Transformative Initiatives

THE EIGHT PILLARS OF UNHCR’S TRANSFORMATION

The impetus for UNHCR’s internal change process has been driven, in part, by developments in a rapidly evolving international context in which the need for a more comprehensive, predictable and equitable international response to large refugee movements has become clear. The Global Compact on Refugees aims to achieve this but requires renewed commitment and collaboration with a range of new and traditional partners. With the realization that forced displacement is also a more horizontal and horizontal process, new approaches transcending traditional humanitarian action are being sought. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the commitment to “leave no-one behind” provide a basis for the inclusion of refugees, IDPs and stateless persons in economic development planning, as well as in other measures taken to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Grand Bargain committed donors and aid organizations to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action, to draw on more resources from a wider range of stakeholders and to strengthen the participation of populations of concern in decision-making.

Given these and other initiatives, UNHCR’s change process is designed to better position the Office to protect and assist populations of concern, work with others to promote solutions, address future challenges and take advantage of emerging opportunities. The transformation encompasses multiple areas of work across the following eight pillars:

- Decentralization and regionalization
- Results-based management (RBM)
- People management and human resources (HR)
- Data and digitalization
- Business processes and systems
- UN reform
- Risk Management 2.0
- Global Compact on Refugees

More information on UNHCR’s change process is available here.
THE GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM

Every One Counts

One year after the affirmation of the Global Compact on Refugees, the first Global Refugee Forum will be a critical opportunity to build momentum towards achieving the objectives of this new commitment and strengthening the collective response to refugee situations.

The Forum will be held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, on 17 and 18 December 2019, with a series of spotlight sessions and other events taking place in advance on 16 December. The Forum is an important opportunity for the international community to develop and strengthen the arrangements to operationalize the Global Compact over the longer-term, translating principles of increased solidarity and more equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing into concrete action.

The Global Refugee Forum will be convened every four years with States and other stakeholders. It will make commitments for action to support host countries with strong humanitarian action centred on protection, complement these efforts with the systematic inclusion of refugees in both the funding policies of development donors and in the national development planning of host countries; provide more third-country solutions; and undertake these efforts with a view to preventing and resolving the conflicts that generate and perpetuate displacement.

The pledges and contributions that States and other stakeholders will announce at the Forum will achieve tangible benefits for refugees and host communities. These will include financial, material, and technical assistance; resettlement places and complementary pathways for admission to third countries; as well as policies and practical steps to increase refugee self-reliance and ease pressure on host communities. The Forum will also serve as a space to share good practices, experiences, and lessons learned identified with respect to specific country or regional situations, as well as on a global level.

Building on the momentum achieved at the Forum and making progress in the implementation of the contributions will be key in 2020. This will include special initiatives, such as the Three-Year Strategy (2019–2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways, the Asylum Capacity Support Group, the Global Compact on Refugees Global Academic Network (GAN), and the implementation of Support Platforms for specific refugee situations launched at the Forum.

The coming years will also be crucial in consolidating the partnerships forged in the context of the Forum, as a wide range of actors engage in supporting refugees and their hosts and in delivering on the promise of the Global Compact.

Every Action Counts

To provide a strategic focus and maximize its impact, the first Global Refugee Forum will be organized around areas of focus. Preparations relating to each area of focus—including the identification of possible pledges and good practices, as well as the design of sessions at the Forum itself—have benefited from the engagement of a number of States and other stakeholders that have volunteered to serve as ‘co-sponsors’ that form a broad alliance of support for concrete action in relation to the area of focus. The areas are summarized throughout this Appeal.

Areas of focus of the Global Refugee Forum

**Burden- and responsibility-sharing** | The Global Refugee Forum will seek to lay the foundations for the sustainable operation of the Global Compact’s arrangements for burden- and responsibility-sharing over the longer term, both at the global level and in relation to specific refugee situations, through mobilizing timely, predictable and sustainable funding for humanitarian and development responses, contributing to global, regional and sub-regional responses to refugee situations; and preventing and addressing root causes such as contributing to peacebuilding and human security.

**Solutions** | The Global Refugee Forum will seek to make progress towards finding solutions for refugees. This includes promoting enabling conditions for voluntary, safe and dignified return and repatriation and support for the sustainable reintegration of returnees; enabling local integration and local solutions; resettlement; and complementary pathways. For the latter, this will be primarily through galvanizing support for the “Three-Year (2019–2021) Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways”.

(See as well the resettlement and complementary pathways section in *Building better futures*).

**Education** | The Global Refugee Forum seeks to include refugee children and youth in national education systems within three months from the onset of displacement to benefit from increased access to the full cycle of accredited quality early childhood development, primary and secondary education, along with increased access to tertiary and technical and vocational education opportunities. A Global Framework for Refugee Education has been developed by the GFRF Education co-sponsorship alliance, which helps translate the refugee education strategy, “Refugee Education 2030: a strategy for refugee inclusion”, into a guidance for pledging on education.

(See as well the education section in *Building better futures*).

**Energy and infrastructure** | The Global Refugee Forum will serve as an opportunity to expand access to sustainable energy for refugees whilst mitigating and adapting to climate change through three pillars: energy provision (linked to SDG 7 on affordable and sustainable energy for refugees); essential services (energy, connectivity, environment, health, WASH, shelter); and inclusion (in national structures and services).

(See as well the energy and environment, and cities and urban refugees sections in *Building better futures*).

**Jobs and livelihoods** | The Global Refugee Forum will work towards the key outcomes of economic inclusion, job creation, local economic growth, enhanced protection, and preparations for solutions through a series of sub-themes and cross-cutting areas such as investment in economic development, private sector engagement and changes to legal frameworks.

(See as well the the livelihoods and economic inclusion section in *Building better futures*).

**Protection capacity** | The Global Refugee Forum will seek to strengthen strong institutions and capacities that can enable and enhance refugee protection and the well-being of host communities with the support from a range of actors. This will include enhanced emergency preparedness and responses, more protective legal and policy frameworks, better asylum capacity through the coordinating support of the newly established Asylum Capacity Support Group, enhanced protection response and strengthening of national institutions, and the promotion of and support to the participation and inclusion of refugees and host communities in all levels of planning and response, as well of refugee-led initiatives.

(See as well the chapter on Safeguarding fundamental rights).
RISK MANAGEMENT AND INTEGRITY

Strengthened accountability lies at the heart of the regionalization and decentralization process, an undertaking that goes well beyond simply moving staff to new locations: it is about shifting accountabilities, authorities, capacities and resources closer to the people UNHCR serves. It is a clear, robust application of the “Three Lines of Defence” framework—the field, bureaux and Headquarters—creating a new culture of accountability by clarifying roles and responsibilities and decision-making authorities. Reinforcing and supporting this culture of accountability across UNHCR is the Risk Management 2.0 Initiative, which helps to proactively and systematically identify, analyze and treat emerging risks, as well as to address the root causes such as fraud, corruption and misconduct.

UNHCR is deploying senior risk management professionals in high-risk operations to support country representatives as risk owners, while mainstreaming risk management and anti-fraud functions in all regional bureaux. In addition to building risk management skills and capacities within the Office, Risk Management 2.0 is about strengthening the integration of risk considerations in the operations management cycle and other core processes. In the spirit of increased transparency and closer collaboration on issues of risk management, UNHCR shared its Strategic Risk Register with external stakeholders for the first time in 2019.

UNHCR will continue to promote the global implementation of the “Policy on Fraud Committed by People of Concern”, to mitigate the risk of fraud throughout the continuum of protection procedures, from registration to resettlement and beyond. Multi-functional integrity and anti-fraud missions to the field will empower operations to proactively identify vulnerabilities to fraud and implement solutions and measures to address these accordingly. The Office will continue to expand feedback mechanisms, raise awareness among people of concern on access to complaint venues and ensure access to counseling services and information through improved communication of anti-fraud messaging.

UNHCR’s zero tolerance approach means that every allegation of misconduct such as fraud, corruption, resettlement/refugee status determination fraud, sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment (SEA/SH) by UNHCR or partner personnel is thoroughly assessed and investigated and, if substantiated, may lead to sanctions including dismissal. The number of disciplinary measures imposed on UNHCR personnel has increased across all staff grades, demonstrating UNHCR’s commitment to increased reporting, investigation, disciplinary measures and referral to national authorities where appropriate. Around a quarter of new investigations opened by UNHCR’s independent Inspector General’s Office (IGO) are into allegations of SEA or SH and, while this is partly due to success in raising awareness and trust in reporting systems, it highlights the need for perseverance in the fight against sexual misconduct, and for greater capacity.

The IGO has been strengthened and professionalized, including with specialist investigation officers and enhancements to investigation case management tools to meet increased needs for data capture, analysis and reporting. UNHCR’s Legal Affairs Service has been bolstered to ensure cases of misconduct are dealt with within the targeted timeframes and with the required level of expertise, and there are combined efforts to reinforce safeguarding measures under the strategy on addressing SEA/SH (see below).

Through committed leadership, the engagement of its workforce, and thanks to support of Member States, partners and like-minded entities in the humanitarian sector, the Office will continue its transformative journey with integrity at the core of it.

UNHCR’s fight against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment

UNHCR’s holistic approach to tackling sexual misconduct is outlined in its “Strategy on Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment”, overseen by a multifunctional team, under the leadership of the Deputy High Commissioner. A Senior Coordinator has been designated to drive the implementation of this strategy, bringing together key safeguarding entities in the Office to reinforce mechanisms for preventing and responding to SEA and SH.

Recent work includes the establishment of a confidential independent helpline available to all colleagues wishing to report misconduct or obtain advice, and the issuance of a new administrative instruction on protection against retaliation. To complement this, a psychosocial case management system was put in place to support both victims and witnesses of sexual harassment and a short guide for managers on the prevention of, and response to, sexual harassment in the workplace was published. The Office is also finalizing an administrative instruction on addressing sexual misconduct, which aims to consolidate all relevant policies and guidance on SEA and SH and ensure a victim-centred approach. Several initiatives aimed at creating safe spaces for discussion among colleagues were also launched. This includes internal dialogues on sexual misconduct enabling personnel worldwide to participate in an interactive platform and exchange views with senior managers, and a challenge posed on UNHCR’s Ideas Platform seeking innovative ideas to tackle sexual harassment. UNHCR managers are being invited to participate in “Reflective leadership dialogues” to equip them with the tools to create working environments in which SEA and SH are prevented and/or effectively addressed. UNHCR is currently adapting a new face-to-face training programme for all personnel on SEA and SH, and is working with IOM and other partners to develop a similar package for personnel of NGO partners.

In the same spirit of collaboration, UNHCR is cooperating closely with NGOs and UN entities, such as the Office of the Special Coordinator on SEA and the UN Victims’ Rights Advocate. In the IASC, UNHCR co-chairs the results group that focuses on the eradication of SEA and SH in the humanitarian system. In September 2019, the Deputy High Commissioner took the interim Chair of the UN Chief Executives Board Task Force on Addressing SH and the High Commissioner has assumed the role of IASC Champion on protection from SEA and SH. During his tenure, the High Commissioner will focus on advocacy to tackle sexual misconduct and his initiatives will aim at bolstering prevention, expanding safe spaces to ensure victims can speak out and promoting respectful working cultures.

At the heart of UNHCR’s engagement is the commitment to place survivors at the centre, using an age, gender and diversity approach. This requires quality programmes for protection from sexual and gender-based violence as a whole; community outreach; effective feedback mechanisms; and solid multi-sectoral victim assistance services. The Office’s ability to deliver on these multiple fronts is challenged by field realities, particularly in locations where services are scarce, security is volatile, humanitarian access is restricted, and operations are underfunded. This is a critical area that requires sustained investment and Member States’ collaboration to ensure that all safeguarding standards can be met, even in the most complex working environments.
STRENGTHENING UNHCR’S ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT SITUATIONS

At the end of 2018, there were an estimated 41.4 million IDPs—people displaced within their own countries as a result of violence, armed conflict, and human rights violations, millions of whom were displaced multiple times in their search for safety and security. In addition, there were as well some 17.2 million displacements caused by disasters in 2018.

UNHCR’s involvement in situations of internal displacement is a fundamental aspect of its operations worldwide and of its protection leadership in collective responses to humanitarian crises.

UNHCR’s updated “Policy on Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement” reaffirms long-standing commitments to the internally displaced and sets out measures for how—given the rise in internal displacement, and the complex and overlapping factors that drive it—the Office will engage more decisively, predictably, effectively, and in coordination with others.

UNHCR’s revitalized approach to how it deals with internal displacement has a set of key commitments at its core.

- To be better prepared for IDP emergencies through sound risk analysis, and maintaining or strengthening its participation in inter-agency prevention, early warning and preparedness measures in countries prone to forced displacement. An upcoming preparedness package for IDP emergencies will support this.
- To maximize opportunities for operations to respond through integrated programming and area-based approaches. This will help direct programming and resource allocation towards the greatest needs, including access to services and risk mitigation, while taking account of UNHCR’s differentiated responsibilities for various groups, and relevant inter-agency arrangements.
- To deliver assistance, directly and through partners, including as a “provider of last resort”, in a way that brings to bear UNHCR’s extensive experience and added value, particularly in the protection, shelter and CCCM sectors.
- To contribute to solutions that include IDPs in national services, safety nets, and development plans, bridging the humanitarian-development nexus, and building and sustaining peace.
- To support local and national actors to meaningfully take over operational delivery, coordination and monitoring in relation to protection and solutions for affected populations, thereby enabling UNHCR to responsibly disengage. Achieving this requires UNHCR to implement well-resourced multi-year, multi-partner strategies that enhance national response capacity, and which provide advice and support for national laws and policies on internal displacement, training, and capacity development.
- To revitalize data and information management and analysis to support evidence-based inter-agency response planning, operational delivery by UNHCR, monitoring, and advocacy.

UNHCR’s stepped-up engagement in internal displacement situations will be supported through Office-wide efforts to operationalize these key commitments. Resource mobilization will be intensified at the onset of an emergency and then sustained throughout UNHCR’s engagement. At the newly decentralized regional and country levels, empowered representatives will be able to exercise greater control over how funds are raised and spent. UNHCR will step up its communication and advocacy strategies to promote and highlight its work with IDPs, giving it an appropriate profile and prominence in external relations and fundraising efforts, as well as to draw attention to gaps in the humanitarian response and their impact on affected populations.

Alongside these efforts, UNHCR staff and partners will need new skills and competencies to work effectively across the full spectrum of forced displacement. UNHCR aims to identify, train and maintain a cadre of staff with specialized skills and competencies, including those related to coordination and information management, for deployment as needed, especially in emergencies.

None of this, of course, is done in isolation. UNHCR will maintain its contribution to effective inter-agency humanitarian action. For example, it will continue its contribution to IASC-led humanitarian reform processes, including those related to establishing collective outcomes and a meaningful humanitarian-development nexus, and bolstering accountability to affected populations. At national and regional levels in particular, partnerships between humanitarian, development and peace-building actors will be reinforced, in order to establish or strengthen concrete linkages between respective plans and operations.

The IDP Initiative

While the IDP Policy is applicable across all IDP contexts, the High Commissioner has prioritized eight operations across the preparedness, response and solutions spectrum to support, monitor and showcase UNHCR’s commitment to robust protection leadership, tri-cluster coordination and operational delivery for the protection of, and solutions for, IDPs.

The countries are Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, South Sudan, and Ukraine.

A team led by a Senior Advisor on Internal Displacement in Headquarters will ensure coherence and consistency in operationalization of the updated Policy.
2020 INITIATIVES FOR IDPs

A multi-stakeholder, inter-agency, approach will underpin UNHCR’s engagement in internal displacement situations during the operationalization of the new IDP Policy in 2020 and beyond. This approach will be crucial to advancing progress on collective initiatives such those outlined below.

The 20th anniversary of the “Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement”

Building on the momentum afforded by the 20th anniversary of the “Guiding Principles”, UNHCR is spearheading the “GP20”, a three-year multi-stakeholder Plan of Action to advance prevention, protection and solutions for IDPs with OCHA and the UN Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights of IDPs.

GP20 is galvanizing collaborative and strategic action in favour of IDPs, building on achievements at country level. At the national level, GP20 has generated increased international attention and support for preventing, responding to and resolving internal displacement. GP20 initiatives and events capture operational best practices, and create opportunities for States to exchange information on challenges and opportunities directly with one another, and it will be an important complement to the forthcoming High Level Panel on Internal Displacement. A compilation of national-level initiatives and operational best practices, as well as outcomes of regional exchanges, will be issued in the fall of 2020.

Reinforcing strategic partnerships for IDP protection

UNHCR’s Toolkit for Protection in Armed Conflict, which will be strengthened in 2020, is highly relevant to current operational dilemmas and draws from UNHCR’s extensive field practice, as well as that of its partners. In addition, UNHCR and ICRC have launched a joint training initiative for staff and partners on Protection in Armed Conflict. UNHCR will also remain engaged as a strategic partner of the Centre for Humanitarian Negotiations. This supports and strengthens the capacity of humanitarian workers to engage in negotiation processes through the capture, analysis and sharing of experiences and practices, as well as through multi-agency dialogue and a community of practice.

Strategic tri-cluster leadership

As per the new IDP Policy, UNHCR’s leadership of the Global Protection Cluster, and its co-leadership of the CCCM and Shelter Clusters, will be strengthened through deployment of dedicated and well-capacitated staff, and an agency-wide resource mobilization strategy to support the Global Clusters with their key functions, raising the quality, quantity and predictability of funding. With country-level clusters citing underfunding as their number one challenge, UNHCR will aim to generate greater appreciation of the way protection, CCCM and shelter collectively contribute to reducing vulnerabilities, mitigating protection risks, and supporting sustainable solutions.

The data and information generated by Clusters will support evidence-based response planning, delivery of assistance, and advocacy by UNHCR and other humanitarian actors. UNHCR will promote synergies across these three Clusters through collective contributions to protection and solutions outcomes and area-based approaches.

In line with Grand Bargain commitments, UNHCR will use its leadership in the three Clusters to reinforce efforts at localization, national ownership, and accountability to affected populations, while contributing to joint assessments and bridging the humanitarian-development nexus. Where the context merits, UNHCR will as well work alongside UN and Humanitarian Country Teams to support the gradual de-activation of clusters in support of government-led coordination arrangements.

Global Protection Cluster (UNHCR lead)

The Global Protection Cluster (GPC) is a network of UN agencies, NGOs and international organizations working on the protection of IDPs and others affected by conflict and natural disaster, ensuring protection is at the centre of humanitarian response and that it is mainstreamed continuously across all clusters. It works closely with UNICEF, UNFPA, UNMAS, and NRC as the lead organizations responsible respectively for: child protection; prevention of, and response to, sexual and gender-based violence; mine action; and housing, land and property rights.

For 2020-2024, the GPC is developing a new strategic framework to meet changing and expanding needs in the field, with humanitarian, development, peace, and human rights considerations. It will also focus on climate change, protection of youth, and protection in urban environments. Building on lessons learnt and achievements to date, the GPC also plans to revitalize its governance structure to react better to the needs of the field, and speak more forcefully for change.

Global CCCM Cluster (co-lead with IOM)

The Global CCCM Cluster’s strategy will focus on promoting protection and solutions from the onset of crises through adequately capacitated, data-driven and context-specific response modalities. In particular, the Global Cluster will support national counterparts to contribute to protection and solutions in camp/site management and coordination through participatory needs assessments and intention surveys, performance monitoring, data gathering and analysis on assistance and service gaps, information on and referral to specialized services, compilation of best practice and lessons learned on area-based approaches, and robust complaint and feedback mechanisms. A protection and solutions orientation will be embedded from the outset in site planning, coordination of information and services, and through joint assessments, consolidation and closure stages. The Global Cluster’s involvement in the Joint Inter-sectoral Analysis Group and other inter-agency assessment fora will contribute to improved joint needs assessments, in line with Grand Bargain commitments.

Global Shelter Cluster (co-lead with IFRC)

The Global Shelter Cluster’s 2018-2022 strategy aims to strengthen shelter and settlement responses that contribute to protection and solutions. Monitoring and evaluation will help gather lessons learnt on innovative response modalities, and advocacy for scaling up appropriate interventions, including urban assistance, cash and markets, and area-based programming. Housing, land and property rights considerations will continue to be mainstreamed in needs assessments and delivery of shelter assistance to contribute to solutions from the onset of crises. To bolster evidence-based response, the Global Cluster will collaborate with humanitarian partners and academia to fill information gaps and document best practices and lessons learnt.
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

The overview includes the three Global Clusters led by UNHCR (Protection, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) and Shelter.

- Protection Cluster and Cluster-like mechanisms
- CCCM Cluster and Cluster-like mechanisms
- Shelter Cluster and Cluster-like mechanisms
- Country prioritized for the HC’s IDP Initiative

WG: working group

1 Cluster

2 Clusters

3 Clusters
UNHCR’s campaigns and Goodwill Ambassadors

Building on engagement and commitments achieved at the Global Refugee Forum, UNHCR’s campaign efforts present an alternative narrative: one that frames refugees as a positive force instead of a burden. It will use this narrative to promote inclusion, compassion and tolerance towards people on the move, as well as increase meaningful engagement and action with new and existing audiences.

Launching on April 6—the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace—the 2020 World Refugee Day campaign supports global and regional advocacy and communications efforts. In the lead up to the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, and with UNHCR’s 2030 education focus, the campaign will focus on education and sports in fostering social inclusion and belonging among forcibly displaced people and the communities that welcome them. The role of cities in fostering more and better inclusion will continue to be a highlight in 2020 and will bring communities together at events and activities in hundreds of locations worldwide, including former Olympic cities.

UNHCR’s #WithRefugees platform will remain a strong global and regional tool for advocacy and outreach in 2020 as country offices begin to incorporate it into their own advocacy agendas. Over 220 cities are today signatories of a solidarity statement committing them to more and better inclusion of refugees and more than 500 organisations are members of a diverse and active coalition of entrepreneurs, businesses, universities and groups from across the public and private sectors.

The Goodwill Ambassadors—many of whom have themselves experienced displacement—will also use their voices and networks to help showcase the new approach embodied in the Global Refugee Compact, with 2020 presenting opportunities for their involvement in campaigns and advocacy including World Refugee Day, the Nansen Refugee Award, in major fundraising campaigns, and in cheering on the refugee athletes at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

The 2 Billion Kilometres to Safety campaign will enter its second year in 2020, challenging people to cover the distances refugees cover to reach safety.