

# The Global Compact on Refugees Three Years On:

Navigating barriers and maximising incentives in support of refugees and host countries



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Cover image: **Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement** – *Esther Mbabazi*

# Executive Summary

December 2021 will mark the third anniversary of the affirmation of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the second anniversary of the first Global Refugee Forum (GRF), and the first opportunity to take stock of progress measured against GCR objectives and GRF pledges at a High-Level Officials' Meeting (HLOM), scheduled to take place in Geneva in mid-December.

However, three years on, little is still known about the results, challenges, and opportunities from GCR implementation. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, new and re-emerging crises, and in some cases, a concerning trend of hardening of positions and negative rhetoric toward refugees and migrants in domestic politics are testing international support for refugees and the communities and countries that host them, as encapsulated in the GCR.

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC), International Rescue Committee (IRC), and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) commissioned this research in September and October 2021 to help fill this important accountability gap around GCR implementation. This qualitative report draws from 48 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and a complementary desk review, offering detailed analysis of how the GCR is influencing responses in three select host countries – Uganda, Colombia, and Bangladesh – and four key donors – the European Union (EU), United States (US), Germany, and Denmark. It also explores whether and the ways in which other states are supporting refugees in terms of financial, political, and other kinds of assistance.

against the GCR Indicator Framework developed in 2019, by providing a snapshot of changes in refugee policies and practices since the adoption of the GCR and the type of support still needed to facilitate access to durable solutions. While this report intentionally focuses on donor and host governments, DRC, IRC, and NRC recognise the importance of including countries or origin, as well as local and refugee voices in future research efforts of this kind.

## Key findings and implications

### *Operationalising responsibility-sharing*

- 1. The GCR does not seem to be considered in at least two of the major host countries under review in this study, calling into question the political will of the international community to ensure better and more predictable responses to**

**protracted displacement contexts.** While Uganda was an early implementer of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), a central part of the GCR, and has embraced the GCR as a tool to call for more predictable and equitable responsibility sharing, in the two other host countries researched for this report, Bangladesh and Colombia, GCR accountability remains lacking. Colombia has made significant progress in extending protection and assistance for the 1.7 million 'Venezuelans displaced abroad.'\* However, the Government of Colombia refers to people displaced from Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) as migrants, and the Government has not appeared to use the GCR objectives to frame their response, despite United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) guidance that the majority fleeing would at the least meet agreed upon definitions of who comprises 'refugees.' In Bangladesh, the Government has consistently not recognised the more than 742,000 Rohingya in Bangladesh as refugees, and the lack of effective incentives (financial and political) to operationalise the GCR has meant the GCR is never referred to, despite the Government's joining 180 other States in voting to affirm the GCR in December 2018.

- 2. Donor states often perceive the GCR as foreign policy, rather than a domestic responsibility. Donors often risk undermining the GCR by being constructive abroad but obstructive at home.** Many have argued the paradigm shift regarding refugee policies that has emerged was the result of the so-called refugee and migrant crisis in Europe from 2015 onwards. This framing of migration management is not just affecting donors' external actions, with the last few years seeing a hardening of rhetoric, policies, and political positioning across donor countries, but it is also weakening the asylum space within some countries. Elements of the new EU Migration and Asylum Pact, continued political deadlock on responsibility sharing within the EU, and Denmark's recent pursuit of the externalisation of asylum procedures illustrate the growing disconnect between strong donor support for the GCR alongside improved international responses to refugees and host communities abroad, and a different agenda at home, which frequently undermines the international protection regime.

### *Improving the quality and quantity of funding*

- 3. It remains unclear whether the GCR has supported increased and more predictable funding for refugees, host communities, and host countries, as well as greater medium to long-term development financing rather than short-term**

\* This is the term used by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to describe those fleeing the largest exodus in recent history in Latin America.

## The Global Compact on Refugees Three Years On:

Navigating barriers and maximising incentives in support of refugees and host countries

**humanitarian assistance.** GCR approaches require more - not less - funding when a combination of humanitarian, catalytic, transitional, and development financing is needed. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) preliminary findings for 2020 indicate that Official Development Assistance (ODA) rose by 3.5 percent in real terms compared to 2019, but these figures encompass more than solely funding to refugees and host countries, and therefore cannot confirm whether funding has increased for refugee situations. In 2021, refugee response plans in all three identified host countries remain chronically underfunded like previous years (between 34 and 44 percent funded per current reporting).

- 4. Development approaches and medium- to longer-term development financing are being more widely adopted, and key donors are supporting some promising 'nexus' approaches aligned with the GCR.** While the humanitarian-development-peace nexus is not new, this framing for the GCR has spurred increased engagement of the World Bank Group (WBG) and development cooperation from all four identified donors. Although the development financing agenda for some donors has been squarely framed in migration management terms, there is a need for new financing windows, instruments, and partnerships in host countries' refugee responses. With a development-oriented approach now a widely recognised norm, discourse needs to move from calling for development actors to engage, to holding them accountable for their role in providing long-term financing, to more effectively addressing the protracted nature of forced displacement.
- 5.** Among donors, the GCR/CRRF approach provides a useful basis for discussion of the implementation of nexus approaches, but pre-existing structural factors are impeding further progress and full accountability for supporting refugees and hosts. All donors researched stated that in refugee situations they are applying a nexus approach using both humanitarian funding and development cooperation. They mentioned that while conceptually the GCR logic is now part of their overall strategies toward forced displacement, further work is needed to ensure harmonisation and synchronisation of approaches leading to impact at scale and more predictable support to refugees, host countries, and host communities.

### *Creating enabling conditions for implementation of the GCR*

- 6. Most changes in refugee policy and practice in the last three years have been linked to local solutions.** For some host countries, implementing a GCR approach requires a significant shift in policies and practices to see refugees not as a burden and to fully realise their economic potential. At the 2019, GRF host countries made over 280 pledges

in relation to law- and policymaking, with many focusing on national inclusion and legal and policy frameworks in line with the GCR. There has also been some promising momentum around such shifts in approaches, including Colombia's continued efforts to support the regularisation of Venezuelan refugees and migrants and their access to protection, health and education services, and labour market opportunities. However, more needs to be done to take these pledges as the starting point and support coordinated multi-stakeholder support to move many of them toward implementation.

- 7. More focus and support on the 'how' of implementing GCR/CRRF approaches is needed.** Different stakeholders must work toward collective outcomes and support whole-of-government approaches. This requires a more nuanced political economy analysis of potential sensitivities in hosting refugees in specific host countries and more integrated multi-stakeholder engagement and commitment of humanitarian and development partners, including operational agencies and donors, to plan together and engage coherently through calibrated political dialogue, technical assistance, and financing to help shift incentives toward creating enabling legal and policy environments. Despite political goodwill, implementing the GCR in Uganda remains challenging, but it can offer key learnings that can be applied around CRRF architecture and inclusion of refugees into national development plans in other country contexts.
- 8. There are opportunities to apply the GCR more broadly, including developing creative solutions.** The research revealed that while there has been a strong level of engagement among governments with several of the key 'arrangements for responsibility-sharing' established by the GCR – most notably the GRF and the three Support Platforms for responses to displacement in Afghanistan, Central America, and the Horn of and East Africa – a number of the other 'arrangements' are yet to reach fruition. There is also the opportunity to further strengthen regional and sub-regional approaches in support of the Rohingya and Venezuelan displacement crises, in line with the objectives of Regional Support Platforms.
- 9. Although COVID-19 has played a major role in hampering refugee responses, there has been a decline, rather than an increase, in the availability of third country solutions since the GCR was affirmed.** One of the earliest and most visible impacts of the pandemic on refugees was the suspension of resettlement travel. Although resettlement travel resumed three months after the onset of the pandemic, the pandemic helped drive resettlement down in 2020 to its lowest level in almost two decades. In a year when 'The Three-Year Strategy (2019-2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways', developed under the auspices of the GCR, aimed to see 70,000 refugees

## The Global Compact on Refugees Three Years On:

Navigating barriers and maximising incentives in support of refugees and host countries

resettled through the UNHCR alone, just 22,770 people were resettled. While the United States' recent commitment to resettling up to 125,000 refugees in 2022 is auspicious, for resettlement to be a true demonstration of responsibility-sharing, resettlement numbers need to substantially increase and more states need to be involved.

- 10. Efforts to broaden the base of states engaging actively in the international refugee protection regime have not yet yielded results.** A key objective of the GCR is to engage more states in the international refugee protection regime, with the Compact noting that more equitable responsibility-sharing must involve widening the support base beyond those countries that have historically hosted and supported refugees. A multi-stakeholder strategy to achieve this objective should focus on aligning incentives for deeper engagement, including linking refugee protection to other core state interests, and expanding visibility for states who choose to engage, for example at global events such as the second GRF in 2023.

If there were a scorecard against GCR progress three years on, the international community collectively would not pass. While there are some significant examples of changes in policies and practices, such as the cemented role of development actors in refugee responses and the real ambition of host countries to implement a GCR approach, there is still work to be done.

This work is a collective responsibility. It requires the concerted effort of host countries, donors, and many states who are currently not contributing their fair share, both in terms of financing and resettlement. It also requires the support of humanitarian and development actors, including UNHCR and all relevant UN agencies, as well as NGOs like DRC, IRC, and NRC. Through this research, these NGOs recommit to not only playing their part in implementation in countries, but also to further policy development at the regional and national levels; and to hold themselves, but also states, to account.

## Key recommendations

1. The international community must show stronger support for the GCR as a whole and **urgently prioritise more equitable and predictable responsibility-sharing** towards refugees before the next GRF in 2023. Donor governments must intensify their political and diplomatic efforts to support responsibility-sharing pledges made at the 2019 GRF. Host states must take a more consistent approach to ensure the GCR is being applied in all refugee-hosting contexts.
2. Donor governments should take immediate steps to ensure responsibility-sharing towards refugees **beyond foreign policy and international financing**. Donor governments' GCR progress should also

be assessed against their role in upholding international refugee protection at home, including by safeguarding the asylum space and supporting third country solutions.

3. Existing resettlement targets globally are woefully insufficient, both substantively - to address massive protection needs - and symbolically - as a reasonable demonstration of solidarity and responsibility-sharing with countries that host the majority of refugees, even when accounting for COVID-19 setbacks. **As a priority for 2022, governments should commit to raise their resettlement targets. UN agencies and civil society must work together to hold states accountable against a further erosion of resettlement commitments.**
4. **OECD's collaboration with UNHCR on refugee-related financing flows should intensify** to provide more detailed annual data on overall levels of funding, humanitarian versus development financing, modalities, recipient countries, etc. Better data on these financial flows will lead to a deeper understanding of, and improved accountability for, the financing of refugee responses, including gaps.
5. **Development actors must play a larger and more predictable role in financing the response to protracted forced displacement contexts**, following the early groundwork laid by the World Bank and some key refugee donors. Other multilateral development banks in particular should provide much needed development financing to support host countries at the outset of refugee situations to incentivise refugee-friendly policies.
6. **Donors should take urgent steps to link their humanitarian and development sections and strategies** to facilitate greater coherence and deliver on the nexus approach. These efforts should include engaging in policy dialogues with host countries.
7. **UNHCR**, together with humanitarian and development partners and with funding from donors, **should focus more on implementing the GCR at the country level**. This includes funding sustained government technical capacity to lead GCR implementation and linking existing refugee responses to national development plans.
8. **UNHCR**, together with interested actors including states, international organisations, and civil society, **must undertake coordinated strategic initiatives to bring in a wider range of states** to support comprehensive refugee responses against which progress can be reported at the next GRF.

## The Global Compact on Refugees Three Years On:

Navigating barriers and maximising incentives in support of refugees and host countries

# Acronyms

Asylum Capacity Support Group	<b>ACSG</b>
Association for Southeast Asian Nations	<b>ASEAN</b>
Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration within the US Department of State	<b>PRM</b>
Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework	<b>CRRF</b>
Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework	<b>MIRRPS</b>
Danish Refugee Council	<b>DRC</b>
Development Assistance Committee	<b>DAC</b>
European Centre for Development Policy Management	<b>ECDPM</b>
European Union	<b>EU</b>
EU Directorate-General for International Partnerships	<b>INTPA</b>
EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department	<b>ECHO</b>
EU Trust Fund	<b>EUTF</b>
Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development	<b>BMZ</b>
German Federal Foreign Office	<b>GFFO</b>
Global Compact on Refugees	<b>GCR</b>
Global Refugee Forum	<b>GRF</b>
High Level Officials Meeting	<b>HLOM</b>
Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela	<b>R4V</b>
International Network on Conflict and Fragility	<b>INCAF</b>
International Organization for Migration	<b>IOM</b>
International Rescue Committee	<b>IRC</b>
International Development Association	<b>IDA</b>
Joint World Bank-UNHCR Data Center	<b>JDC</b>
Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument	<b>NDICI</b>
Norwegian Refugee Council	<b>NRC</b>
Official Development Assistance	<b>ODA</b>
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Refugee Status Determination	<b>RSD</b>
Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat	<b>ReDSS</b>
Regional Refugee and Migrant Plan	<b>RMRP</b>
Regional Sub-Window for Refugees and Host Communities	<b>RSW</b>
Special Stay Permit	<b>PEP</b>
Special Permit to Stay for the Promotion of Formalization	<b>PEP-FF</b>
Temporary Protection Status	<b>TPS</b>
United Nations	<b>UN</b>
United Nations General Assembly	<b>UNGA</b>
United Nations Refugee Agency	<b>UNHCR</b>
United States Agency for International Assistance	<b>USAID</b>
United States of America	<b>US</b>
Window for Host Communities and Refugees	<b>WHR</b>
World Bank Group	<b>WBG</b>

# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Acronyms</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>I. Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
Forced displacement in 2021	8
Research rationale	9
<b>II. Methodology</b>	<b>10</b>
Research logic	10
Methodology	10
Key limitations	11
<b>III. Has the Global Compact on Refugees become truly global in its application?</b>	<b>12</b>
Among donor states the GCR is often perceived as foreign policy related rather than also a domestic responsibility	14
<b>IV. Has the GCR led to more funding for refugees and host communities and the right type of financing for host countries?</b>	<b>16</b>
It is unclear if the GCR has supported increased and more predictable funding for refugees, host communities, and host countries	16
The need for development approaches and for medium to long-term development financing is more widely recognised	18
The GCR/CRRF approach is providing a useful basis for discussion of the implementation of nexus approaches	19
<b>V. Has the GCR supported better protection, inclusion, and solutions for refugees?</b>	<b>21</b>
Most changes in refugee policy and practice in the last three years are linked to local solutions	21
More focus and support on the ‘how’ of implementing GCR/CRRF approaches is therefore needed	22
There are opportunities to use the GCR more broadly, including developing creative solutions	23
Although COVID-19 has played a major role, there have been fewer third country solutions since the adoption of the GCR	24
Efforts to engage more states in the international refugee protection regime require greater progress	25
<b>VI. Conclusion and recommendations</b>	<b>26</b>
Conclusion	26
Recommendations	27
<b>References</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>32</b>

# I. Introduction

Providing refugees with protection and assistance, enhancing their self-reliance, and expanding access to durable solutions continues to outstrip available resources, challenges current refugee response approaches, and has been complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic. By the end of 2020, 82.4 million people were forcibly displaced, including 30.5 million refugees and asylum seekers and an additional 3.9 million Venezuelans displaced abroad who have not yet received asylum or refugee status but require international protection.<sup>1</sup>

The pandemic, protracted conflict, new and re-emerging crises, and in several cases, a concerning trend of hardening of positions and negative rhetoric toward refugees and migrants in domestic politics are testing momentum and the international support for refugees and the communities and countries that host them encapsulated in the 2018 [Global Compact on Refugees](#). The affirmation of the GCR marked a high point of global solidarity and commitment to better protect and support refugees and host communities, but three years on, the question of whether the GCR remains both a relevant and effective tool to meet its ambitious objectives remains.

## Forced displacement in 2021

Since 2018, the Syrian crisis has stretched into its tenth year, forced displacement from Venezuela has dramatically increased, millions of refugees remain in protracted displacement contexts across the Horn of and East Africa, and Rohingyas' displacement in Bangladesh and Myanmar will soon meet the UNHCR definition of a protracted displacement situation - among other worsening regional refugee situations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further complicated addressing refugees' protection, vulnerabilities, and needs. UNHCR warned that COVID-19 containment measures disproportionately affect refugees and forcibly displaced persons, pushing them deeper into poverty, reducing incomes and even permanently destroying prospects for livelihoods, further constricting their access to the labour market for those working in the informal economy, and constraining their ability to access durable solutions.<sup>2</sup> COVID-19 has also impacted their ability to flee war and persecution and reach safety, with arrivals of refugees and asylum seekers sharply down in most regions in 2020 (comparative figures are not yet available for 2021).<sup>3</sup>

The WBG has said that while global recovery from the pandemic has been strong, progress remains uneven, and for many developing and low-income countries where 86 percent of refugees live<sup>4</sup>, serious negative impacts will

persist into the next few years.<sup>5</sup> The pandemic could also have significant repercussions for levels of international financial assistance to support refugee responses by host countries in the medium term. While in 2020 the OECD noted that global ODA rose by 3.5 percent in real terms compared to 2019, this increase occurred in part because 2020 ODA budgets had already been adopted by the onset of the pandemic, enabling countries' accountability to previously made commitments.<sup>6</sup> However, the OECD noted that while traditionally ODA has been a stable source of development financing during financial crises, "...given the global economic impacts of the pandemic, it is uncertain if ODA volumes will continue to grow or remain stagnant in the coming years."<sup>7</sup>

## A new way of supporting refugees and host countries

The GCR represented a key opportunity to transform the way in which the international community responds to refugee situations. It built on the 2016 UNGA [New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](#) and the CRRF, an annex to the Declaration piloted in specific situations that experienced large-scale movements of refugees and protracted refugee situations. The CRRF forms an integral part of the GCR (Part II) with both the CRRF and GCR sharing the same objectives, namely to: (1) ease the pressure on host countries; (2) enhance refugee self-reliance; (3) expand access to third country solutions; and (4) support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

### *Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, December 2018<sup>8</sup>*

The [2018 UNGA] resolution underscores the importance of the global compact on refugees as a representation of political will and the ambition to operationalize the principle of burden- and responsibility-sharing, to mobilize the international community as a whole, and to galvanize action for an improve response to refugee situations.

The GCR set out a 'programme of action' for more equitable and predictable responsibility-sharing by United Nations (UN) member states and relevant stakeholders, recognising that solutions to displacement require international cooperation. Its primary purpose was to bring together different cohorts of states – including donor countries, host countries, and countries that have not historically contributed to refugee



## The Global Compact on Refugees Three Years On:

Navigating barriers and maximising incentives in support of refugees and host countries

responses in terms of hosting or financing – to commit to changes in refugee policy and practice and widen the support base.

### **Volker Türk, (former) Assistant High Commissioner (Protection) UNHCR, 2018<sup>9</sup>**

The new arrangements in the Global Compact on Refugees have the potential take us much further towards a more predictable response to refugee situations than we are today. They are robust, practicable, and implementable, and provide a solid basis from which to move forward. They represent the best that can be achieved in a document that aims to articulate, in effect, commitments for everyone, but which is at the same time voluntary and legally non-binding.

### **International Rescue Committee, June 2018<sup>10</sup>**

Committing to a multi-stakeholder process to define collective outcomes, targets, and indicators, and then holding each other accountable for them, will determine the success of the Global Compact in the long run.

DRC, IRC, and NRC commissioned this joint study to look at a cross-section of donor and host countries and help fill this important accountability gap. By looking at the actions taken by a subset of governments and a series of case studies across three regions (Horn of and East Africa, South America, and South Asia), important lessons can be documented and key recommendations drawn out for more effective refugee inclusion and protection. This qualitative piece of research is meant to provide more detailed analysis on how the GCR is influencing select host countries and key refugee donors. It is designed to complement the forthcoming first GCR Indicator Report produced by the UNHCR and built around the macro-level [indicator framework](#) agreed upon in 2019.

## Research rationale

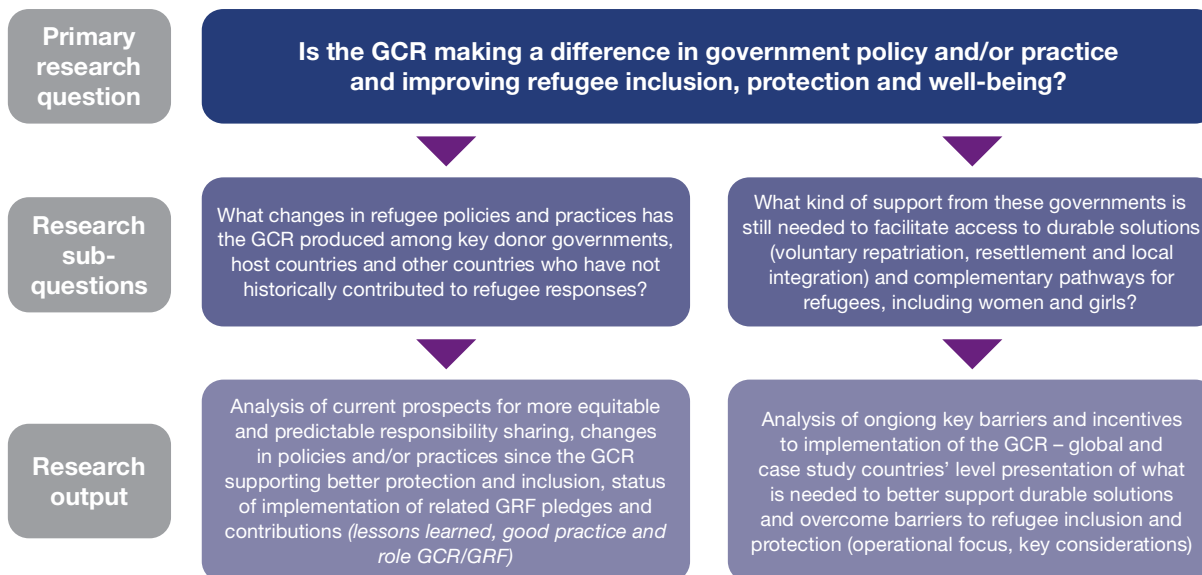
Since 2018, governments and other relevant stakeholders have committed to a variety of initiatives to implement the GCR, most notably at the first GRF organised by the UNHCR and six states in December 2019. Three years on, however, little is still known about the results, challenges, and opportunities of GCR implementation. Moreover, there is currently limited information available on how the GCR has impacted the range of durable solutions put in place by key states in their different roles as donors, hosts, or countries of origin. Therefore, governments, civil society, and other GCR stakeholders are currently unable to determine whether and how the GCR is making a difference in government policy or practice – and whether it is ultimately improving refugee inclusion, protection, and well-being.



Cucuta, Venezuela – Everardo Esquivel

## II. Methodology

### Research logic



In line with the GCR objectives of more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing for refugees, the research looked at different cohorts of states:

- **Key donors** – large refugee donors, namely the US, EU, Germany, and Denmark, given their focus on both humanitarian funding and development cooperation in forced displaced contexts and the design of durable solutions
- **Host countries** – Uganda (Horn of and East Africa), Colombia (Latin America), and Bangladesh (Asia) to enable comparison across regions but also different displacement contexts and refugee policy landscapes in terms of GCR relevance and implementation
- **“Other” member states** – broadly defined as support to refugee responses (i.e., USD \$20 million or more per year in previous funding years) nor currently hosting large numbers of refugees (i.e., usually 300,000 or more)

### Methodology

In addition to global and country-specific desk reviews, targeted KIs also informed qualitative primary research. In total 48 KIs (with 60 persons) were conducted at the global, regional, and country level, broken down broadly by:

- Government officials from both donor agencies and host countries (11)
- Humanitarian and development agencies including the UNHCR and WBG (9)
- Civil society organisations at the global, regional, and country level (24)
- Researchers and academics (4)

## The Global Compact on Refugees Three Years On:

Navigating barriers and maximising incentives in support of refugees and host countries

### Key limitations

A key constraint was the identification of and timely access to the most relevant stakeholders, particularly government officials. Where there are gaps in primary data for this research this is noted and supplemented with desk review information. This limitation is most relevant for research on countries that have not historically contributed to refugee responses, where a lack of existing networks within the government hindered timely access. For these contexts, only desk review analysis was used. A longer-term and more dedicated piece of research led by UNHCR, in coordination with civil society stakeholders around broadening the support base, would be timely ahead of the next GRF in 2023.

The research did not include countries of origin, despite their importance both in terms of addressing root causes of displacement and the GCR objective linked to supporting conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity, given that the report focuses on changes in refugee policies and practices. More targeted regional and/or displacement situation specific research on GCR implementation would be worthwhile, with the role of both countries of origin and hosting countries analysed from a solutions agenda.

While the focus of the research was on governments, humanitarian and development partners - as well as broader civil society at the global, regional, and country level - were engaged to get their perspectives on research questions. The research did not include engagement with local civil society actors and refugee and host communities themselves, given the target of governments. Their perspectives and important voice, particularly when discussing the impact of changes in refugee policy and practice, should be included in follow-up regional and country research on GCR implementation.



Bogota, Colombia – IRC

### III. Has the Global Compact on Refugees become truly global in its application?

The logic underlying the GCR is both simple and appealing: By enhancing international cooperation with a view of “a more equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world’s refugees”<sup>11</sup>, the international community can support the countries and communities hosting large numbers of them (most notably in the Global South) in a manner that also expands the protection space and advances the search for solutions.<sup>12</sup>

As a non-binding international framework, equal application and influencing of the GCR across host countries cannot be assumed. Such requires a deep knowledge and understanding of the GCR by relevant authorities and buy-in from humanitarian and development partners to use the GCR as a tool to engage with governments and donors. While Uganda was an early implementer of the CRRF approaches and has embraced the GCR as a tool to call for more equitable responsibility sharing, the two other host countries researched for this report have not made as much progress in terms of GCR application.

#### Colombia and the Venezuelan forced displacement crisis

The displacement of Venezuelans represents the largest exodus in the recent history of Latin America, starting in 2015 but increasing significantly in scale and complexity since the GCR was affirmed in 2018. In August 2021, the UN estimated that there were 5.7 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants worldwide, of which 4.6 million lived in the region alone.<sup>13</sup>

#### Are displaced Venezuelans considered refugees?

UNHCR uses the phrase “Venezuelans displaced abroad” to refer to this particular population, stating that it applies “to persons of Venezuelan origin who are likely to be in need of international protection under the criteria contained in the Cartagena Declaration, but who have not applied for asylum in the country in which they are present. Regardless of status, Venezuelans displaced abroad require protection against forced returns, and access to basic services”<sup>14</sup>.

UNHCR noted in its latest ‘Guidance Note on International Protection Considerations for Venezuelans’ that “for a number of profiles, international protection considerations are likely to arise under the 1951 Refugee Convention/1967 Protocol and further considers that the majority of Venezuelan nationals are in need of international protection under the criteria contained in the Cartagena Declaration”<sup>15</sup> due to events in Venezuela.

The 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, adopted by the Colloquium on the International Protection of Refugees in Central America, Mexico, and Panama, offers an expanded refugee definition, which includes “refugees persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalised violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order”<sup>16</sup>.

Colombia is the largest host country among Venezuela’s neighbours, hosting 1.72 million displaced Venezuelans, and the second largest host country in the world behind Turkey.<sup>17</sup> The Government of Colombia has framed its approach to displaced Venezuelans as one of solidarity given the history of displacement of Colombians to Venezuela (Venezuela currently hosts 845,000 Colombian and binational returnees<sup>18</sup>). It is also seen as a pragmatic approach given the sheer scale of displacement and irregular movement into the country.

Colombia has made significant progress in recognising displaced Venezuelans as in need of international protection, assistance, and access to services, particularly given its being a country with limited experience as a host and one that is still grappling with significant internal displacement.<sup>19</sup> However, it refers to Venezuelans as “migrants,” and interviewees noted that to date

## The Global Compact on Refugees Three Years On:

Navigating barriers and maximising incentives in support of refugees and host countries

authorities have not taken significant steps to boost their asylum capacity and refugee status determination (RSD) procedures with just over 770 Venezuelans in Colombia registered as refugees and 20,000 as asylum seekers, according to UNHCR statistics.<sup>20</sup>

This could be one reason why in interviews carried out for this research, the GCR was not mentioned as having informed the framing of the current response. Instead, UNHCR and International Organization for Migration (IOM) are working together with authorities and humanitarian partners to support Colombia, prioritising interventions to address humanitarian needs, barriers to integration, and reduce protection risks.<sup>21</sup> “Good practice” submitted in relation to the GCR included bridging the humanitarian and development divide through the provision of direct emergency assistance, while in parallel working toward increasing refugees’ labour market access and self-reliance.<sup>22</sup>

On the one hand the need for the GCR to dialogue with regions’ contexts and existing systems to build on them and tailor actions, and, on the other hand, the role the GCR can play in aiding the improvement of refugee protection, i.e., showing that a bidirectional pathway is needed for enhancing refugee protection from the GCR, by assessing how existing regimes can assist it, but also how it can benefit from existing structures.<sup>23</sup>

Given the framing by Venezuela itself, as well as Colombia and other countries proximal to Venezuelan displacement in migration management terms, it would also be interesting to explore further how the GCR and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration could intersect and work together to ensure better protection, responses, and solutions, given their common focus on the need for more predictable and comprehensive responses.

## Bangladesh and the plight of the Rohingya

The Rohingya situation in Bangladesh is another example of the kind of displacement context for which the GCR was designed - that is, “large-scale refugee movement”<sup>24</sup> into a lower- to middle-income country “facing [its] own economic and development challenges”<sup>25</sup>. When violence in Myanmar in the summer of 2017 forced more than 740,000 Rohingya to flee,<sup>26</sup> Bangladesh, in line with future GCR principles, “[went] to great lengths to scale up arrangements to receive them”<sup>27</sup> and committed in writing to respect “the cardinal principle of non-refoulement”.<sup>28</sup> However, although the Government of Bangladesh supported the development of the GCR, voted for, and welcomed its affirmation, interviews and desk research

conducted for this report indicated that the Compact is not being fully applied in response to Rohingya displacement in Bangladesh<sup>29</sup>

### *Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, September 2018<sup>30</sup>*

The Compact on Refugees has been adopted at a time when the world is faced with swelling refugee crises. Innocent people from various conflict-torn countries are leaving their homes for safety and security while many countries like Bangladesh are giving them shelter, protection, and hope. Most of these refugee-hosting countries are developing countries with their own set of challenges. Yet they respond to the call of humanity. The world must recognize their contribution and help those countries shoulder the burden. The world leaders must come forward with political will and commitment.

The challenges begin with the fact that Bangladesh – as a non-signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol – does not recognize the Rohingya as refugees, and instead refers to them as “Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals”. The GCR also appears to have little ground for application presently in Bangladesh because of a lack of a conducive political environment, particularly in relation to the enhancement of refugee self-reliance (GCR Objective II).

Instead, the Government of Bangladesh has emphasised that its priority is the fourth GCR objective, namely the establishment of conditions in countries of origin that would enable the return of refugees in safety and dignity. As the Prime Minister recently told the UN, the government’s “topmost priority is to ensure sustainable repatriation, and we must invest all our efforts towards that end”.<sup>31</sup>

As a result, the Government repeatedly emphasises the humanitarian but fundamentally temporary nature of their receiving Rohingya refugees. To this end, policies and programmes seeking to provide or promote education, livelihood opportunities, and/or integration of the Rohingya refugees into the host community in Cox’s Bazar are limited, as is the construction of permanent or semi-permanent structures.<sup>32</sup> The shrinking humanitarian space has limited responses that can sustainably support refugees. A particular source of tension with humanitarian actors is the Government’s plan - which is already well under way - to relocate 100,000 Rohingya refugees to the previously uninhabited island of Bhasan Char, which many fear has insufficient facilities and protection against storms and flooding. Some 18,500 refugees are already on the island, having been relocated by the Government in late 2020 and early 2021.

## The Global Compact on Refugees Three Years On:

Navigating barriers and maximising incentives in support of refugees and host countries

Interviews revealed that because of this positioning, other actors involved in the response – including UNHCR, other UN entities, donor representatives, and civil society organisations – rarely (if ever) use the GCR as a framework for their activities or advocacy in their response to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. The current Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya situation, for example, makes no mention of the Compact,<sup>33</sup> and there is little discussion of the GCR within humanitarian coordination fora. The current lack of effective incentives (financial and political) is widely acknowledged as impacting engagement with the Government of Bangladesh and pursuing a strategy that would encourage “the achievement of [the GCR] objectives on equal footing”<sup>34</sup> for the Rohingya response. More broadly a lack of responsibility-sharing for the Rohingya crisis and regional perspective, for example, among the Association for Southeast Asian States (ASEAN) is exacerbating the challenge around how the GCR could support easing the responsibility on Bangladesh as a host country.

Despite this, several organisations have made some progress in advancing a Compact-like agenda by linking Rohingya self-reliance to the sustainability of return, once conditions in Myanmar allow it. Considerable headway was made, for example, in ensuring access to formal education in January 2020 when – following coordinated advocacy by states, the UN, and civil society – the Government of Bangladesh granted permission for teaching in accordance with the curriculum of Myanmar.<sup>35</sup>

## Among donor states the GCR is often perceived as foreign policy related rather than also a domestic responsibility

As with most international policy processes, state engagement with the development of the GCR was largely led by ministries of foreign affairs and in some donor states, by international development agencies. The GCR, however, touches upon the work of a wide range of government departments and agencies, and research conducted for this report revealed the extent to which the job of mainstreaming the GCR across all relevant government departments requires further attention.

### *Gillian Triggs, UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection*<sup>36</sup>

When [the Global Compact on Refugees] speaks of the international community’s ‘solidarity with refugees’, this is in no way limited to refugees who form part of large refugee situations, or who are hosted in low- or middle-income countries. Whilst it is true that developed States are encouraged to support the quality of protection in the developing world, there are many provisions of the Compact that apply equally within their own borders... **Indeed, there is no better way for States to demonstrate commitment to the principles of the Global Compact than to implement them domestically.**

Many have argued that the paradigm shift that has emerged in terms of refugee policies, as encapsulated in the GCR, was the result of political priorities arising from the so-called refugee and migrant crisis in Europe from 2015 onward.<sup>37</sup> This research has found that migration management continues to be a driving framing for many key refugee donors in terms of funding priorities, recipient countries, and their engagement with host country governments, particularly regarding development cooperation strategies. The last few years have seen a hardening of rhetoric, policies, and political positions, as well as a weakening of the asylum space for some countries domestically.

The EU has seen the development of the Migration and Asylum Pact published in September 2020, which aims to establish a predictable EU-wide mechanism to deal with migration and responsibility sharing. The new Pact is a combination of multiple migration policy initiatives and partnership agreements launched by the EU over the past few years, which were developed in a context of strong rhetoric around unmanageable movements and unprecedented crises. While some aspects of the Pact are welcomed in terms of a more common, predictable, and reliable migration mechanism, NRC has pointed to concerns that the Pact gives insufficient guarantees that the rights and dignities of people on the move are respected and protected, with its focus on efficient and fast asylum procedures (and swift return procedures as appropriate).<sup>38</sup> There is also concern with its emphasis on reinforced border and migration management and promotion of returns as the preferred durable solution, while the Pact mainly focuses on the deterrence of migration.

## The Global Compact on Refugees Three Years On:

Navigating barriers and maximising incentives in support of refugees and host countries

### *Global Asylum Governance and the European Union's Role (ASILE) Project, June 2021*<sup>39</sup>

The EU is a crucial actor in this regard, not only because its Member States host many asylum seekers and refugees, but also because its asylum policies are widely emulated internationally and can thus be expected to have a global impact. Moreover, the EU plays a key role in international processes that seek to leverage better protection for refugees in the main host states outside the EU.

The EU played a key role in the negotiation and affirmation of the GCR in 2018 and is supporting its implementation not just in terms of financing but also process, including within various GCR linked Regional Support Platforms. Yet it seems that the GCR is often perceived as a foreign policy engagement tool rather than part of a country's domestic responsibilities. As one interviewee said, "How can we be constructive abroad while obstructive at home?". The actions taken by some UN member states undermining international refugee protection also erode confidence in the GCR more broadly and reinforce previous critiques that the 'responsibility-sharing' at the heart of the GCR and its approach to 'easing pressure' on countries that welcome and host refugees "largely comes down to a simple bargain between refugee hosting states and donor countries: 'You host, we fund'".<sup>40</sup>

### Denmark's externalisation policy

Denmark has long been considered a 'good' refugee donor with its deeply embedded approach to the humanitarian-development nexus and its strong focus on durable solutions, illustrated by its many pledges at the first GRF in December 2019.<sup>41</sup> In its most recent development cooperation strategy, 'The World We Share: Climate, Fragility, Human Rights at the Forefront', Denmark committed to prevent and fight poverty and inequality, conflict, and displacement.<sup>42</sup>

It remains one of the largest refugee donors to UNHCR, providing unearmarked funds and working with Danish civil society, among others, to support GCR implementation in many contexts. While Denmark remains a committed GCR donor, it is also actively pursuing a policy of externalisation of asylum procedures.

During its GRF pledge, Denmark committed to "substantial initiatives in support of better solutions, for vulnerable refugees, for women and girls, and for the young generation that are agents of change for a better future"<sup>43</sup>. However, it also pledged to "strengthen asylum capacity along migratory routes and in regions of origin" and challenged the need to "consider alternative solutions such as reception centres and asylum capacity along routes"<sup>44</sup>. Since that time, Denmark has actively worked toward an externalisation of its asylum procedures, justifying the response in terms of the need for a more fair and humane approach to asylum that protects people from traffickers.

In June 2021, the Danish Parliament passed a bill that opens the possibility to transfer asylum seekers and refugees to a third country, although its exact implementation remains unclear. DRC has noted, "It is also still very unclear how a possible reception center in a third country would be administered, in light of including Denmark's legal responsibility for safeguarding the rights of asylum seekers and refugees and ensuring their protection. It has also been one of our main concerns regarding the bill, which has now unfortunately been passed without adequate consideration".<sup>45</sup>



Jan Grarup / DRC

# IV. Has the GCR led to more funding for refugees and host communities and the right type of financing for host countries?

The GCR objectives of easing pressure on host countries and enhancing refugees' self-reliance requires more - not less - funding in the short and medium term when a combination of humanitarian, catalytic, transitional, and development financing is required.<sup>46</sup> For host countries it requires financing not just to be predictable and of scale, but also the right type to incentivise CRRF approaches in terms of promoting inclusion and protection and supporting reforms in the medium to longer term through sustained financial engagement.

Yet, the GCR does not contain a concrete mechanism to ensure additional or more predictable development funding, relying instead on voluntary contributions and processes like the GRF to secure concrete pledges and contributions toward the objectives of the Compact. Earlier text proposing more ambitious mechanisms to ensure states' responsibility-sharing was removed during the drafting process.<sup>47</sup>

## It is unclear if the GCR has supported increased and more predictable funding for refugees, host communities, and host countries

Answering the question of whether there is now more funding for refugees, host communities, and host countries is extremely difficult and a central focus of the forthcoming first GCR Indicator Report under Outcome 1.<sup>48</sup>

Mostly financed through humanitarian funding streams, refugee responses remain chronically underfunded. For example, in 2020 UNHCR reported its own budget needs as a gap of more than USD \$9.13 billion to respond to the populations it serves, yet the agency only received 58 percent of these funds by the end of the year.<sup>49</sup> UNHCR noted that this trend has continued in 2021, having received, for example, by August, only 33 percent of necessary funding for its COVID-19 emergency response.<sup>50</sup>

In terms of broader refugee response plans developed by UNHCR with other UN agencies, civil society, and governments, response plans remain similarly underfunded in 2021 and span both protracted and emergency crises. Across the three selected host countries, funding against these plans remains bleak, with Bangladesh having received 34 percent of necessary funding,<sup>51</sup> Uganda 36 percent<sup>52</sup> and Colombia 44 percent,<sup>53</sup> as of the latest available reporting.

Another reason for caution is global Overseas Development Assistance (ODA), which comprises financing flows to countries on the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list of ODA recipients and multilateral development institutions. OECD's preliminary findings for 2020 indicated that ODA rose by 3.5 percent in real terms compared to 2019 to an all-time high<sup>54</sup> (complete reporting and preliminary findings for 2021 are not yet available). ODA levels had previously decreased by 1.2 percent between 2018 and 2019.<sup>55</sup>

Overall, ODA figures encompass more than financing to refugees and host countries, and therefore make it impossible to determine whether funding has increased, stagnated, or even worsened for refugee situations. A previous survey conducted by OECD between 2015 and 2017 indicated that donors are using - and will continue to use - ODA to support the world's refugees<sup>56</sup> with the proportion of ODA estimated to involve refugees steadily increasing from 1% to 4% over the last decade<sup>57</sup>. There has also been for some time concern that ODA figures for refugee responses are not always indicative of the real value of overseas support with "in-donor refugee costs" counted as part of individual countries ODA support to refugees (despite 2017 OECD guidance that clarified and limited costs which could be counted in terms of when ODA can be spent domestically to support refugee arrivals<sup>58</sup>).

At the first GRF in December 2019, 250 of the 1,400 pledges and commitments made included financial commitments.<sup>59</sup> However, it is difficult to say whether of the USD \$2 billion announced by states and other international actors, what proportion comprised new and additional funding sources or already existing commitments.<sup>60</sup>

In interviews with key refugee donors of the US, EU, Germany, and Denmark, none mentioned the likelihood of additional funding for refugee responses in the near future, but highlighted a focus on ensuring that their current commitments in humanitarian funding and development cooperation are sustained in the coming years.



## The Global Compact on Refugees Three Years On:

Navigating barriers and maximising incentives in support of refugees and host countries

### Uganda's lack of predictable funding

Uganda's progressive refugee policies have long been applauded, including its approach to safeguarding refugees' right to work and freedom of movement, despite hosting a large number of refugees for considerable periods of time; it is currently the largest host country in Africa.<sup>61</sup> This is also despite the OECD's classification of Uganda as a low-income and least developed host country.<sup>62</sup>

A fundamental challenge remains levels of funding against Uganda's ambitious integrated sector response plans developed under its comprehensive CRRF approach. The Government of Uganda continues to raise serious concerns that the funding is not of the scale and predictability required to allow them to both plan for and implement a response, such as the inclusion of refugees into national health systems.

OECD found that between 2015 and 2017, USD \$777 million was allocated to refugee and host community programs, but between 81 to 87 percent was spent on short-term project-style interventions.<sup>63</sup> Early 2019 research suggested that the extension of sector response plans does not appear to have fundamentally altered the funding picture in terms of new financing, with the focus still on humanitarian funding and its often one-year funding cycles.<sup>64</sup>

Another significant problem identified across all interviews on Uganda was whether responses were "on or off plan," i.e., whether funding was responding to government-identified priorities, as well as the lack of effective aid tracking, particularly on development cooperation, to be able to track levels of refugee response funding that flowing into the country and for which outcomes.

The question of "on or off budget," i.e., whether funds were being provided directly to the government or through partners, was also frequently identified as a key source of tension. This goes to the heart of the GCR approach and a fundamental challenge around the ability of financing to incentivise coherent CRRF responses in host countries. As noted by the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) in recent research on displacement financing architecture in the Horn of Africa region more broadly, "Financing for solutions to displacement still flows largely outside of government financial systems. This limits scope to building financing packages and agreements calibrated to incentivise and support government-led solutions"<sup>65</sup>. Despite challenges and obstacles, multilateral development banks like the WBG and development partners with experience implementing large grants with governments have considerable tools to support direct budget support implementation models, if the political will exists from the international community to find a way forward while appropriately managing the risks.

### Colombia's responsibility-sharing

Another hallmark of Colombia's response is its chronic underfunding and its description as one of the most neglected crises in the world. As of October 2021, the Colombia Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) is 44 percent funded with some USD \$279 million out of the requested USD \$641 million received.<sup>66</sup> The 2019 and 2020 plans were similarly underfunded with just 52 and 42 percent of funds received respectively.<sup>67</sup> While a breakdown is not available at the country level, at the regional level the US government is by far the largest donor, providing USD \$408 million (or 81 percent of funding received to date in 2021).<sup>68</sup> Other reported funding received per R4V tracking from smaller donors includes Sweden (USD \$12 million), EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO at USD \$11 million), Germany (USD \$5 million) and Canada (USD \$4 million).

However, at the International Donors' Conference in Solidarity with Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants in June 2021, international donors pledged a total of USD \$1.5 billion in regional funding, including USD \$954 million in grants and USD \$600 million in loans toward the regional response.<sup>69</sup> End-of-year funding updates will provide a better snapshot as to how much of the pledges entailed new funding and whether more international donors are now responding at scale. Importantly, there appears to be growing engagement from the WBG and Inter-American Bank in supporting regional engagement and development approaches to forced displacement.

The Brookings Institute has shown the situation more bluntly in terms of both a critical lack of funding for the response plans and scale of the response in comparison to Syrian refugees (given the similarity in displacement figures and trends over time). They note that for Syrians at the end of 2020 there has been USD \$20.8 billion of funding since the beginning of the crisis, compared to USD \$1.4 billion for Venezuelans.<sup>70</sup> At the end of 2020, total funding per refugee amounted to USD \$3,150 per Syrian compared to USD \$265 per Venezuelan. They note that even if the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) was fully funded this year, the total amount of funding for the Venezuelan crisis would reach USD \$3 billion, translating to USD \$600 per person.

Given the absence of sufficient funding, Colombian authorities must find the resources putting financial strains on local and state governments that are already struggling to support vulnerable Colombians, given compounding impacts of COVID-19 resulting in a parallel socio-economic crisis. It also leads to further movement of people within and between hosting states in the region as they seek better assistance and services to meet their basic needs.

# The need for development approaches and for medium to long-term development financing is more widely recognised

While it is difficult to determine whether the GCR itself has led to more funding for refugees and host communities, the need for engagement of development actors in forced displacement contexts is now widely recognised, and the four donors researched are engaging on forced displacement, both in terms of humanitarian and development financing approaches.

The humanitarian-development-peace nexus is not new, but the framing of the GCR with this language has spurred increased engagement of development financing partners, including the WBG, in refugee settings. In this regard, Denmark stands out as a donor due to its commitment to development approaches in forced displacement contexts and significant GRF pledges toward the solutions agenda. Its new strategy for development cooperation, “The World We Share: Denmark’s strategy for development cooperation,” outlines its commitment to addressing forced displacement through a development lens.<sup>71</sup>

The adoption of the OECD’s 2019 DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus<sup>72</sup> in developing countries and the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) Common Position, on supporting comprehensive responses in refugee situations,<sup>73</sup> in 2019 furthered this trend toward the adoption of nexus approaches.

While on the one hand the development financing agenda for some donors has been squarely framed in migration management terms, on the other hand GCR stakeholders must acknowledge the much-needed engagement of development financing partners in some refugee response and host countries, and the many new financing windows, instruments, and partnerships.<sup>74</sup> This is a huge step forward from when responses to displacement were overwhelmingly financed from humanitarian funding budgets on an ad-hoc and short-term basis in 2017 (72 percent of all funding was humanitarian funding, and 50 percent was over a period of one year or less).<sup>75</sup> The OECD will be releasing its updated report on funding for refugee responses in December 2021, shedding light on any shifts in the percentage of refugee responses funded by humanitarian versus development financing.

## World Bank IDA funding

Since 2016, the WBG has engaged more in forced displacement contexts. The International Development Association (IDA) – the World Bank’s fund for the poorest countries – IDA18 replenishment (2017 to 2020) introduced a new ‘Regional Sub-Window for Refugees and Host Communities’ (RSW) and dispersed some additional USD \$1.85 billion across 14 host countries in Africa (60 percent of total IDA18 RSW funds), South Asia (39 percent) and the Middle East North Africa region (1 percent).<sup>76</sup> It was dedicated to helping low-income countries hosting large numbers of refugees and supported the WBG in tripling its resources to refugees and host communities during these four years.<sup>77</sup>

At the first GRF, the Bank confirmed an additional USD \$2.2 billion under IDA19 (2021 to 2024) and the renamed ‘Window for Host Communities and Refugees’ (WHR).<sup>78</sup> This funding is similarly dedicated to countries that host refugee populations. It now includes a dedicated sub-window of USD \$1 billion for operations that respond to the impacts of COVID-19. In addition, the WBG committed a separate USD \$2.5 billion to boost the private sector and create jobs in countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence, including refugee-hosting countries. It has also invested in the GCR process and its partnership with UNHCR, such as through the Joint WB-UNHCR Center (JDC) for Forced Displacement.

The WBG aims to use its support to build inclusive systems to address the needs of both refugees and host communities and to help host countries incorporate long-term development strategies and ‘whole-of-government’ approaches into refugee support programs.

In IDA18 the Bank noted:

*The sub-window underpins the development approach to forced displacement, supporting commitments by host governments to enact policy change and address the social and economic dimensions of refugee situations. Funds are provided on more favorable terms for medium-term investments that benefit both refugees and host communities.*<sup>79</sup>

While in IDA19 the framing was amended to:

*The WHR is neutral as to sector and instrument – it supports all kinds of operations in eligible countries that create meaningful longer-term development opportunities for refugees and hosts. A key element of creating these development opportunities involves improving the policy and institutional environment for refugees in the host country, so all projects are expected to demonstrate policy content.*<sup>80</sup>

The revised language for the current IDA approach could, in part, be reflective of learnings by the WBG on the need to be clearer on the outlook for its engagement, i.e., in the medium to long-term, and that while substantive additional financing can support a more enabling policy environment, this requires sustained political and financing engagement, given political sensitivities, as well as concerted multi-stakeholder and calibrated engagement from all partners.

The WBG has committed that by the IDA19 mid-term review (2022), IDA will conduct a systematic review of refugee policy and institutional environments in countries eligible for the WHR.<sup>81</sup>

## The Global Compact on Refugees Three Years On:

Navigating barriers and maximising incentives in support of refugees and host countries

With the now widely recognised need for a development-oriented approach, calls for development actors to engage must move toward calls to hold them accountable for their role in long-term financing to address the protracted nature of forced displacement situations. While it may be difficult to measure impact, the focus should be on sharing learnings, recognising the need for principled and flexible approaches, coordinating with other actors, and influencing those who are not there yet.

This includes learning from where developmental approaches do not offer the same incentives for better practice as in other refugee hosting situations. In Bangladesh, for example, there is scepticism around nexus approaches and concern that the increasing involvement of development actors in the Rohingya response would signal and/or facilitate a longer-term stay in Bangladesh for the Rohingya. Despite research outlining areas in which development programming could build resilience among Rohingya refugees and the low-income host communities in Cox's Bazar,<sup>82</sup> such approaches have, to date, had little traction with the national government. Development partners need to continue to engage constructively with refugee-hosting governments to consider how best to engage and calibrate their responses to the specific host country situation.

## The GCR/CRRF approach is providing a useful basis for discussion of the implementation of nexus approaches

Interviewees from all four focus donors indicated that in refugee situations, they are applying the 'nexus approach' using their humanitarian funding, development funding, and sometimes additional stabilisation (peacebuilding) financing. Officials interviewed mentioned that while conceptually the GCR is now part of their overall strategies toward forced displacement, further work is needed to ensure harmonisation and synchronisation of approaches leading to broader impact and more predictable support to refugees, host countries, and host communities.

Barriers include: (1) the division of roles and mandates across different donor agencies between humanitarian and development portfolios<sup>83</sup>; (2) different funding sources and in some cases internal earmarking that makes development cooperation less flexible and more politicised including around framing in migration management terms; (3) lack of alignment of timeframes and planning between shorter humanitarian funding cycles (often one year) and longer-term development

cooperation (between four to seven years for the four donor countries interviewed); and (4) institutional changes necessary to fully embrace the nexus approach through stronger internal coordination architecture, shared strategic frameworks and policies, and in some cases, changed mindsets around roles and responsibilities.

### The US's trial with nexus approaches in refugee settings

In the US, institutional structures that have been in place for decades have struggled to bridge the humanitarian-development divide. The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) within the State Department, for example, is the overall lead on refugees within the US government and understands refugee protection. However, its leverage to incentivise protection globally – though considerable – is limited by the fact that the bureau focuses on humanitarian assistance and funding predominantly to intergovernmental organisations, including the UN and to a lesser extent NGOs. USAID, on the other hand, may be in a better position to use its development cooperation investments to support longer-term approaches to refugees and host communities including incentivising policies supporting refugee protection in host countries, but further work is needed to better define this role and ensure coordination between the two agencies. Other constraints, including funding limitations imposed by Congress for USAID, which earmarks funds by themes, regions, countries, and different planning horizons, further complicate the picture. An interagency Relief-Development Coherence Working Group has made some progress in promoting a coherent approach, but an institutional approach to development cooperation in forced displacement contexts was described as 'a work in progress' that would require more buy-in from senior management. The GCR was described, however, as giving a strong impetus and framework for such discussions into the future building on the progress made at country level in terms of increased coordination across different US government agencies for refugee responses.

Germany also struggles with similar institutional structures across the Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), with its humanitarian assistance portfolio focussed on emergency assistance (shelter, food, and basic needs) and healthcare, and the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), which focuses on economic development. Interviewees noted that Denmark, despite its long-standing promotion of nexus approaches in forced displacement contexts, is still trying to see how to support more flexibility in development cooperation to ensure that it can calibrate its four-year country level strategies to changes in the – refugee-hosting environment.

## The Global Compact on Refugees Three Years On:

Navigating barriers and maximising incentives in support of refugees and host countries

### Next steps for EU development cooperation

Framed by the Syrian crisis in terms of migration management, the European Commission (EC) was an early advocate of the need for development-oriented approaches to forced displacement. Its 2016 communication, 'Lives in Dignity from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance', called for a new approach to prevent refugees from having to rely on humanitarian assistance and promoted ways to help them become more self-reliant in countries where they reside.<sup>84</sup> The EC brought this approach to their engagement with the development of the GCR.

Since 2018, the EU appears to have gone further than other donors researched in trying to build cross-institutional structures to implement a nexus approach to forced displacement through coherent inter-directorate working groups, common reporting frameworks on GRF pledges, and explicit directives to EU delegations at the field level of how to program using CRRF approaches.

One of the key vehicles to promote a nexus approach was the use of different trust funds, including the European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) to address the root causes of irregular migration and displacement in Africa. Set to close in 2021, the EUTF has funded over 500 projects in more than 25 countries with a total of EUR 4.8 billion committed since 2016.<sup>85</sup> The EUTF has been controversial due to its upfront focus on migration management, though more nuanced in terms of implementation with a large share of funding going more broadly to resilience and solutions programming for displaced populations. While the EU regularly published regular from the EUTF, interviewees noted that the fund needed more than five years to adequately test how a well-resourced and dedicated forced displacement development funding stream could support 'easing the burden' on host countries and promoting refugee self-reliance and inclusion.

Instead, in March 2021 the EU adopted a single unified instrument for development cooperation – the Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) or "Global Europe". Operating on a seven-year planning cycle the current 2021 to 2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF) has EUR 79.46 billion for cooperation with third countries.<sup>86</sup> Analysis by European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) suggested that the proportion of the budget dedicated to development assistance had slightly increased by 3 percent, compared to previous 2014 to 2020 budgets (excluding an EUTF funding).<sup>87</sup>

Migration is one of the five themes for the NDICI with significant advocacy reportedly needed to ensure that in relevant documents this was broadened and framed in both migration and forced displacement language. There is a global spending target of 10 percent of funds dedicated to migration (forced displacement) and a flexibility cushion for emerging challenges and priorities. But as of October 2021, the Multi-Annual Indicative Plans (MIPS) - the main EU country-level strategies for 2021 to 2027 - have not been approved, and thus it is difficult to predict whether the new "mainstreaming" approach of migration and forced displacement within the EU's broader development cooperation at the country and regional levels will result in the same levels of development financing for refugees and host communities. What is known is that without the dedicated funding streams, more focus on ensuring coordinated approaches between humanitarian and development and across regional responses will be needed.

### A Germany-specific development funding stream for forced displacement

The OECD noted in 2020 that most countries address forced displacement through their pre-existing humanitarian and development programs with two notable exceptions: Germany and the Netherlands.<sup>88</sup>

In 2014 Germany introduced the Special Initiative 'Tackling the Root Causes of Displacement, (Re)integrating Refugees' (often referred to as the Special Initiative on Forced Displacement) as their main development cooperation instrument targeting forced displacement. It complements BMZ's traditional approach to bilateral development cooperation through its ability to "deliver a rapid and targeted response to displacement situations, providing support to displaced populations and host countries or communities"<sup>89</sup>. It is focused on providing financial and technical support to: (1) assisting refugees, internally displaced persons, and returnees; (2) stabilising host regions; and (3) tackling the triggers of displacement.<sup>90</sup> The initiative has evolved over time, adding a more explicit reference than many donors to supporting local integration initiatives, building the resilience of host communities, and providing a better enabling environment for refugees. The Special Initiative has its own budget line, and since its inception has provided some EUR 2.4 billion<sup>91</sup> through 245 projects in 65 countries reaching 11.3 million people.<sup>92</sup>

According to interviewees, the introduction of the Special Initiative has allowed development approaches to forced displacement to become more visible and attract additional resources to Germany's support to host countries beyond existing bilateral funding budgets. The addition of the funding has been important in discussions with host countries who recognise that the funding does not take away from bilateral development cooperation.

The lifespan of the Special Initiative on Forced Displacement is not known following recent German elections, with officials noting a goal is to move forward with a "mainstreaming" approach to forced displacement within its broader development cooperation approach while still ensuring that the specific needs of refugees are met.

# V. Has the GCR supported better protection, inclusion, and solutions for refugees?

The GCR objectives of enhancing self-reliance and promoting the inclusion of refugees into national systems, while expanding access to third country solutions, set out an ambitious framework for changes in refugee policies and practices to better protect and support refugees. It requires the mobilisation of significant and sustained political will.

Three years on, there is still much work to meet these objectives of the GCR. This section presents examples of best practice, persisting barriers, and opportunities, with a snapshot of key findings.

## Most changes in refugee policy and practice in the last three years are linked to local solutions

For some host countries, implementing a GCR approach requires a significant shift in policies and practices to see refugees not as a burden and acknowledge their economic potential. And there has been some promising momentum around such shifts in approaches by many host countries, building on the groundwork laid by CRRF pilots in 15 country and regional approaches.

At the 2019 GRF, host countries made over 280 pledges, with many focused on national inclusion through revised legal and policy frameworks in line with the GCR. While political, technical, and financial challenges remain in implementation of these commitments, host countries must provide the framework for concerted efforts of the international community to support their implementation and allow concrete progress to be showcased at the next GRF in 2023. This includes building on examples of what is working in different contexts and the chance for more cross-country and regional learning.

### Colombia's protection response to Venezuelans displaced abroad

In early 2021, 56 percent of the 1.72 million Venezuelans displaced in Colombia remained in an irregular situation.<sup>93</sup> Without status they are more vulnerable to exploitation and violence and face barriers to socio-economic integration within the country. OECD noted that the policy environment in Colombia affects the cost of the refugee response as well as refugees' ability to earn income. In the case of undocumented Venezuelans, they both cannot work formally and can only access emergency healthcare, driving up costs through care as emergency responses are more expensive.<sup>94</sup>

In February 2021, the Government of Colombia announced it would grant Temporary Protection Status (TPS) to the Venezuelan population in the country including those who currently had irregular status who had arrived before 31 January 2021. This builds on previous commitments of the Government to support their regularisation, including three rounds of renewal of the Special Stay Permit (PEP) and the implementation of two additional rounds, including the Special Permit to Stay for the Promotion of Formalization (PEP-FF).<sup>95</sup>

UNHCR's High Commissioner described it as "the most important humanitarian gestures made on this continent since 1984, when the Cartagena Declaration was signed"<sup>96</sup>. Despite the temporal nature and outside of some key guarantees akin to refugee status such as protection from non-refoulement and recognition of a durable solution as the end of refugee status, regularisation will support Venezuelans to access their rights and essential services including health, education, housing, bank accounts and the formal labour market. The approach of the Government of Colombia is reportedly led by the President himself and has wide support across the political spectrum, which is important given the upcoming elections.

The challenge remains in implementation and the need for strengthening the 'whole of government' approach to ensure both a smooth roll-out of the decree, but also that it translates in practice in terms of displaced persons' ability to access basic rights and services such as education and health care. Previous regularisation efforts have still left many Venezuelans without legal status. Sustained international support is also needed to bolster Colombia's social protection system hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure that it can deal with influx of new students and new patients, for example.

# More focus and support on the ‘how’ of implementing GCR/ CRRF approaches is therefore needed

There is also a need to focus more on the ‘how’ of GCR implementation based on learnings from CRRF pilots in 15 countries and regional situations in 2017 to 2018. A starting point is strengthened knowledge and understanding of the role of national and local authorities, as well as that of other local actors, in terms of GCR’s framework but also of its benefits and opportunities.

Better analysis around ‘how’ also requires a more nuanced collective political economy analysis of the sensitivities of refugees in specific host countries and different interest groups that stand to gain or lose from changes in refugee responses.<sup>97</sup> It requires more cohesive multi-stakeholder engagement and commitment from humanitarian and development partners, including operational agencies and donors, to plan together and engage coherently with host countries based on a shared understanding of who may be best placed to lead on political dialogue, technical assistance, and financing to help shift incentives toward creating enabling legal and policy environments.

The responsibility for supporting CRRF engagement and articulating approaches in host countries goes beyond UNHCR. Their leadership is essential to creating visibility and shepherding the process, but all relevant UN agencies and humanitarian and development partners must be held accountable to engaging and supporting the CRRF.



Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement, Uganda – Esther Mbabazi

## Key learnings from Uganda’s CRRF approach

Uganda, given its progressive refugee policies for some time, was an early implementer of the CRRF approach, and with time has put in place considerable architecture to implement it through a CRRF Secretariat and Steering Group model and a focus on ‘whole-of-government approaches’ supported financially and technically by UN agencies, NGOs, and donors. A key focus has been the inclusion of refugees into national development plans and the development of sector response plans across a wide array of key sectors from as early as 2018, with new plans still being developed and updated in 2021.

Despite political goodwill, implementing the CRRF in Uganda remains challenging, with key learnings that can be applied to the ‘how’ of implementing a CRRF approach. During interviews with government actors, humanitarian and development partners and international donors, all recognised the importance of the process of developing the sector response plans across governments and in coordination with relevant stakeholders. However, they noted implementation of the response plan model is challenging given: (1) the mismatch in terms of authorities’ expectations of the level of funding that can be achieved against the high dollar values of the plans, impacting coordination and relations between key partners at the country level; (2) the expectation that the funding for the plans will go directly through government budgets, despite the continued dominance of humanitarian funding and, for some bilateral development donors, a continued wariness of directly funding the government due to concerns around transparency and accountability; and (3) despite the plans’ ‘business as usual’ approach, some donors and partners may work not per the plans, but per their own priorities.

Another crucial challenge that threatens Ugandan’s CRRF implementation is the dramatic impact of COVID-19 on both refugees and host communities, with the focus once again returning to humanitarian assistance and life-saving support for both refugees and vulnerable host communities and the challenge of maintaining a dual focus on short and longer-term responses within a significantly underfunded response.

# There are opportunities to use the GCR more broadly, including developing creative solutions

The research also revealed that while there has been a strong level of engagement among governments in relation to several of the key arrangements for responsibility-sharing established by the GCR – most notably the GRF and the three Support Platforms that have been established to support the response to displacement situations in Afghanistan, Central America, and the Horn of and East Africa<sup>98</sup> – a number of other ‘arrangements’ are yet to reach their potential.

The Asylum Capacity Support Group (ACSG), a special initiative of the GCR, works to facilitate asylum capacity support between states and other stakeholders. It was set up to ensure that states have measures in place for

protection needs by matching states’ requests for support with corresponding offers made by states and other stakeholders.<sup>99</sup> Since 2019, it has made good progress in matching two asylum-strengthening pledges with support from donors (and a third match is under discussion), but the demand for assistance comfortably outstrips supply at present (more than 50 requests for assistance were made by 2019.<sup>100</sup> Donor governments should consider favorable opportunities to support this mechanism, which promises to directly support the strengthening of asylum systems around the world.

## Opportunities to further strengthen regional and sub-regional approaches for the GCR

‘Regional and subregional approaches’, provided for in the GCR,<sup>101</sup> also appear to have the potential to advance refugee protection and the search for solutions in the contexts of Bangladesh and Venezuela.

### Bangladesh and regional responses

Several officials interviewed spoke with measured optimism about the potential to revive or reinvent some parts of the ‘Solidarity Approach for the People of Rakhine State’, a diplomatic initiative launched by UNHCR in 2018 that sought to bring together states and other actors from across the region and around the world to apply a Global-Compact-style response to the Rohingya situation. The Solidarity Approach sought to both support refugees and host communities in Bangladesh, focus on enabling conditions for sustainable voluntary repatriation while “inclusive development, resilience and livelihood opportunities for all of Rakhine State’s communities is supported, in the region and globally”<sup>102</sup>. Given return is no longer likely in the short to medium term following the recent coup in Myanmar, and the displacement situation in Bangladesh will soon meet UNHCR’s definition of a protracted refugee situation, multiple interviewees argued for further thinking on what might be achieved through a broad-based multi-stakeholder and diplomatic effort to support the Government of Bangladesh in hosting Rohingya refugees. They noted that while the Solidarity Approach was eventually rejected by the Government of Bangladesh (and Myanmar) that through more careful preparatory work (including through engaging civil society groups, think tanks and academics in Bangladesh) that some renewed opportunities may be worth pursuing through strategic and coordinated engagement by all actors.

Several interviewees also expressed hope at the possibility of a revived regional approach to the Rohingya situation and the need to focus on ensuring a regional perspective to their displacement.<sup>103</sup> While to date they have not engaged on refugee responses, AESAN was seen as having an important brokering role to play, in regard to the conditions in Myanmar, a perspective shared by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.<sup>104</sup>

## The Global Compact on Refugees Three Years On:

Navigating barriers and maximising incentives in support of refugees and host countries

### Colombia and regional responses

There has been regional cooperation under the Quito process since 2018 when 13 countries met to exchange information on the situation in each country and, articulate a regional strategy to address the Venezuelan displacement crisis. Since the signing of the Quito Declaration on Human Mobility of Venezuelan Citizens in the Region in 2019, five additional technical and coordination meetings have taken place focused on processes such as the adoption of an Action Plan, thematic areas, and international and regional cooperation but the focus remains largely in terms of migration management.<sup>105</sup> This is somewhat similar in process to the regional application of the GCR through the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRRPS) in Central America.<sup>106</sup>

However, there are opportunities to deepen the engagement with and increase support to the Quito process in ways akin to the Regional Support Platforms rationale. For example, given the regional dynamics of Venezuelan displacement in Latin America, the Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V) Regional Protection Sector is currently undertaking a review of various regularisation efforts in the region with a view to support harmonisation and regional engagement from host countries around the protection of Venezuelans displaced abroad. This would be a significant step given the dynamic nature of migration within the region. The body plans to use the Quito technical meetings to present its analysis and discuss ways of supporting harmonisation of regularisation efforts by governments in the region.

## Although COVID-19 has played a major role, there have been fewer third country solutions since the adoption of the GCR

One of the earliest and most visible impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the international refugee regime was the suspension of resettlement travel for refugees in March 2020.<sup>107</sup> Although resettlement travel was resumed three months later,<sup>108</sup> the pandemic was a key factor in driving resettlement down to its lowest level in almost two decades in 2020.<sup>109</sup> In a year when 'The Three-Year Strategy (2019 to 2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways', developed under the auspices of the GCR, aimed to see 70,000 refugees resettled through UNHCR,<sup>110</sup> just 22,770 resettlements occurred. This represents a dramatic fall from the 63,726 UNHCR-arranged resettlement departures in 2019, which met the target of 'The Three-Year Strategy.' Although more recent figures are not available, OECD-UNHCR joint research shows that the strategy's 2019 target for complementary pathways was also met: 156,000 arrivals against a target of 120,000.<sup>111</sup>

Despite the extremely challenging environment and continuing slow pace of resettlement (at the time of writing in mid-October, UNHCR was reporting 19,991 resettlement departures in 2021<sup>112</sup>), there is a projected upward trajectory. In the US, the Biden Administration has announced its intention to resettle up to 125,000 refugees in the fiscal year beginning 1 October 2021,<sup>113</sup> a number that – if renewed each year – would single-handedly fulfil the targets of 'The Three-Year Strategy' through 2025.

But for resettlement to demonstrate responsibility-sharing, the numbers need to substantially increase and more states need to be involved.

For its part, UNHCR has used the challenging COVID context to advance initiatives that will build stronger foundations for action once travel becomes easier. To this end, it has launched a [Global Taskforce on Third Country Education Pathways](#) and a Global Family

refugee labour mobility task force.<sup>114</sup>

The true trendline insofar as third country solutions are concerned will only become clear once international travel returns to some semblance of pre-pandemic levels and major events, such as the resettlement of Afghan refugees, are discounted as exceptions. Over the course of the last few years, a number of other countries have signalled their commitment to third country solutions as crucial tools for protection and solutions.



Colombia – DRC



# Efforts to engage more states in the international refugee protection regime require greater progress

A key objective of the GCR is to engage more states as active players in the international refugee protection regime, with the Compact noting that more equitable responsibility-sharing must involve “widening the support base beyond those countries that have historically contributed to the refugee cause through hosting refugees or other means”.<sup>115</sup> There has been a considerable degree of interest - among diplomatic representatives of major donor states, in particular - in engaging those states that have not traditionally played an active role in the international refugee regime. Such states are sometimes referred to as the ‘missing middle’, though such phrasing risks being seen as pejorative by the governments it is seeking to persuade.

‘Contributions’ to the international refugee protection regime can take many forms, some of which are difficult - if not impossible - to quantify. A clear-yet-crude measure of progress in this regard is the number of states in UNHCR’s so-called “\$20 million club” of donors who contribute at least that amount to UNHCR’s activities each year; 19 states, plus the EU, qualified for membership based on contributions in 2018, when the GCR was affirmed, and 2019, when the first GRF took place, rising to 20+1 in 2020 with the addition of Ireland and Spain and the removal of Qatar.<sup>116</sup>

The total number of countries resettling refugees is another simple indicator of the breadth of contributions to the international refugee regime.<sup>117</sup> Here, too, the data suggests that the breadth of the base of support is remaining constant, with UNHCR recording resettlement departures to 20 states in 2018, 2019, and 2020 and most of them more broadly involved in refugee responses as large donors already.<sup>118</sup>

## The role of evidence in supporting more equitable responsibility-sharing

Directly connected to the need for additional states to contribute to easing the pressure on host countries is an initiative identified in the GCR on “measuring the impact arising from hosting, protecting and assisting refugees with a view to assessing gaps in international cooperation and to promoting burden- and responsibility-sharing that is more equitable, predictable and sustainable”.<sup>119</sup>

A series of workshops in 2019 were convened with state representatives and relevant international organisations, including the World Bank and the OECD<sup>120</sup>, and a sector-specific analysis of ‘The Global Cost of Inclusive Refugee Education’ was published in February 2021 by the World Bank and UNHCR.<sup>121</sup> The need for a phased and multi-year approach was recognised given the “participation and practicality in undertaking this complex task”.<sup>122</sup>

However, further progress in what could be an essential element in the effort toward enhanced responsibility-sharing has been limited by a lack of engagement from governments and the recognition of the need for significant technical support to continue this work. It is hoped that the forthcoming report against the GCR Indicator Framework will support this effort through its process of harmonising and standardising data collection standards.<sup>123</sup>

These datapoints indicate then a need for a more concerted effort from those active players in the refugee regime—including donors, hosts, international organisations, and civil society—to broaden the base of support for comprehensive refugee response. A multi-stakeholder strategy to achieve this could focus on aligning incentives for deeper engagement, including linking refugee protection to other core state interests,<sup>124</sup> and expanding visibility opportunities at global events such as the second GRF in 2023.

## VI. Conclusion and recommendations

### Conclusion

The findings of this research have provided a snapshot of analysis on implementation of the GCR by states. If there were a scorecard to give against progress three years on, the international community collectively would not pass. This report has shared key learnings in terms of how we can regain momentum and ensure better protection, inclusion, and solutions for refugees.

While there are some significant examples of changes in policies and practices, such as the cemented role of development partners in refugee responses and the real ambition of host countries to implement a GCR approach, there is still work to be done.

And this work is a collective responsibility. It requires what the GCR called for in 2018: “more equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world’s refugees”.<sup>125</sup>

While the COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly impacted implementation, we must be able to move forward. Continued conflict, new and (re-)emerging crisis and the high numbers of refugees living in protracted displacement alongside host communities who have for too long shouldered the responsibility necessitates the changes envisaged in the GCR.

This requires the concerted effort of the international community – host countries, donors, and significant engagement from many states who are currently not doing their fair share both in terms of financing and resettlement. It also requires the concerted support of humanitarian and development partners including UNHCR and all relevant UN agencies, as well as NGOs like DRC, IRC, and NRC, who through this research recommit to playing their part in implementation in countries but also in their contribution to further policy development at the regional and national levels, to hold themselves but also states to account.

#### Afghanistan: Application of GCR in (re-)emerging crises

The period of research for this report coincided with renewed upheaval in Afghanistan, with US and allied forces withdrawing from the country, the Taliban sweeping to power more quickly than almost any observer predicted, and thousands seeking to flee the country. Although it was not clear at the time of writing whether these events would lead to a new mass displacement emergency, Afghanistan’s position as one of the major countries of origin for the forcibly displaced over the past four decades meant that the possibility of large-scale displacement was at the forefront of international discussions concerning the crisis.

As a potentially (re-)emerging crisis, the renewed upheaval in Afghanistan was described by UNHCR as ‘a seminal moment for the implementation of the Global Compact’; in particular, recent developments represent perhaps the clearest opportunity since the affirmation of the Compact in December 2018 to implement its ambitious vision relating to preparedness, contingency planning, evidence-based forecasting, and ‘early efforts to address the drivers and triggers of refugee movements (as a complement to other related efforts)’.<sup>126</sup> The Core Group of the Support Platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees, established under the Global Compact, has reoriented its immediate focus to include preparedness efforts in neighbouring countries.



Richmond, Virginia, USA – Andrew Oberstadt

# Recommendations

## Operationalising responsibility-sharing

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- The international community must show stronger support for the GCR as a whole and urgently prioritise more equitable and predictable responsibility-sharing towards refugees before the next GRF in 2023. Donor governments must intensify their political and diplomatic efforts to support responsibility-sharing pledges made at the 2019 GRF. Host states must take a more consistent approach to ensure the GCR is being applied in all refugee-hosting contexts
- All actors must work together to translate the GCR into practice beyond high-level global moments like the GRF. UNHCR can better support implementation by working at country and regional levels to create stronger operational linkages with governments around GCR approaches. Humanitarian and development partners, including operational agencies and donors, can use it more prominently as a tool to engage and orient programming.
- Donor governments should take immediate steps to ensure responsibility-sharing towards refugees

Donor governments' GCR progress should also be assessed against their role in upholding international refugee protection at home, including by safeguarding the asylum space and supporting third country solutions.

- An important step would be the development of coherent "one government" GCR policies articulating the role of different government agencies across both foreign and home affairs in its implementation and setting the direction for broader strategy development. Such an approach could leverage previous government coordination around Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets and national progress reporting.

## Toward increased funding and better financing

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- OECD's collaboration with UNHCR on refugee-related financing flows should intensify to provide more detailed annual data on overall levels of funding, humanitarian versus development financing, modalities, recipient countries, etc. Better data on these financial flows will lead to a deeper understanding of, and improved accountability for, the financing of refugee responses, including gaps.
- Development actors must play a larger and more predictable role in financing the response to protracted forced displacement contexts, following the early groundwork laid by the World Bank and some key refugee donors. Other multilateral development banks in particular should provide much needed development financing to support host countries at the outset of refugee situations to incentivise refugee-friendly policies.
- Development financing partners should provide more opportunities to share learnings from their engagement (i.e., in terms of modalities, incentives, and barriers) and build greater flexibility into their responses to not only learn and adapt but also to adjust to shocks and opportunities in fluid refugee policy situations.
- Donors should take urgent steps to link their humanitarian and development sections and strategies to facilitate greater coherence and deliver on the nexus approach. These efforts should include engaging in policy dialogues with host countries.
- There should be greater focus on supporting government-led country level coordination through in-country aid tracking mechanisms that can provide data on both humanitarian assistance and development financing against national/sector response plans.
- In the absence of major reforms among government institutions and agencies, inter-government coordination and complementarity of approaches needs to be strengthened and institutionalised at regional and country levels to make it work.

## The Global Compact on Refugees Three Years On:

Navigating barriers and maximising incentives in support of refugees and host countries

### Creating enabling conditions for implementation of the GCR

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- Host countries' policy pledges at the first GRF must be more strongly utilised to support changes in policies and practices. This includes renewed stocktaking and matching exercises at the country, regional, and global level, supported by UNHCR.
- In the lead-up to the next GRF in 2023, key refugee donors should support and UNHCR should facilitate more information sharing between host countries on implementation beyond intra- regional dialogue, but also between different regions.
- UNHCR, together with humanitarian and development partners and with funding from donors, should focus more on the process of GCR implementation at the country level. This includes funding sustained government technical capacity to lead its GCR implementation and linking existing refugee responses to national development plans.
- As part of this approach, the UN system should work to identify the different ways in which it can optimise its engagement in support of refugees, building on previous work done to include refugees using the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and implementing nexus approaches looking at structures, coordination, planning and funding mechanisms.
- Existing resettlement targets globally are woefully insufficient, both substantively - to address massive protection needs - and symbolically - as a reasonable demonstration of solidarity and responsibility-sharing with countries that host the majority of refugees, even when accounting for COVID-19 setbacks. As a priority for 2022, governments should commit to raise their resettlement targets. UN agencies and civil society must work together to hold states accountable against a further erosion of resettlement commitments.
- The Three-Year Resettlement Strategy - expansion of the base of actors, scope, and size of resettlement and complementary pathways, as well as of protection, impact, and quality of resettlement and complementary pathways - must continue to be the focus, given the lack of progress against many targets and its description as a blueprint for the further development of third country solutions over ten years (2019-2028). This could be started through HLOM through a high-level event to take stock and outline efforts for what success would look like ahead of the next GRF in 2023.
- UNHCR, together with interested actors including states, international organisations, and civil society, must undertake coordinated strategic initiatives to bring in a wider range of states to support comprehensive refugee responses against which progress can be reported at the next GRF.

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