

## UNHCR's inputs to the SG Report on the 3<sup>rd</sup> UN Decade for Eradication of Poverty

### 1. Context

Forced displacement and poverty, also hampered by the negative impact of climate change, are becoming increasingly interconnected. As forced displacement spikes dramatically across the globe, its impact on SDGs progress cannot be disregarded. **The poverty rate of refugees, including children, is higher than nationals** and may vary from 5% in Chile, up to 120% in Ethiopia. SDG1 and the 2030 Universal Social Protection Agenda cannot be achieved unless forcibly displaced persons gain access to national social protection services. However, they are often left without coverage either by law or by operational barriers, such as limited local government capacity (53%), lack of documentation (52%), and/or insufficient funding (46%). The same can be said for access to employment and decent work. **55% of refugees live in countries with restricted or no access to formal employment and 61% live in countries requiring a work permit<sup>1</sup>.**

Refugee food security is largely dependent on the legal frameworks governing refugees' access to rights including access to land, employment, financial services, association and freedom of movement. **85% of refugees** are hosted in developing countries **where national resources and capacities are insufficient** to meet their needs that can span beyond food, such as adequate shelter, access to safe water and sanitation, modern energy, among others. Burkina Faso, Mali, South Sudan, Sudan are among the countries where acute food insecurity is expected to significantly deteriorate. Refugee rations have been reduced significantly in half of refugee operations<sup>2</sup>, while tens of thousands of refugees are cut off from assistance altogether due to lack of funding. **Various forms of malnutrition persist among the refugee population** with a global GAM<sup>3</sup> and stunting prevalence of respectively 10%, and 30% against the global 7% GAM and 22% stunting<sup>4</sup>. Refugee children in emergency situations experiences even higher levels of malnutrition (in the Sudan situation 1 in 3 children are affected by acute malnutrition). **The global food crisis is not just about hunger, it is also exacerbating acute protection risks, especially for forcibly displaced, with a heightened risk for women and girls.**

### 2. UNHCR's action

UNHCR is committed to the principle of leaving no one behind, and to this end, works for the inclusion of forcibly displaced and stateless people to mitigate marginalization, improve access to rights, and alleviate poverty among affected populations and their host communities. Through partnerships, UNHCR also aims to expand and bolster the involvement of various stakeholders across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus to overcome the obstacles that forced displacement and statelessness present to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The [2023 Global Refugee Forum](#) marked a significant evolution in addressing the challenges of forced displacement and statelessness, showcasing an unprecedented level of engagement from a broad spectrum of stakeholders. The forum received a remarkable **1,684 pledges (600 from states and nearly 1,100 from non-state actors), representing a 'modern approach to multilateralism, characterized by its inclusivity and the diversity of its participants.** With over **4,200 attendees from 168 countries, including 320 refugees, the GRF demonstrated a holistic engagement across societal sectors.** This approach not only broadens the base for innovative solutions to displacement but also amplifies the

<sup>1</sup> [2023 UNHCR global survey on livelihoods and economic inclusion](#)

<sup>2</sup> Bangladesh, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Burundi, Tanzania, South Sudan, Chad, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, Mozambique, Malawi

<sup>3</sup> Global Acute Malnutrition

<sup>4</sup> data from the Standardized Expanded Nutrition Survey (SENS) from 117 sites across 18 countries

impact of collective efforts in addressing one of the most pressing humanitarian challenges of our time and advance in the implementation of the Agenda2030 and its commitment to leave no one behind.

UNHCR is working in close collaboration with key development agencies to strengthen policy and programmatic coordination at global, regional and country level. The [UNHCR-UNDP Global Collaboration Framework for Inclusion and Solutions](#) focuses on seven thematic areas where the two organizations bring comparative advantages – livelihood, SDG integration, Rule of law and local governance; conflict prevention and peace building; nature, climate and environment; internal displacement and statelessness. [The ILO-UNHCR Joint Action Plan](#) supports forcibly displaced access to the labour market; decent work conditions and adequate social protection, through promoting inclusive and equal treatment in access to decent work and livelihoods; countering economic exploitation; eradicating child labour; climate change; digital labour platforms among others.

UNHCR has issued [Guidelines on International Legal Standards Relating to Decent Work for Refugees](#) with the possibility to develop proposals for country-level pilots. Targeted programs providing job opportunities has given positive results (UNHCR's [Graduation Approach in Mozambique](#); [voluntary labour relocation program in Mexico](#)).

With dedicated data, digital and innovation services, as well as comprehensive strategies on data and digital, UNHCR is scaling up skills and resources with the aim of delivering assistance more efficiently. Inclusion in statistical systems is a key element to facilitate the broader inclusion of the forcibly displaced in the socio economic structure of host communities: robust and comparable nationally owned data provides accurate assessment of the needs of these populations and their ability to contribute to the host societies. As more data and evidence become available—[almost 800 datasets are now publicly available on the UNHCR Microdata Library](#)—they become important tools to inform policies and programs. The work of UNHCR and its partners is critical in pushing for an evidence-based approach which can benefit both the forcibly displaced and their hosts: [the World Bank's World Development Report 2023](#), for example, highlights how providing refugees with support in accessing jobs and education can improve their ability to contribute to local economies.

Within the framework of the Global Compact on Refugees, support to member states continues to advance through capacity building of statistical bodies to include forcibly displaced populations in national systems, digital platforms to share data and commit to open data principles as well as innovative projects focused on solutions and outreach in the framework of accountability to affected populations. The work of UNHCR, in collaboration with its partners and the [World Bank – UNHCR Joint Data Center](#) has led to the recognition of the importance of statistical inclusion by numerous countries and international institutions, and stimulated around 100 pledges in this area in the last Global Refugee Forum. Additionally, [the Refugee-led Innovation Fund](#) provides financial resources, mentoring, and other expertise – directly to refugee-led organizations, to enable them to design and deliver new interventions that have a lasting positive impact on their communities.

As many refugees still live in camps, at the 2023 GRF UNHCR has launched the [Climate Resilient Sustainable Human Settlements for refugees and their Hosting community pledge](#) with the aim of fostering climate-resilient and sustainable living conditions for the forcibly displaced and their host communities. By promoting and implementing a sustainable, integrated approach to environmental and climate action mainstreaming, shelter and housing, access to services, governance and improved urban planning, the Human Settlements approach emphasizes the importance of self-reliance and economic inclusion. Forty-three pledges were made, with countries like Kenya and Ethiopia committing to transitioning camps into sustainable settlements. [Kenya's Shirika Plan](#) is a groundbreaking initiative aimed at transforming selected refugee camps into sustainable human settlements, supporting

socioeconomic inclusion and resilience. The transition from camps to human settlements could significantly impact poverty eradication, shifting away from an aid-driven economy and creating economic opportunities for both displaced and host communities. By leveraging the skills of the displaced and creating an enabling environment for education and livelihoods, the human settlements approach prioritizes socioeconomic inclusion. Additionally, the human settlements approach focuses on climate resilience, recognizing the global importance of addressing climate change for economic prosperity.