



Global initiatives in 2021

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Djuba is a 75-year-old pastor who fled the Democratic Republic of the Congo and found safety in Kakuma refugee camp, in Kenya. With churches closed due to the COVID-19 lockdown, he used his bicycle to both preach to his parishioners and share information with them.

COVID-19: IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN 2021

On 30 January 2020, the WHO declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a public health emergency of international concern. By March, countries around the world were successively contending with a global pandemic that permeated rapidly into most aspects of daily life. As public health responses were ramped up, the measures taken to curb the spread of the virus had and continue to have significant socioeconomic consequences, notably affecting those who are most vulnerable, including people of concern to UNHCR such as refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, stateless persons, and returnees.

Pandemic-related border closures affected access to asylum and territory, with many States (75 as of October 2020) providing no exceptions for those seeking international protection. Across regions, there have been spontaneous returns by refugees to their countries of origin even when conditions there are not safe, largely propelled by economic hardships in countries of asylum. The economic downturn has also meant that millions of

people of concern have lost their livelihoods and are struggling to meet their basic needs. Protection incidents, particularly those involving children as well as gender-based violence, have markedly increased. The pandemic has also deepened gender inequalities, with women and girls seeing their access to services, including for health and livelihoods, further limited while their unpaid care responsibilities have increased. Millions of children and youth remain out of school, with potential long-term implications for their development and well-being.

In collaboration with governments, partners, donors, and people of concern, UNHCR has worked to address these challenges by swiftly identifying needs and reprioritizing and reallocating resources, introducing measures to increase flexibility, and adjusting programming to mitigate the impact of the virus and ensure continuity of essential protection and assistance services. As of October 2020, \$118.7 million worth of personal protective equipment and medical items have been procured. Nearly 4 million people of concern have accessed

health services, with 265,000 individuals receiving mental health and psychosocial support in 68 countries and over 468,000 women and girls accessing sexual and reproductive health services in 46 countries. Over 9.3 million people have accessed protection services, and 3 million people of concern benefitted from cash assistance (totalling nearly \$339 million). To facilitate quarantine, physical distancing and other COVID-19 preparedness and response measures, about 8,000 refugee housing units have been distributed in 15 countries.

UNHCR's transformative initiatives, including decentralization and regionalization, modernization of business processes, and expanded use of evidence in decision-making have enabled the organization to increase efficiencies and to act with greater agility. The positioning of the bureaux in their respective regions has enhanced the support provided to operations and helped UNHCR rapidly identify and respond to requirements and needs. Through its Headquarters, UNHCR was able to ensure economies of scale, as well as to strengthen the use of data to track the spread of the pandemic. Use of technology has been critical, allowing UNHCR to stay and deliver despite 88% of the workforce being required to work remotely from home at certain periods. The pandemic has accelerated thinking and initiatives already underway in this area, focusing attention on the feasibility and efficiency of remote working as a future modality.

Building on lessons learned in 2020, in 2021 UNHCR will work to maintain the same levels of responsiveness, adaptability and flexibility, whilst strengthening resilience as staff and people of concern adjust to living and working with COVID-19 in the medium term. The Office will work to mainstream COVID-19 activities within its programmes where possible. With the World Bank predicting

the deepest global recession since the Second World War, UNHCR's 2021 planning is grounded in the understanding that specific socioeconomic and protection efforts will require long-term investment beyond UNHCR's regular programming. Indeed, all of UNHCR's work to address the COVID-19 pandemic will take place against the backdrop of ongoing conflicts, persecution, disasters and insecurity, with a record 97.3 million people projected to be of concern to the Office in 2021, all of which indicate compounding humanitarian needs globally.

In sum, UNHCR anticipates that considerable and sustained investment will be needed in 2021 to respond to the effects of the global pandemic on people of concern. Requirements in terms of needs and priorities for 2021—particularly in relation to the pandemic's lasting socioeconomic and protection impacts, including loss of livelihoods and challenges with education—are in the process of being identified, with country operations undertaking detailed planning exercises. Detailed COVID-19 requirements will be outlined in a forthcoming supplementary appeal but, broadly speaking, emerging priority areas for the coming year will include the following.

Primary and secondary health care

The pandemic will continue to require a strong public health response. Some 85% of refugees are hosted in low- and middle-income countries, where health systems are often overstretched. In 2020, however, COVID-19 transmission rates amongst refugees generally remained similar or, in some places, lower than those among host communities. This is a testament to the generous support provided by host countries, the value of facilitating inclusion of people of concern

For more details of UNHCR's response to COVID-19, see the situation page on Global Focus.



Report on UNHCR's response to COVID-19



in national health responses, as well as the importance of UNHCR and partners' risk communication and public health prevention, preparedness and response efforts. As a second wave of the pandemic is well underway across different parts of the globe, these efforts will need to continue, in addition to maintaining support for and strengthening access to routine health services, mental health and psychosocial support, and adequate water, sanitation and hygiene for people of concern. (See as well *Responding with life-saving support*.)

Protection

The pandemic has challenged fundamental principles of protection for people of concern, notably refugees and asylum-seekers. It has also exacerbated already high protection needs across regions, increasing reliance by vulnerable populations of concern on more precarious coping strategies.

In celebrating the 70th anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees in 2021, UNHCR will continue to collaborate closely with States and partners to promote and monitor the implementation of international protection standards, including access to asylum and protection from refoulement, strengthen national capacities and systems, and further solutions for people of concern. Efforts to address racism and xenophobia impacting people of concern in the context of COVID-19 will be key. Additionally, UNHCR will maintain, adapt and strengthen core protection services, including to address gender-based violence and child protection risks. Building on promising practices and UNHCR's long experience in community-based protection, UNHCR will enable and be guided by the leadership of people of concern themselves in preventing and responding to existing and emerging protection needs within their

communities, not least in contexts where UNHCR and partners face difficulties in access. (See as well *Safeguarding fundamental rights*.)

Cash assistance

UNHCR has leveraged cash assistance in the global response to COVID-19, building on its longstanding knowledge and experience in this area. Cash has proven to be an efficient means of delivering support to affected people fast, providing protection, empowering families to meet their basic needs, and mitigating some of the negative socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19. UNHCR operations have adapted existing cash assistance—introducing new approaches and technology, designing new cash grants and targeting criteria to assist newly vulnerable populations, developing exit strategies, increasing the use of digital payments, adjusting systems and complaints and feedback mechanisms and, where appropriate, aligning cash assistance with government social assistance. In 2021, UNHCR will take these lessons forward and continue to invest in cash assistance as an effective modality to protect and assist. (See as well *Responding with life-saving support*.)

Livelihoods

Along with cash assistance, a redoubled emphasis on livelihood support will be needed in 2021. Displaced and stateless persons, especially those at heightened risk such as women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, are more vulnerable to the pandemic's devastating socioeconomic consequences. UNHCR analysis of eight large refugee-hosting countries suggests that 60% of refugees work in sectors highly impacted by COVID-19, compared to only 37% of non-refugees. UNHCR monitoring carried

out since the onset of the pandemic also indicates that 74% of refugees can only meet half or less of their basic needs.

In 2021, UNHCR will prioritize investments to protect livelihoods and advance socioeconomic inclusion to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on the economic and living conditions of people of concern.

Strengthening coordination and strategic partnerships will also be key. In line with the Global Compact on Refugees, UNHCR will intensify coordination with government authorities, local and international partners, as well as international financial institutions and development actors, to increase the capacity of national systems, promote the inclusion of people of concern in national socioeconomic responses, expand the use of evidence and bolster self-reliance. (See as well *Building better futures*.)

Education

COVID-19 has limited children's access to education around the world. Based on UNHCR data, the Malala Fund estimates that half of refugee girls at the secondary level are at risk of dropping out of school due to COVID-19. Meanwhile, as learning resumed in some parts of the world, reliance on digital modalities for remote or blended learning has disproportionately disadvantaged displaced and stateless children.

Almost 2 million refugee children and youth were out of school due to mandatory school closures as of October 2020, with many attempting to learn from home through national programmes delivered through radio, television and the internet. In 2020, UNHCR worked to ensure that families had access to these programmes, supporting more than 744,700 children and youth with distance and home-based learning. In 2021, a more focused effort on education will be needed. In collaboration

with governments and partners, including development actors, UNHCR will work to reduce the enrolment gap between refugee and host community children, and to boost enrolment and retention rates for adolescent girls in national school systems. While the pandemic has meant UNHCR has had to adapt the way it operates, ensuring that the forcibly displaced are included in national systems whenever possible will remain a guiding principle of its work. (See as well *Building better futures*.)

Way forward

COVID-19 knows no borders, and does not discriminate based on nationality or legal status. The year 2020 provided lessons in resilience and solidarity; with communities across the world displaying extraordinary levels of camaraderie to help one another through this time of uncertainty. Mutual assistance groups have proliferated, and communities and volunteers from within populations of concern stepped up across the world. Host governments by and large did not exclude people of concern from their health response. Donor governments responded generously to UNHCR's financial requirements.

The international community as a whole is being called on once again to demonstrate cooperation and collective commitment. In the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees, UNHCR appeals to donors and supporters to ensure burden- and responsibility-sharing with refugees and hosting countries and to step up support for UNHCR and partners to provide vital life-saving protection and assistance in 2021. There is abundant evidence that, despite the very real implications of the pandemic for lives and livelihoods, this challenge may be met and overcome through solidarity.

Coronavirus a dire threat to refugee education



STRENGTHENING UNHCR'S ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT SITUATIONS



A mother and child, internally displaced from their home in Al Jawf, living in an unfinished building in Marib, Yemen.

© UNHCR/Maria-Joelle Jean-Charles

Policy on engagement in situations of internal displacement



In 2019, violence, armed conflict and human rights violations had displaced an estimated 43.5 million people, with disasters displacing a further 5.1 million. In the first half of 2020, millions more were newly displaced due to conflict and violence. The largest increases were in the Syrian Arab Republic, where nearly 1.5 million were internally displaced, the Democratic Republic of the Congo with more than 1 million displaced, and Burkina Faso with nearly 500,000. Cameroon, Mozambique, Niger and Somalia reported more new internal displacements in the first half of 2020 than in the whole of 2019. Sudden and slow-onset disasters triggered 9.8 million new internal displacements in the first half of 2020; while in Somalia and Yemen, for example, hundreds of people

moved from urban to rural areas to escape situations of poor sanitation and crowded environments in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Issued in September 2019, UNHCR's IDP Policy clarifies the scope, rationale and vision for the Office's response in IDP situations. In 2020, accountabilities and responsibilities for IDP responses were further integrated into the management culture and mandated functions of the newly regionalized bureaux. In 2021, this will continue to be strengthened and guided by certain key commitments:

- **Ensure the centrality of protection through predictable and principled protection leadership across the humanitarian response to internal displacement.**

UNHCR will assist Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators and UN and humanitarian country teams (HCTs) in IDP operations to facilitate an overarching protection and solutions response and, through leadership of the Global Protection Cluster, continue to support HCTs in the development of protection strategies which mobilize the humanitarian system toward protection outcomes. As an example, in Ethiopia UNHCR supported the HCT with a flash protection analysis in mid-2020 amidst new internal displacement.

- **Prioritize actions that contribute to safe, dignified and comprehensive IDP resilience and solutions, in partnership with others.** UNHCR will continue to advocate the inclusion of IDPs in national support services, social safety nets and local and national development plans. Bilateral engagement with international financial institutions, as well as support to area-based programming, is expected to benefit local populations, IDP returnees and those who may have been unable to flee, for example in the Sahel.
- **Revitalize data and information management and analysis to support evidence-based inter-agency planning, operational delivery by UNHCR, monitoring, and advocacy.** In 2021, the UNHCR-World Bank Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement will support collection, analysis and sharing of quality socioeconomic data on internal displacement. This will enhance the ability of stakeholders, including governments, international organizations and NGOs, to make timely and evidence-informed decisions that can improve the lives of IDPs, including at the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.
- **Support inter-agency response efforts through dedicated, resourced and**

well-capacitated coordination leadership.

In 2020, UNHCR worked to reduce gaps in its cluster leadership, both at the national and subnational levels. In 2021, systematic efforts will continue and will also bolster internal synergies between global clusters under UNHCR's leadership.

- **Ensure robust operational responses.** In collaboration with relevant lead agencies, UNHCR will strengthen operational responses in internal displacement situations, ensuring community-based protection approaches to address urgent and immediate protection needs, including gender-based violence and child protection. Operational delivery in shelter will be expanded and include more comprehensive area-based approaches for settlement profiling linking to longer-term solutions, aligned with new partnerships (with UN-Habitat, for example). UNHCR will continue to roll out its preparedness package on IDP emergencies, which supports effective responses by the Office both as an operational agency and as the cluster lead in protection, shelter and camp coordination and camp management (CCCM).
- **Support local and national actors to meaningfully engage in operational delivery, coordination and monitoring.** UNHCR will, wherever possible, support local efforts including for the development of IDP national laws and policies, training and capacity development. Achieving this will require UNHCR to implement well-resourced multi-year, multi-partner strategies which enhance national capacity.
- **Advance communication and advocacy.** UNHCR will step up its communication and advocacy strategies to promote and highlight the situation of IDPs, especially



given the impact of COVID-19. Enhanced communication on UNHCR's work with IDPs in partnerships and through coordination leadership will support external relations and fundraising efforts, and draw attention to gaps in the humanitarian response and their impact.

- **Build up the human resource base.** UNHCR will continue to identify, train and deploy a cadre of staff with specialized skills and competencies, such as coordination and information management.
- **Support the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement.** With recommendations from the panel expected during the second half of 2020, UNHCR will support its work, including by facilitating communications with affected communities and key stakeholders. UNHCR will continue to support the knowledge base through written submissions related to the panel's six workstreams.

Reinforcing partnerships for IDP protection and assistance

UNHCR continues to build strategic partnerships for IDP protection, including through the three-year, multi-stakeholder plan of action for the 20th anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GP20). Following regional exchanges in 2020 with ECOWAS, the Economic Community of West African States, and IGAD, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, UNHCR spearheaded exchanges on internal displacement in the Middle East, Americas and Asia in collaboration with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Platform on Disaster Displacement. In 2021, UNHCR will facilitate national,

regional and global consultations to foster best practices around IDP protection and solutions, and galvanize collective action and support to displacement-affected States.

UNHCR will also reinforce its strategic partnerships in response to growing protection needs in conflict settings. For example, UNHCR and ICRC have collaborated closely as protection-mandated agencies, building on regional workshops on protection in armed conflict and international humanitarian law, peer-to-peer exchanges on legal and operational issues, as well as global events on displacement in war. Following a high-level meeting in 2020, UNHCR and ICRC issued joint protection messages in the context of COVID-19 which were widely disseminated across both entities, and which will form the basis for UNHCR to strengthen field engagement and global collaboration on protection in 2021.

Global Protection Cluster (UNHCR lead)

The Global Protection Cluster (GPC) is a network of United Nations agencies, NGOs and international organizations engaged in protection work in humanitarian crises including armed conflict and disasters. The GPC ensures that protection is at the centre of the humanitarian response and that it is mainstreamed across all clusters. It works closely with UNICEF, UNFPA, UNMAS, and the Norwegian Refugee Council as the lead organizations responsible respectively for: child protection; prevention of and response to gender-based violence; mine action; and housing, land and property rights.

The GPC's work will remain guided by its strategic framework for 2020-2024,

"Protection in a climate of change". This includes, in 2021, an emphasis on effective coordination capacities, and timely and evidence-based protection analysis to support decision-making. The GPC's strategic orientation includes accountability to the affected population, support for localization, ensuring collective protection outcomes through strategic partnerships with non-protection actors, durable solutions, and adaptability to an ever-shifting operational environment including disasters, pandemics and artificial intelligence.

Global Shelter Cluster (co-lead with IFRC)

The Global Shelter Cluster (GSC) will continue to strengthen a range of critical response areas in 2021. In particular, integrated, area-based approaches are ensuring more environmentally-sensitive approaches to humanitarian shelter and settlement responses and transforming cooperation with other clusters. Collaborative approaches to housing, land and property issues have resulted in new tools and products for improved programming and response, supporting early identification of and action to address tenure security and land use issues. United Nations system-wide efforts—such as "Greening the blue"—are creating new opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint of emergency shelter and non-food item interventions, while improving local approaches and leadership.

The GSC will support country-level clusters through surge capacity and remote assistance. Further progress will be made in aligning the research efforts of academic institutions with the operational needs of GSC partners and in capturing

good practices. The GSC will also support country-level clusters to: better incorporate appropriate local construction materials and techniques; improve understanding of housing markets to provide more efficient and effective shelter responses; improve responses in urban areas; and strengthen capacity of local partners to respond and in terms of shelter coordination.

Global CCCM Cluster (co-lead with IOM)

UNHCR has over seven decades of experience in working with communities in camps, sites and urban areas, which informs its co-leadership of the Global CCCM Cluster. A new Global CCCM Cluster strategy will emphasize the connection between reinforced camp or site management capacity and protection and solutions responses. Given COVID-19 pandemic-related restrictions on access, UNHCR will undertake remote management and engagement with displaced communities, where necessary. Additionally, the Global CCCM Cluster will finalize an updated camp management standards policy.

CCCM activities and UNHCR's IDP response will continue to be driven by efficient and evidence-based information management systems, grounded in sound analysis of a populations' needs, protection concerns and demographics, as well as continuous monitoring and robust analytical methodologies. The overall capacity of the cluster to respond to and address the diversity of challenges across different displacement situations will be strengthened, including through partnerships with relevant stakeholders such as academic institutions and internal UNHCR capacity-building.

Global Protection Cluster website



GP20 PREVENT PROTECT RESOLVE



Global CCCM Cluster website



Global Shelter Cluster website



STRENGTHENING UNHCR'S ENGAGEMENT IN CLIMATE ACTION



Solar panels bring light to Kutupalong refugee camp, Bangladesh.

The impacts of climate change disproportionately affect the world's most vulnerable people, with refugees and IDPs often hosted in “climate hotspots” or regions being rendered increasingly uninhabitable. Climate change can also drive new displacement and, in terms of solutions, create barriers to return and reintegration. The eight worst food crises in 2019—all in countries where UNHCR is operating—were linked to both climate shocks and conflict, and it is projected by the IFRC that storms, droughts, floods and wildfires could double the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance to over 200 million each year by 2050. Climate change and its effects are therefore of both legal and operational relevance to UNHCR's work, spanning preparedness, emergency response and solutions, leading the Office to step up its climate action under three strategic pillars.

The first is legal and normative. UNHCR supports States to develop and implement legal and institutional policy frameworks that prevent, respond to and facilitate

solutions for displacement in the context of climate change and disasters. This includes catalyzing international action and awareness, and developing guidance to support access to international protection for those in need, including refugees. UNHCR also provides guidance for States and other stakeholders to ensure that citizens do not become stateless as a result of climate change impacts.

In line with its IDP Policy, UNHCR will step up its operational response to ensure protection and assistance for people displaced internally by disasters during the emergency response and early recovery phase, as well as to enhance the resilience of IDPs to climate and disaster risks. This includes strengthening preparedness for engagement in disaster situations and integrating climate change and disaster risk assessments into planning. UNHCR will also increase collaboration with global, regional and national actors to ensure inclusion of displaced and stateless persons in early warning and early action mechanisms,

disaster risk reduction and management strategies, and climate adaptation plans.

As part of the second pillar of its engagement on climate action, UNHCR aims to minimize any negative environmental impacts of large displaced populations, while also enhancing their protection and well-being. In addition to increasing access to safe, clean and (when possible) renewable energy, the organization will continue to mainstream environmental sustainability across all sectors, including settlements, shelter, core relief items, water, sanitation and hygiene, food security, nutrition, livelihoods, public health and cash assistance. UNHCR will also collaborate with governments and partners to promote reforestation and sustainable agriculture in refugee-hosting areas facing deforestation.

Finally, UNHCR aims to continually “green” its operations and improve its own environmental footprint by reducing its greenhouse gas emissions and minimizing damage to the environments in which it operates and upon which local populations depend for their livelihoods. Sustainability management also brings key benefits, such as efficiencies in the use of natural resources and finances. A key focus in 2021 will be implementing clean energy solutions for offices, building on the experience of teleworking and reduced travel in 2020 as well as by applying the “green box” project, which measures an

office's power consumption and helps identify alternative energy options. As of early October 2020, 124 UNHCR offices in 72 countries were participating in this initiative. (See as well *Building better futures*.)

Additional steps are planned to improve the sustainable and “climate smart” management of UNHCR's facilities, waste, water and energy usage, travel, procurement of goods and services, and fleet management systems. Based on the outcomes of the UN Development Group's BIG—the Business Innovation Strategic Results Group—UNHCR and WFP have agreed to form a joint venture to provide fleet-related services to the broader UN system. This will lay the foundation for carbon emissions measurement, management and mitigation at the inter-agency level through more efficient and effective use of global fleet assets. Another focus in 2021 will be maintaining carbon neutrality, which was achieved for the first time in 2018 through emissions offsets and reductions.

UNHCR's “Strategic framework on climate action” will be released by the end of 2020, setting parameters for the organization's response to the climate emergency. The framework will be operationalized through regional plans of action developed by UNHCR's bureaux and operations, consistent with climate adaptation policies of host countries and UN country teams.



SPOTLIGHT: Greening the blue

In the last five years, UNHCR has participated in the United Nations' “Greening the blue” initiative, progressively rolling out environmental reporting across its country operations. In 2020, 200 UNHCR field offices will report on their carbon dioxide emissions, waste production and water use. UNHCR and GIZ, the German Agency for International Cooperation, are working together to reduce the carbon footprint of selected UNHCR operations—including in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda—and to improve their access to sustainable energy, helping to meet UNHCR's climate responsibilities while providing clean and sustainable sources of energy to people of concern. With the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, UNHCR is establishing an innovative revolving fund to help staff in field operations to partner with the private sector to transition to clean energy, phase out fossil fuels and reduce carbon dioxide emissions (See as well *UNHCR's 2021 Financial requirements*).

THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES IN 2021



Alytor Ag Alkhalifa is a Malian refugee in Mbera camp in Mauritania, where he is training as a mason alongside fellow refugees and members of the local community at a vocational training school for construction run by UNHCR and the ILO, with the support of the European Union, Japan and the United States of America.

Compilation of GCR/ CRRF-related development partner projects and programmes



In 2020, key advances were made in the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees. Arrangements and tools to facilitate more predictable and equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing were operationalized, while progress was made towards greater inclusion of refugees in national systems and national development plans. The Compact's comprehensive response model has advanced out-of-camp approaches and enabled many refugees to access education, health care, employment and financial services (see *Building better futures*). The international community has continued to mobilize support for the achievement of the Compact's four objectives on an equal footing and, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of the 1,400 pledges made by governments and other stakeholders at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum is progressing well. While the pandemic has slowed implementation of pledges in some areas, it has accelerated it in others, including in the areas of health and

social protection, with the pledges also stimulating new partnerships and strengthening the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

The continued political commitment to the Compact in 2021 has been impressive, with the Compact's central principle of solidarity more relevant than ever. The support platforms, a new mechanism launched at the Forum for three regional refugee situations, will continue to strengthen and sustain the international community's response to the most protracted and complex refugee situations, facilitating greater responsibility-sharing and State engagement. In 2021, UNHCR will also continue to work with States and other actors who pledged financial, technical or material assistance at the Global Refugee Forum to identify how their pledges could support efforts by host countries towards inclusion and protection of refugees. The dynamic process of aligning donor and host country pledges while also



SPOTLIGHT: Socioeconomic data on refugees and host communities

To monitor progress towards the Global Compact on Refugees and its goals of more equitable and predictable burden- and responsibility-sharing and easing pressures on host countries, improving comparable data and evidence on the socioeconomic circumstances of displaced and host communities is key. Better data will inform initiatives under the Compact, including measuring the impact of protecting, hosting and assisting refugees on host countries, as well as addressing evidence gaps, informing policy and programming, and improving efficient resource allocation more broadly. Data is also central to linking humanitarian and development efforts for displaced people, who by 2030 could account for two-thirds of the world's extreme poor. Progress has been made in a number of countries hosting significant refugee populations to address the current gap in socioeconomic data and analytics, including Kenya and Uganda, but further efforts are needed.

In October 2019, UNHCR and the World Bank Group formally established the Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement to improve the collection, dissemination and analysis of data on forced displacement. A research conference on displacement scheduled to take place in Bogota, Colombia, in May 2021 will highlight learning from the center's first full year of operation, which saw initial support provided to some 40 activities across the two organizations and their partners. Together with the center, the Global Academic Interdisciplinary Network (GAIN) also seeks to expand the scope and applicability of research on displaced people and host communities in support of the Compact.

bringing new partners on board is an innovative modality introduced at the Forum, which will continue to be prioritized.

Other initiatives established by the Compact, such as the Asylum Capacity Support Group, the "Three-year strategy (2019-2021) on resettlement and complementary pathways", the Global Academic Interdisciplinary Network and the Clean Energy Challenge also show encouraging levels of progress and engagement by a broad range of stakeholders, and will continue to guide the work of the Office in 2021. The digital platform for the Global Compact on Refugees keeps all stakeholders abreast of these developments, enabling the sharing of good practices and tracking progress made on pledges.

In December 2021, UNHCR will organize a High-Level Official's Meeting to take stock of progress towards the implementation of the Compact and the pledges made at the Forum. In preparation for the meeting, a series of thematic and regional stocktaking

opportunities and events will be convened, enabling pledging entities to report on progress and share information about remaining needs. Additionally, the first Global Compact on Refugees indicators report will be released at the meeting. The outcomes of the indicators report and the stocktaking exercise will guide the development of future pledges and contributions for the next Forum in 2023.

The Global Compact on Refugees will steer the work of UNHCR, States and partners in the decade ahead and beyond, providing a powerful tool for broadening the base of support for refugees and their host countries and communities, strengthening protection, advancing inclusion and pursuing solutions. In 2021, UNHCR will ensure that its internal systems can support and facilitate effective implementation of the Compact, including follow-up to Forum pledges, by integrating these aspects into the organization's planning, programming, budgeting, reporting, training and communications processes.

Initiatives to share global responsibility for refugees



Pledges and contributions dashboard



PARTNERSHIPS



UNHCR staff distribute personal protective equipment to MEDU (Doctors for Human Rights), its partner in Rome, Italy.

Strengthening multi-stakeholder approaches

In 2021, UNHCR will strengthen its work with partners to advance protection and solutions, including by furthering collaboration with development, peace and security actors. The ongoing NGO partnership reform process is expected to result in simplified agreements in 2021, leaving more room for strategic discussions and engagement. A new framework for UNHCR's work with refugee-led organizations and networks will also be developed, and particular focus will be placed on relationships with faith-based actors and women-led civil society organizations.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that no-one is safe unless everyone is safe, underlining the need for efforts to include the displaced in national health and socioeconomic response plans.

Partnering with WHO and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, on the basis of new memoranda of understanding concluded in 2020, UNHCR will focus on ensuring that risk communication activities and vaccination campaigns reach displaced and stateless populations. COVID-19 also highlighted the need for better prevention of and response to gender-based violence, along with activities to enhance gender equality to address its root causes. Cooperation with agencies such as UN Women, UNFPA and the many international NGOs and civil society actors working in this field will be strengthened in 2021.

In 2020, UNHCR ensured that inter-agency humanitarian action plans and response frameworks included strategic objectives relating to refugees, IDPs and stateless persons. In 2021, based on feedback from

people of concern, many of whom have lost their livelihoods as a result of COVID-19, renewed impetus will be given to also ensuring their inclusion in socioeconomic response plans, in line with the Global Compact on Refugees and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNHCR will continue to partner with development actors, international financial institutions and those involved in the design and implementation of economic recovery plans and social security schemes. A key focus will be the UNHCR-UNICEF “Blueprint for a fair deal for refugee children”, which is aimed at ensuring the inclusion of refugees in national development plans and multisectoral needs assessments.

UNHCR's innovative work together with partners on predictive analysis and artificial intelligence will continue, focusing on mitigating the displacement aspects of climate change. UNHCR will develop new and more strategic partnerships with academic, research and peace institutions and actors, with a particular emphasis on addressing the root causes of displacement.

At the strategic level, monthly consultations will be held with key international NGOs and the annual partnership survey will continue to highlight the challenges and advances made in UNHCR-NGO cooperation. Localization efforts will continue, in line with Grand Bargain commitments, focusing on ensuring local actors are part of coordination mechanisms and strategic decision-making.

Given the important role sport can play in the social development, inclusion and well-being of refugees, as recognized in the Global Compact on Refugees, in 2021 UNHCR will strengthen work with a coalition of 87 sport, private sector, NGO and government entities that made three joint pledges at the Global Refugee Forum on access to sport programmes and facilities and participation in sports activities at all levels. Although the 2020 Tokyo Olympics were postponed by 12 months because of COVID-19, UNHCR will continue to partner with the International Olympic Committee to support their Refugee Athlete Scholarship Holders, and the Refugee Olympic Team will compete at the Games in 2021.



SPOTLIGHT: Engagement with development actors and processes

In 2021, UNHCR will consolidate its partnerships with multilateral development banks and other development actors. UNHCR will engage in the World Bank's 18th and 19th International Development Association (IDA) replenishments—more than \$4.2 billion in total—as these have been essential not only in increasing investments in refugee-hosting areas but also in supporting more inclusive, progressive and sustainable policies. Partnerships with regional development banks such as the African Development Bank, will be consolidated, building on collaboration to assist people of concern in the Sahel and the East and Horn of Africa.

UNHCR will work with the European Commission on development interventions targeting refugee-hosting areas as part of the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework. Work with the French Development Agency (AFD), the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) will be a priority, with particular focus on increasing synergies at the programme and policy levels in countries hosting large numbers of refugees. Supporting governments to strengthen complementarity of interventions by development actors in hosting areas will also be a priority.

Close collaboration with the ILO, UNDP and UNICEF to support the inclusion of people of concern in national development plans will continue. UNHCR will also strengthen collaboration with key stakeholders in peacebuilding and conflict prevention, operationalizing the United Nations “sustaining peace agenda” and the recommendation on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC).

German development cooperation in the context of forced displacement



Engagement approach for Syrian refugees (JICA)



Regional refugee response plans in 2021

UNHCR will continue to lead and coordinate the response to complex refugee crises, including those involving mixed refugee and migrant situations, through five regional refugee response plans (RRPs). UNHCR leads inter-agency planning and coordination for the RRP for the situations in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Sudan. The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan in Response to the Syria Crisis (3RP) is co-led together with UNDP, and the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (RMRP) together with IOM.

RRPs cover the inter-agency response in 33 refugee-hosting countries and, where appropriate, are an integrated yet distinct part of inter-agency humanitarian response plans. They contribute to the application of the Refugee Coordination Model, articulating protection and solutions priorities and outlining the needs of refugees and their host communities.

Through RRP, UNHCR and partners seek to address the most urgent needs, including humanitarian, socioeconomic and development needs; as well as new health needs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, with RRP partners mainstreaming COVID-19 response activities into core strategies and working to ensure the refugee response is integrated into national efforts. In addition, UNHCR and partners will prioritize the mitigation of and response to gender-based violence, and the inclusion of the needs of persons with disabilities within RRP frameworks, as well as support to other groups at heightened risk.

RRPs integrate a resilience and solutions approach, based on coherent engagement of partners and host governments in the pursuit of solutions for refugees, migrants and impacted members of host communities. Recognizing the importance of promoting innovative approaches in the overall refugee response, RRP include environmental initiatives by partners to complement UNHCR's strategy on climate change and energy, such as the one-of-a-kind recycling facility at Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan.

REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE PLANS | 2020-2021

REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE PLANS	2020			2021
	Inter-agency budget (USD) ³	Inter-agency funding received (USD)	Funding level as at 30 September 2020	Estimated Inter-agency budget (USD) ⁴
Burundi	298,375,205	73,593,745	25%	298,375,205
The Democratic Republic of the Congo	638,709,377	93,364,469	15%	638,709,377
South Sudan	1,429,908,307	280,976,959	20%	1,429,908,307
Syria 3RP ¹	5,995,975,760	1,705,237,566	28%	5,995,975,760
Venezuela ²	1,407,580,167	416,545,541	30%	1,407,580,167
TOTAL	9,770,548,816	2,569,718,280	26%	9,770,548,816

¹ co-lead with UNDP.

² co-lead with IOM.

³ Except for the RRP for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, these budget figures refer to revised inter-agency requirements including for the COVID-19 response.

⁴ The 2021 budgets are only preliminary figures, based on the 2020 requirements, pending finalization and approval by partners and host countries.

RISK MANAGEMENT



COVID-19 isolation and treatment facility for refugees and host community members at Nalemsokon health clinic in Kalobeyei settlement, Kenya.

UNHCR's approach to managing the uncertainties that could impact the achievement of its objectives—commonly called “risk”—is now well established. As part of its core business, for example in supporting the implementation the Global Compact on Refugees and stepping up the IDP response, as well as in addressing emerging priorities like climate action, UNHCR staff regularly undertake high-quality risk analysis, with results informing decision-making. UNHCR is broadening awareness of and skills for risk management across all levels of the organization. This means empowering the workforce to take the appropriate level of risk and equipping them to make

decisions systematically in light of risks and opportunities. Already colleagues speak with authority on the biggest risks facing their operations; and the COVID-19 pandemic has only reinforced the need for UNHCR staff at all levels to act as risk managers.

COVID-19 highlighted the need to strengthen preparedness for catastrophic events which could disrupt the lives of people of concern and UNHCR's activities. In camps in Bangladesh, for example, triage and isolation zones were established and sanitary measures reinforced to better manage the negative impact COVID-19 could have had on operations.

Across operations, proactive decisions were taken to reinforce health facilities for staff, to ensure that the best possible care should someone contract the virus. While the situation evolves, a thorough assessment of the risks is helping to shape UNHCR’s response and has enabled the organization to continue to deliver under exceptional circumstances, protecting the well-being of both people of concern and UNHCR’s own staff. With the reduced physical presence imposed by the pandemic, risk management plays an important role in safeguarding the integrity of UNHCR’s programmes.

In 2021, an expanded network of 33 dedicated risk experts—up from three in 2017—will support those operations most in need. Through in-person and, more recently, remote trainings and workshops, more than 3,000 personnel have been trained in risk management, including in conducting risk assessments and strengthening fraud risk management and fraud detection. In addition, senior leadership in regional bureaux and country operations are being coached in risk management and crisis communications to better prepare them to respond to the next emergency. UNHCR will also launch an internal communications campaign to empower staff to “horizon scan” for risks and opportunities before making important decisions in their work.

UNHCR is developing tools to support field staff in identifying and addressing risks in areas such as cash assistance, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and partnership management. In addition, the risk management framework will be strengthened through a revised policy, and the organization is exploring

the development of a risk appetite statement that defines the level and nature of risk UNHCR is willing to accept in pursuit of its objectives.

UNHCR continues its active engagement on risk management with partners and other UN agencies. Through regular briefings and updates to States, UNHCR shares information on its high-level risks and opportunities. UNHCR is also actively engaged in the UN High-Level Committee on Management’s (HLCM) task force on risk management.

UNHCR has been independently assessed as being at an “established” level of risk maturity, according to an HLCM-endorsed UN risk maturity model. UNHCR has defined risk management processes, good organizational coverage, regular risk reporting and escalation, and risk information used in operational decision-making. Building on the success of the Risk Management 2.0 initiative (2018-2020), the High Commissioner has called for UNHCR to further enhance its risk culture to reach an “advanced” level of maturity. To that end, UNHCR is integrating the new results-based management tool and the risk register tool; strengthening the strategic use of data; and continuing to embed risk management considerations in policies, processes and day-to-day activities.

UNHCR’S FIGHT AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

UNHCR has made significant progress in tackling sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment over the last two years. With efforts coordinated by dedicated staff working as part of multifunctional structures under the leadership of the Deputy High Commissioner, organizational accountability has been strengthened, reporting mechanisms on sexual misconduct by colleagues and people of concern have been enhanced, and trust in systems has increased. In addition, investigation and disciplinary action has been strengthened and there is increased awareness and capacity among staff, along with initiatives to support strong leadership and organizational culture change.

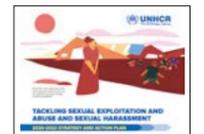
The High Commissioner has also implemented a number of key initiatives in his role as IASC Champion on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment, a position which began in September 2019 and which will continue until the end of 2020. His championship has focused on bolstering prevention, expanding safe spaces, and promoting the respectful use of authority.

Despite progress, much more remains to be done. Reflecting a commitment to ensuring UNHCR is run in a way that actively prevents harm, harassment and abuse and to responding safely and consistently if there is a problem, and building on achievements and in line with a safeguarding and victim-centred approach, the Office issued a 2020-2022 strategy and action plan which takes into account challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, and is guided by four main objectives: ensure an end-to-end

victim-centred approach is streamlined across all UNHCR practices and procedures concerning sexual misconduct; equip and empower UNHCR and partner personnel to prevent, identify and respond to sexual misconduct; uphold organizational accountability in tackling sexual misconduct; and maintain UNHCR’s role as a key stakeholder in inter-agency efforts through close and active engagement with all partners.

Some key initiatives to be launched in 2021 include: work with an academic institution to better understand the experiences of victims/survivors of sexual harassment to inform response and support mechanisms, ensuring that the needs and wishes of victims/survivors are heard and considered; implementation of a new policy on a victim-centred approaches; the roll-out of new interactive learning materials on sexual misconduct for staff and for partners; mainstreaming of prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse across operational sectors; strengthening the capacity of partners on sexual exploitation and abuse, including through the piloting and implementation of a new assessment tool; and strong engagement in inter-agency efforts, including those aimed at preventing and responding to sexual misconduct in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tackling sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment



IASC Champion on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment

