



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office



Wilton Park



Chair's summary

Towards the Global Refugee Forum 2023

Monday 10 July – Wednesday 12 July 2023 | WP3275



Chair's summary

Towards the Global Refugee Forum 2023

Monday 10 July – Wednesday 12 July 2023 | WP3275

In association with the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), affirmed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2018, provides a framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing in the global refugee response. Every four years the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) convenes a Global Refugee Forum (GRF) that brings the international community together to commit to action that translates this framework into practice. The second GRF takes place in December 2023 in the context of a continuing rise in global displacement.

Building on the outcomes of the Wilton Park 'Forum on new approaches to protracted displacement' in 2016, this event convened donor and refugee host governments, the World Bank, UN agencies, civil society, academia, private sector, and refugee leaders to galvanise momentum around key thematic priorities ahead of December's GRF.

Participants explored the economic and protection-based case for including refugee children in national education systems, how the localisation agenda can support an expanded role for refugee-women led organisations and reduce Gender-Based Violence (GBV), the innovation in resettlement offered by complementary pathways, the need for development interventions to facilitate voluntary return in safety and dignity, and the challenges and opportunities of access to climate finance for displaced populations.

Key points

- **GRF pledging best practice:** pledges will be most impactful if they are simple and concrete. They should have a programme of action, with measurable targets and outcomes against which progress can be benchmarked between now and the third GRF in 2027. Age, gender, and diversity lenses should be mainstreamed throughout, as should protection concerns and meaningful refugee participation.
- **Meaningful refugee participation in decision and policymaking:** the GCR committed the international community to the meaningful participation of refugees in decision- and policy- making. Whilst there has been some progress realising this since the 'meaningful refugee participation' pledge championed by the Global Refugee-Led Network (GRN) at the first GRF in 2019, there is much further to go to establish refugee participation as a norm in the structures of the global refugee regime. Refugee participation must be recognised as an instrument to achieve better decision- and policy-making rather than just an outcome in itself, with focus given to how responses are more effective when they incorporate the expertise of people with lived experience of displacement.
- **Financing:** there was a question of how to reconcile increased demand for flexible and predictable funding with competing pressures, growing humanitarian need, and increasingly stretched development and humanitarian budgets. In this context, there is a need for innovative financing approaches, including through expanding the donor base, pivoting towards local responses that are lower cost and more accountable,

increasing partnerships with the private sector, and improving access to climate finance. In a competitive funding landscape, the case for the vulnerability of forcibly displaced populations to climate impacts must be considered to attract **climate finance**. The quality and quantity of data on the cost of inaction on climate risks in relation to displaced populations should be increased to crowd in climate investors.

- **Inclusion of refugees into national education systems:** inclusive refugee education is critical to safeguarding refugee children's development. It offers a high return on investment for host communities, providing refugees a greater ability to contribute if/when situations become protracted, and leads to more financial sustainability and social cohesion. It provides preparation for an eventual solution, including return, and is an investment in the peace and stability of countries of origin. Freedom of movement is a key enabler of inclusion in national systems. There was significant support for a GRF multi-stakeholder pledge on facilitating inclusive education for refugees.
- **Refugee-women led organisations (RWLOs):** there is a need for specific support to RWLOs as part of broader Grand Bargain commitments to localisation. This is necessary to facilitate effective RWLO responses to tackle GBV, but also to further their action and advocacy on wider issues, such as refugee employment. There is a role for donor and host governments to support and advocate for RWLO inclusion in local and national responses, and to encourage agencies and intermediaries to engage with them as equal partners.
- **Sustainable return and reintegration:** barriers to refugees returning to their country of origin are complex, especially where services are poor and livelihoods to facilitate effective reintegration may be lacking. As a result, sustainable return and reintegration requires a development-based approach to refugee skill building during their time in host countries, and the inclusion of returnee populations in national development planning of origin countries.
- **Complementary pathways:** if third country solutions are to have a greater role in responding to global displacement, the challenges of increasing scale and innovation must be addressed. Opportunities exist to strengthen and leverage international architecture to share best practice, and to match the willingness of communities in receiving countries to welcome refugees. More can also be done to develop innovative labour mobility pathways that proactively prepare refugees for third country resettlement by delivering training to them whilst still in host countries, rather than only pursuing pathways which target refugees with existing in-demand skills.