implementation plans toward the outcomes in the multiyear strategy will be defined annually, reflecting changes in the context, results and available funding. UNHCR will continue to allocate resources annually due to the high proportion of funding that it receives on an annual basis.

Operations will move into multi-year planning over the period 2022 to 2024. In the transitional period, Headquarters, Regional Bureaux and some field operations will develop annual interim plans.

Since 2019, UNHCR operations can enter into multi-year partnership agreements, regardless of whether multi-year funding is available. During 2019, 17 multi-year agreements came into effect as a result. As of September 2020, there are a total of 37 active multi-year partnership agreements, of which 23 (62%) are with local NGOs.

Regarding the amount of multi-year funding, UNHCR was able to draw from over \$542 million in 2019 (representing 11% of total income), including \$221 million in unearmarked funds, a four-fold increase over previous years.

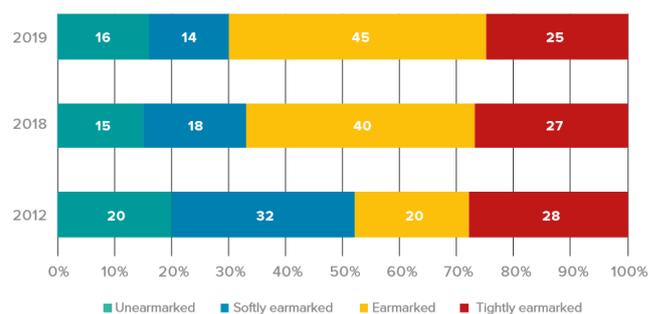
8. Reduce the earmarking of donor contributions

UNHCR's commitment at the WHS:

- Increase the visibility of unearmarked and softly earmarked funding, recognising the contribution made by donors.



In 2019, UNHCR raised a record \$4.174 billion in funding. However, the year was characterized by a marked drop in softly earmarked contributions and a continued increase in earmarking at the country level. At \$1.257 billion, flexible funding comprised of unearmarked and softly earmarked funding, amounted to 30% of voluntary contributions (compared with 33% in 2018 and 52% in 2012).



UNHCR's "Report on the use of flexible funding in 2019", published in June 2020, provided enhanced visibility on how flexible funding (unearmarked and softly earmarked), was allocated by quarter and by region. For the first time, the 2019 report included analysis of flexible multi-year contributions.

In 2019, UNHCR continued to increase the visibility of government donors. Data available for the last two quarters of 2019 shows that news content and web stories containing donor visibility language increased by 160 per cent compared to the previous year, while social media posts from global and country accounts almost doubled. Messaging about unearmarked contributions and flexible funding continues to increase.



Donor response to address the COVID-19 pandemic has been generous. As of the end of August 2020, 36.5% of the funding received was softly earmarked. This high level of flexibility has meant that it has not been necessary to allocate unearmarked funding for the response.

9. Harmonise and simplify reporting requirements

UNHCR's commitment at the WHS:

- Harmonize and simplify reporting requirements by the end of 2018.



UNHCR is one of the six organizations that has fully adopted the harmonized "8+3" narrative reporting template for its partners.

To provide the most current funding data in a user friendly manner, UNHCR continued to upgrade its [Global Focus](#) reporting and transparency portal. The portal now includes a range of dashboards offering information on budget and income, including a dedicated dashboard on flexible funding; augmented donor profiles showing the quantity and quality of contributions as well where contributions were allocated; and a new operational and situational reporting tool for some 40 operations and 13 situations.



Information concerning UNHCR's response to COVID-19, including UNHCR's appeal, is published on the [COVID-19 Situation](#) web-page of the Global Focus.



10. Enhance engagement between humanitarian and development actors

UNHCR's commitments at the WHS:

- Cooperate with multilateral development banks to facilitate their active engagement in situations of forced displacement where their technical and financial comparative advantages can contribute to improved socio-economic outcomes for refugees, IDPs and affected host communities.
- Support efforts that enable economic participation of forcibly displaced persons and access to finance, in collaboration with partners.



During the [Global Refugee Forum](#) (GRF) in December 2019, members of the Multilateral Development Bank Coordination Platform on Economic Migration and Forced Displacement affirmed their commitment to the operationalization of the Global Compact on Refugees.

UNHCR's partnership with the World Bank (WB) was expanded around programmatic aspects of the International Development Association (IDA) sub-window for refugees and host communities and the Global Concessional Financing Facility. In addition to allocating US\$2.2 billion under the IDA19 replenishment (2020 to 2023), the WB committed to systematically reviewing refugee policy and institutional environments for the eligible countries to support creation of socio-economic development opportunities for host communities and refugees.

UNHCR and the WB together with the Joint Data Center (JDC) are currently working on a global data sharing agreement to facilitate and guide data sharing in line with data protection protocols.



In response to the pandemic, the WB, has established COVID-19 Fast-Track Facility of US\$ 14 billion which has been disbursed to over 100 countries, including those hosting large numbers of refugees. Many of the interventions explicitly recognize refugees, IDPs and/or stateless populations as vulnerable groups that should be considered. Furthermore, through IDA19, the WB has committed to provide eligible countries up to US\$ 1 billion out of the 2.2 billion in 100% grant terms during 2021.

In April 2020, the African Development Bank announced the creation of a US\$10 billion response facility aimed at assisting regional member countries in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. In June 2020, a USD 20.5 million pandemic response project for the Sahel region was approved, with UNHCR and the G5 Sahel Secretariat being the implementing support agencies of the 18-month project. The COVID-19 Sahel grant aims to support the primary health response and community resilience of vulnerable communities, including refugees and IDPs, in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger.

With support from the JDC and UNHCR, the WB in select countries is including refugees in national phone surveys capturing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, often in collaboration with national statistical offices.