GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES

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Regional Pledge Stocktaking Report 2024 - 2025

Eastern and Southern Africa region

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Across Eastern and Southern Africa, governments, regional bodies, development partners, refugee-led organizations (RLOs), private-sector actors and civil society continued to advance implementation of pledges made at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF). The period was marked by strengthened national leadership, deeper humanitarian–development collaboration, and the growing institutionalization of refugee inclusion within national systems.

Progress was recorded across all thematic pillars throughout 2024 and 2025. Together, these efforts are promoting self-reliance, inclusion and resilience for nearly 26 million forcibly displaced and stateless people across the region. Countries advanced legal and policy reforms, expanded access to documentation, strengthened environmental and energy initiatives, and delivered tangible gains in socio-economic inclusion.

Regional mechanisms including the African Union Commission, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Support Platform, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) played a central role in policy alignment, data harmonization and regional coordination. Refugee-led organizations increased their engagement, including in service delivery, legal protection and monitoring, and environmental action, reflecting progress in localization and accountability.

At the same time, persistent financial pressures underscored the need for sustained development investment, stronger private-sector engagement and coordinated, long-term planning.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Transformative Legal and Policy Reforms to Expand Refugee Rights

- **Ethiopia** implemented new Right to Work and refugee status determination (RSD) directives, significantly improving access to employment, financial services and justice.
- **Kenya** operationalized the 2024 Refugee Regulations and advanced the Shirika Plan, enabling integrated settlements and expanded socio-economic rights.
- **Rwanda** maintained one of the region's most progressive refugee policy frameworks. In 2024, it enacted a new Law Governing Refugees and Applicants for Refugee Status and in 2025 finalized the Refugee Sustainable Graduation Strategy (2025–2030), which aims to transition 50 per cent of refugee households to self-reliance by 2030.
- **Somalia** adopted the Refugees and Asylum-Seekers Law, establishing a legal framework for refugee protection, asylum procedures, and rights in line with international conventions, alongside the IDP (internally displaced persons) Law, which includes a landmark allocation of 5 per cent of the national budget for displacement-affected populations.
- **South Sudan** acceded to the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions, reinforcing its commitment to prevent and reduce statelessness.
- **Zambia** launched the National Refugee Policy and its implementation plan in early 2024, establishing a more progressive framework for protection and self-reliance.
- **Zimbabwe** presented draft amendments to the Refugees Act to the Minister in 2024 (following extensive consultations in 2023) with bill drafting now underway.
- **SADC** and UNHCR strengthened cooperation on data sharing, harmonization of migration and asylum policies, and protection for people in mixed movements, with increasing engagement of local authorities in corridor-level planning.
- The Southern Africa Migration Management (SAMM) project strengthened labour market governance across **Botswana, Eswatini, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia** through legal harmonization, labour market assessments and improved labour migration information systems.

Systemic Integration of Refugees into National Services and Development Frameworks

- **Djibouti** sustained comprehensive inclusion of refugees within national health, education, employment and financial systems under its progressive legal framework.
- **Kenya** registered 51 camp-based schools as public institutions, expanded refugee inclusion in Universal Health Coverage and integrated refugees into county development plans.
- **Uganda** advanced a national transition strategy to fully integrate education, health and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services into government delivery systems.

- **Mozambique** initiated plans to integrate the Maratane refugee settlement into the Naburi administrative unit and urbanize surrounding communities. Refugees and IDPs were included in provincial development strategies.
- Refugees were included in national censuses and household surveys in **Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda**, strengthening evidence-based planning.

Transitioning from Camps to Sustainable Human Settlements

- **Kenya** advanced the Shirika Plan's vision of integrated refugee and host-community settlements, aligning service delivery with socio-economic opportunities.
- **Mozambique** continued integrating Maratane settlement, where around 30 per cent of the country's refugee and asylum-seeker population lives, into a fully locally integrated village and transition from parallel humanitarian service delivery to inclusion into national systems and services. WFP and UNHCR also supported the population around Maratane to transition from food aid dependency towards self-reliance.
- **Rwanda** advanced its commitment to explore alternatives to camp-based refugee assistance and transitioning camps into integrated settlements. The Government also pledged to expand community-based health insurance coverage to all refugees by 2026.
- **Zambia** continued transforming refugee settlements into economic hubs by expanding access to good arable land, agricultural inputs and local markets for refugees and host communities.
- **Zimbabwe** progressed toward policies facilitating refugee inclusion in national systems for education, health care and employment, moving away from isolated camp models.

Expansion of Documentation, Identity Systems and Legal Access to Services

- **Ethiopia** enrolled more than 170,000 refugees in the Fayda Digital ID system, supporting secure authentication and financial inclusion.
- **Kenya** issued over 400,000 digital refugee IDs, enabling access to mobile services, banking, mobility and digital platforms.
- **Mozambique** issued valid ID cards to refugees and asylum-seekers and legal documentation to IDPs and IDP returnees who lost their documents during or after flight. Recognized refugees also gained access to machine-readable travel documents.
- **Rwanda** made significant progress to issue ID cards to refugees and include refugees in the transition to a digitalized ID card.
- **South Africa** progressed toward a fully digital birth registration system to reduce manual processing and document loss.

- **South Sudan** adopted Civil Registration and National Identification Regulations and extended refugee ID validity to five years, with options for overseas renewal.
- **Uganda** issued nearly 200,000 birth certificates to refugee children, strengthening legal identity from early childhood.
- National Action Plans to Eradicate Statelessness were adopted in **Eswatini** and **Zambia**. Citizenship law reviews progressed in **Botswana, Lesotho** and **Malawi**, while the Pan-African Parliament adopted the Model Law on Citizenship and the Prevention of Statelessness in November 2024.

Climate Action, Renewable Energy and Environmentally Sustainable Livelihoods

- **Ethiopia** planted 2.25 million seedlings, expanded solar installations and allocated 1,505 hectares for climate-smart agriculture.
- **Kenya**, **Rwanda** and **Uganda** expanded the SOLCO solar e-cooking model, supporting a transition to renewable household energy.
- **Mozambique** allocated 200 hectares of agricultural land benefiting refugees, asylum-seekers and host communities around Maratane. UNHCR and AfDB collaborated to make local markets more inclusive by engaging private firms and strengthening the skills and access to rights of refugees, IDPs, and host communities in Maratane and Cabo Delgado.
- **Rwanda** advanced inclusive climate-smart agriculture initiatives through a Danish-funded project, benefiting both refugees and host communities in fostering self-reliance and peaceful coexistence.
- **Uganda**'s 'Live in Green' consortium of refugee-led organizations produced 400,000 seedlings annually, with a target of 1.5 million trees by 2027, while generating green livelihoods.
- Regional initiatives such as the Sustainable Waste Employment and Environmental Progress (SWEEP) Partnership and EcoAdapt piloted circular economy, waste-to-energy and landscape restoration programmes across multiple countries.
- The **African Union**, **IGAD** and the **EAC** advanced regional frameworks promoting clean cooking, renewable energy access and climate resilience in refugee-hosting areas.

Strengthened Human Capital through Inclusive Education and Skills Development

- **Ethiopia** launched a national Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Strategy inclusive of refugees, marking a milestone for human capital integration.
- **Ethiopia** and **Kenya** aligned non-formal learning centres with national curricula and teacher management systems.

- Digital learning initiatives such as ProFuturo and by NABU, expanded across **Kenya**, **Rwanda** and **Uganda**, improving literacy and teacher training.
- **IGAD** and the **EAC** advanced multi-country alignment of curricula, teacher management and TVET systems.
- Higher education and blended-learning pathways broadened in several countries in the region through partnerships with Arizona State University, the University of London and regional institutions.

Inclusion in national social protection systems and access to economic opportunities such as formal employment and entrepreneurship support both enable refugees and other forcibly displaced people to have greater agency over their lives and reduce reliance on aid, paving the way to durable solutions beneficial to both displaced people and their host communities.

Angelina pictured at work in her restaurant in Bentiu, South Sudan. With the support of UNHCR, Angelina received a cash grant and a business start-up kit, which she put to good use. She employs three women in the restaurant, an apprentice, a waitress, and someone to run errands. Their lives have also changed for the better.

"I am so happy. Before, I could not feed my children, I was always worrying, but now I no longer worry. I know that every morning and evening there is something for my children to eat."

© UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Burundi

Burundi made steady progress across refugee returnee reintegration, land governance, education, health, and climate adaptation. National education systems continued to absorb refugee and returnee learners, supported by IGAD-led regional alignment and targeted investments from the Global Partnership for Education. The inclusion of refugees in the 2024 national census strengthened the quality of national statistics and informed more responsive service delivery.

Significant advances were also achieved in housing, land, and property rights. Systematic land registration in Nyanza Lac, Mabanda, and Ruyigi enhanced tenure security for returnees and IDPs, reduced land-related disputes, and improved prospects for durable solutions. Nutrition outcomes improved through Burundi's participation in the UNHCR–World Diabetes Foundation regional programme on non-communicable diseases, alongside continued engagement in IGAD-led cross-border initiatives.

Through partnerships with UNDP, IOM, WFP, and other agencies, the Burundi UN Country Team (UNCT) prioritized livelihood programmes and climate resilience measures at the Musenyi refugee site. These interventions directly support Burundi's pledges to strengthen refugee self-reliance and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Complementing these efforts, the World Bank, through five programmes, supported advocy for freedom of movement for refugees and the advancement of self-reliance in Burundi.

Civil society and private-sector engagement further reinforced protection and social cohesion outcomes. Between 2024 and 2025, Anta Group donated one million pieces of sports equipment to refugee communities, contributing to psychosocial well-being and social cohesion.

In May 2025, the UNCT and the Government of Burundi, through the Ministry of National Solidarity, Social Affairs, Human Rights and Gender, officially launched the 2025–2027 Reintegration Operational Plan for returnees, IDPs and Batwa communities. The plan was launched at a multi-stakeholder workshop in Bujumbura with the participation of government institutions, civil society, international NGOs, and representatives of returnees and IDPs. Co-led by UNHCR, UNDP, other UN agencies, NGOs, and the Government, and supported by donor financing, the plan adopts a comprehensive approach across legal, humanitarian, educational, economic, and social dimensions. It places particular emphasis on historically marginalized groups, including Batwa communities and IDPs, while strengthening accountability mechanisms to ensure inclusive reintegration outcomes.

During the February 2025 influx of approximately 76,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi mounted a coordinated, multi-stakeholder response

involving 16 partners under an inter-agency plan. This integrated effort across UN agencies, government authorities, donors, NGOs, and foundations enabled a rapid, multi-sectoral response, addressing protection needs, transit management, basic service provision, and emergency financing.

Djibouti

Djibouti sustained one of the most progressive refugee inclusion models in the region. Under its national refugee legislation, refugees continued to access education, health, employment and financial services, and refugee IDs served as valid work permits. Over 5,000 refugee children were enrolled in national schools and bilingual curricula were expanded. Refugee students were integrated into National Education Database (GOSE - Gestion Orientation et Suivi des Élèves). Higher education access grew through scholarship partnerships.

Refugees were included in the national development plan (2025 – 2030), the 2024 national census and the 2025 household survey, strengthening the evidence base for national planning. Education advances included participation in IGAD/EAC regional policy coordination and GPE-financed systems strengthening.

WASH and health outcomes improved through expanded access to integrated national services, though acute funding shortfalls remain a barrier to sustaining education, health, and social protection systems. Djibouti continued to champion inclusion within Vision 2035, aligning displacement with national development priorities.

Eswatini

In aligning itself with the Global Compact on Refugees and as part of depopulating Malindza Refugee Reception Centre, the Eswatini government allocated over 1,095 hectares of land pledge to be utilized by refugees and asylum-seekers alongside host communities to ensure economic inclusion. This land is earmarked for the Ndzevane Agricultural Project and the resuscitation of the Ndzevane Settlement. A solar-powered borehole has been installed, and a pilot refugee group has been relocated. Additionally, 100 hectares have been cleared for agricultural activities.

Eswatini has also established the Refugee Appeals Board and strengthened its RSD capacity. As part of efforts to resolve and prevent statelessness, more than 30,000 births have been registered for children born on the territory, regardless of nationality.

Ethiopia

Ethiopia strengthened refugee rights through the Refugee Proclamation and new RSD and Right to Work directives. Refugees were included in national surveys to inform planning, and the Socio-Economic Survey of Refugees and Host Communities was published in May 2024.

More than 170,000 refugees obtained Fayda Digital IDs and the RRS continued to strengthen birth registration systems.

Climate and energy actions included planting 2.25 million seedlings, installing solar systems, and allocating 1,505 hectares for climate-smart agriculture. Gender-based violence (GBV) guidelines were endorsed, and national TVET systems were expanded to include refugees through the new TVET Strategy and Technical Coordination Platform to harmonize labour market inclusion. Digital learning platforms such as ProFuturo and literacy initiatives improved teacher capacity and learning continuity.

In health and nutrition, the UNHCR–WDF non-communicable diseases programme expanded diagnostic and treatment capacity for chronic diseases. IMC provided clean water to 304,000 refugees and 89,000 host members, solarized boreholes in Awbare (fuel use cut by 50 per cent), improved operations and maintenance structures, and expanded sanitation and hygiene promotion. Nutrition gains continued through Sanku support to fortification policy and compliance.

A Yemeni refugee serves traditional Ethiopian injera flatbread at her coffee shop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The mother-of-two is among the first group of 3,000 refugees living in the capital who recently received a digital national ID which has helped her obtain a business license. © UNHCR/Sona Dadi

Kenya

Kenya continued to advance a comprehensive inclusion agenda throughout the reporting period, building on a strong policy environment and significant progress across protection, services, livelihoods, climate action, and local governance. The roll-out of the Shirika Plan in 2025 marked a major milestone, outlining a structured transition of the refugee camps into integrated settlements that are embedded in county development processes. This shift was reinforced by the implementation of the 2024 Refugee Regulations, which operationalized Kenya's progressive legislative framework and further aligned national systems with international standards.

Documentation remained a key area of progress. More than 400,000 refugees received digital IDs, greatly improving access to services, financial systems, and mobility. Regulatory clarity on SIM registration enabled refugees to obtain mobile lines using these digital IDs, expanding access to mobile money, communication, and digital livelihoods. Integrated service delivery continued to strengthen, with refugees formally integrated into Universal Health Coverage. In Dadaab, the opening of a Level 4 hospital represented a notable improvement in specialized healthcare, benefiting both refugees and host communities.

Education outcomes advanced through the continued integration of camp-based schools into the national education system. Fifty-one schools in the camps were formally registered as public institutions, reinforcing government ownership of refugee education. The Elimu Scholarship Programme supported more than 8,000 refugee learners, while teacher training and non-formal education alignment improved quality and continuity. Digital literacy initiatives, including the expansion of multilingual reading platforms such as NABU in Kakuma, supported learning outcomes and strengthened early-grade reading.

Kenya also recorded meaningful gains in economic inclusion. Nairobi County expanded its Re:BUiLD initiative, supporting entrepreneurship, vocational training, and market access for refugees living in urban areas. For the first time, county authorities advanced practical steps to recognize refugee-owned businesses, enabling greater participation in local economies. Refugee-led organizations played a growing role, with RELON-K providing vocational training, community-based protection services, and small enterprise development. RELON-K also supported 128 family reunification cases and handled 15 custody cases, exemplifying the increasing leadership of refugee-led legal assistance.

Environmental and climate innovation continued to expand. Waste-to-energy and circular economy initiatives under SWEEP informed county waste management planning, demonstrating how refugee-hosting areas can contribute to sustainable urban systems. Feasibility planning for SOLCO's e-cooking model progressed in several counties, laying the groundwork for clean energy transitions in both camp and urban environments.

Lesotho

Lesotho is advancing key legislative and policy measures to strengthen protection for vulnerable populations. The Government has initiated the development of an Immigration and Citizenship Bill aimed at granting nationality to children of unknown parentage and ensuring that any child born in Lesotho who would otherwise be stateless is entitled to citizenship. This Bill has undergone internal consultations and is progressing through the legislative process, marking a significant step toward reducing statelessness.

To promote refugee self-reliance, Lesotho is facilitating the sub-lease of three acres of land for agricultural and livelihood activities in Thaba Bosiu. This initiative seeks to reduce dependency on government assistance by enabling refugees to achieve greater autonomy and economic resilience. The Government is inviting international partners, donors, and the private sector to support this effort through technical expertise, financial contributions, and innovative partnerships to maximize its impact.

Lesotho is also prioritizing education and research to empower refugees and prevent statelessness. Refugee youth have been successfully enrolled in secondary and tertiary institutions, focusing on fields such as agriculture, mechanics, and small-business development to enhance employability and integration. Additionally, a qualitative study on statelessness is underway, involving consultations with border communities and civil society. The findings will inform legislative reforms and targeted interventions to prevent and reduce statelessness in the country.

Madagascar

Madagascar has taken steps to fulfill its 2023 GFR commitments by establishing an office for refugees and stateless persons, which has initiated capacity building, obtained essential materials, and developed documentation to support its work. Progress has also been made toward creating a national legal framework for refugee status and a draft bill is being prepared with UNHCR.

Mozambique

Mozambique is advancing solutions for forcibly displaced people through administrative inclusion and area-based development. The Government has taken significant steps to integrate Maratane settlement into the Naburi administrative unit, formalized through a Master Plan signed in May 2025. The plan supports the urbanization of Naburi and surrounding communities and promotes integrated service delivery and development. Refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs have also been systematically mainstreamed into national and subnational development frameworks, notably the 10-year Provincial Development Plan for Nampula and the upcoming 10-year Provincial Development Plan

for Cabo Delgado as well as the upcoming Nampula District Development Plan - areas hosting large numbers of displaced people since 2017.

Inclusion into national systems has been further strengthened through expanded access to legal identity, documentation and services. Since 2024, the Government has intensified documentation efforts, including replacing legacy refugee ID cards with a new QR-coded model to modernize verification and enhance integrity. Between January 2024 and mid-2025, 13,000 refugees and asylum-seekers were documented, bringing coverage to 71 per cent of the eligible population. These measures, alongside the issuance of machine-readable travel documents and support for access to nationality and naturalization in specific cases, have reinforced protection against arrest, detention and refoulement while enabling access to services, livelihoods and cross-border mobility.

Mozambique has also advanced self-reliance and resilience through land access, infrastructure and development investments. Two hundred hectares of land have been allocated for agricultural activities benefiting refugees, asylum-seekers and host communities around Maratane, with 751 plots demarcated. Financing has been secured for the restoration of the Maratane Dam to support agriculture and livelihoods. The inclusion of provisions protecting refugee and asylum-seeker land rights and access to strengthened land tenure security in the revised Land Law further consolidates these gains. Overall, increasingly strong government leadership, combined with area-based and development-oriented approaches, has positioned Mozambique as making credible and sustained progress toward fulfilling its GRF commitments.

Namibia

The Government of Namibia bears the full cost of teachers and teaching and learning materials for refugee children in primary and secondary schools at Osire refugee settlement and provides health services to all 6,800 residents and members of the surrounding host community.

In addition, the Government issued 1,400 former Angolan refugees with permanent residency to facilitate their successful integration into Namibian society.

On statelessness, Namibia successfully conducted regional consultations within the country to gather input on the ratification of the 1954 and 1961 UN Statelessness Conventions and the 1969 OAU/2009 AU Conventions. These consultations resulted in a regional agreement to proceed with ratification. Namibia has also commenced identifying and registering stateless persons.

Rwanda

Rwanda sustained strong progress in expanding refugee inclusion across education, skills development, energy access, and environmental sustainability. The integration of digital learning platforms remained a defining feature of the reporting period. ProFuturo significantly broadened its reach in refugee-hosting schools and teacher training centres, equipping educators with digital tools and strengthening instructional quality. Complementing these efforts, NABU's Read for Resilience initiative introduced multilingual digital storybooks and social-emotional learning materials, helping to improve literacy outcomes among refugee and host-community children.

Advances in energy and climate action reflected Rwanda's broader national focus on green development. Planning began for the integration of SOLCO's solar e-cooking model in Mahama and Mugombwa refugee camps, aligning with government strategies to reduce reliance on biomass and promote cleaner cooking technologies. Refugee youth and women continued to drive small-scale green enterprises, contributing to reforestation and local environmental restoration while also strengthening livelihood opportunities.

Data inclusion also remained a strong area of progress. Refugees were counted in national censuses and household surveys, providing a more accurate reflection of population dynamics and supporting evidence-based planning. Higher education and skills development opportunities expanded through partnerships with institutions offering blended learning models, including Arizona State University and the University of London, which opened new pathways for professional growth and employment.

Somalia

Somalia made significant policy advances during the period, particularly in strengthening the legal environment and durable solutions for refugees and IDPs.

The adoption of the Refugees and Asylum-Seekers Law, alongside the IDPs Law, marked a transformative step toward establishing comprehensive national frameworks for protection, rights, and services. Notably, the government's commitment to allocate five percent of the national budget to displacement-affected populations underscored its increasing ownership of the response and its integration into national development planning.

Reintegration initiatives benefitted approximately 50,000 individuals by improving access to services and emerging urban solutions, though insecurity and rapid urbanization continued to challenge sustainable returns and reintegration.

Education and skills development remained areas of steady progress. Windle International expanded vocational training in Hargeisa and Mogadishu, offering practical skills such as plumbing, electrical installation, tailoring, carpentry, and

entrepreneurship. Engagement in regional education platforms through IGAD and the EAC provided further opportunities to harmonize curriculum, teacher management, and inclusive education approaches.

Somalia also strengthened its climate and disaster preparedness frameworks. Implementation of the Climate Change Policy, National Adaptation Programme of Action, and Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy provided a cohesive approach to managing recurrent shocks, particularly drought and flooding, and improved resilience in displacement-affected communities.

South Africa

South Africa is currently transitioning to a fully digital birth registration system to eliminate manual registrations, which pose challenges when documents are lost. The new digital platform aims to streamline and simplify the entire registration process. The National Identification Registration Bill sets out a framework for the digital registration of citizens and foreign nationals, including asylum-seekers and refugees.

To reduce the backlog of asylum application appeals, partnerships with UNHCR and the EU have been established and a surge approach launched in February 2025 has added 40 adjudicators to accelerate the processing of asylum appeals.

South Sudan

South Sudan continued efforts to build a more coherent, nationally led displacement response, guided by the Durable Solutions Strategy and Action Plan (2024–2028). Implementation of this framework supported reintegration, peacebuilding, and early recovery programming in areas of return. Education remained a high priority, with investments in infrastructure reaching more than 200 schools and ongoing teacher training and scholarship initiatives creating new opportunities for learners. Partnerships with tertiary institutions, including the Mastercard Foundation and UNHCR, expanded higher education access for refugee and host-community youth.

Livelihoods programming advanced through vocational training and the registration of agricultural cooperatives, supporting both market development and food security. These initiatives contributed to community resilience in an environment marked by conflict and climate shocks.

Progress in protection and legal identity was notable. South Sudan's accession to the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions represented a significant commitment to addressing statelessness. The extension of refugee ID validity to five years, with the possibility of overseas renewals, further strengthened administrative systems. The adoption of Civil Registration and National Identification Regulations supported improvements in documentation and identity management.

South Sudan also expanded climate adaptation initiatives, including tree planting, the adoption of clean cooking technologies, and the establishment of early warning systems. Inclusion of refugees, IDPs, and returnees in the 2025 Household Budget Survey marked another important step in strengthening data systems.

Sudan

Despite the ongoing conflict, Sudan maintained essential programming in health and education, particularly through regional partnerships. Participation in the regional non-communicable diseases (NCD) programme, jointly implemented by UNHCR and the World Diabetes Foundation, enabled improvements in chronic disease care, diagnostics, and provider training in refugee-hosting states. This programme strengthened local health systems at a time when health facilities were under severe strain.

Higher education opportunities remained accessible to some Sudanese students through distance-learning partnerships with the University of London and Arizona State University, providing continuity in learning despite the crisis. Sudan also remained engaged in IGAD's regional initiatives on displacement data, health surveillance, and cross-border solutions, sustaining collaboration even in a constrained operating environment.

Tanzania

Tanzania recorded important progress in nutrition, public health, and economic development through strong public–private collaborations. The partnership with Sanku/PHC expanded national food fortification capacity, with premix factories and testing laboratories operating across ten regions. These investments improved quality control, enhanced regulatory compliance, and ensured that fortified foods reached communities in need.

The fortification sector continued to generate skilled employment, highlighting the link between nutrition improvements and broader economic development. These developments contributed to better health outcomes in refugee-hosting regions and strengthened national systems for long-term disease prevention and resilience.

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, the Government of the Republic of Burundi, the European Union (EU), UNHCR, in collaboration with the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), and Icirore c' Amahoro (ICCA), launched in September 2024 a four-year project to strengthen the protection and resilience of Burundian refugees in Tanzania and returnees in Burundi.

Uganda

Uganda remained one of the region's frontrunners in refugee inclusion, demonstrating progress across government-led service delivery systems, documentation, livelihoods, climate adaptation, and WASH. A major achievement was the development of a national transition strategy designed to shift key sectors such as education, health, and WASH from humanitarian to government management. This transition is already visible in the growing number of government-run facilities and in the increased integration of refugee services into national systems.

Documentation efforts were sustained, with nearly 200,000 refugee children receiving birth certificates during the reporting period. Uganda also facilitated a wide range of durable solutions, including returns, resettlement, and complementary pathways, supporting more than 25,000 individuals.

Livelihoods programming continued to expand, generating more than 237,000 opportunities through job centres, vocational training, enterprise development, and green employment initiatives. Refugee-led organizations played an increasingly central role, particularly through the Live in Green network, which brought together eight RLOs to produce over 400,000 seedlings annually. This initiative aims to plant 1.5 million trees by 2027, strengthening environmental restoration while supporting livelihoods.

Education partners expanded accelerated education programmes and language bridging, while digital learning and teacher training improved quality and inclusiveness. Climate and energy programmes advanced through the implementation of SOLCO's e-cooking model in Bidibidi and expanded waste-to-value initiatives under SWEEP. Uganda also played a leading role in the EcoAdapt platform, promoting landscape restoration and integrated water–energy–food systems. Solarization of WASH systems continued, improving sustainability and reducing operational costs.

Zambia

Zambia launched the National Refugee Policy and its implementation plan in early 2024, providing a more progressive framework for refugee protection and self-reliance. Zambia issues Convention Travel Documents to refugees/former refugees and allows them to travel out of the country and return while retaining their status. This has facilitated access to the few overseas scholarships refugees can access.

Zambia stands out for its efforts to transition refugee settlements into economic hubs by granting refugees access to arable land, agricultural inputs, and local markets. This enables refugees to engage in farming and small businesses alongside host communities, improving self-reliance and social integration.

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Cover Photo: Ibtisam holds up her new digital ID card and the business license for her coffee shop in Addis Ababa. © UNHCR/Sona Dadi

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