

**EXPERT SYMPOSIUM ON  
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

Population Division

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**CONTRIBUTION  
TO THE EXPERT SYMPOSIUM ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

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<sup>1</sup>The views expressed in the paper do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations Secretariat.

1. According to UNHCR's most recent figures,<sup>1</sup> there are now some 68.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, including 25.4 million recognized refugees<sup>2</sup> and 3.1 million registered asylum-seekers. The overwhelming majority—approximately 85%—of refugees who have fled conflict or persecution across international borders remain in developing countries. A third of all refugees globally are hosted by the least developed countries. More than half of the world's refugee population are children below 18 years of age. As reflected in processes surrounding the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, and the elaboration of the Global Compact on Refugees, among other related developments, the links between responses to cross-border displacement, refugee protection and humanitarian action, development, international cooperation, the support needs of hosting communities, and human mobility more broadly, are increasingly receiving the attention they deserve.

### **Refugee and displacement data**

2. The Global Compact on Refugees highlights the importance of 'reliable, comparable, and timely data' for evidence-based measures as a key tool for operationalizing burden and responsibility sharing in response to refugee situations.<sup>3</sup>
3. At its establishment in 2016, the Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS)<sup>4</sup> was mandated by the UN Statistical Commission to develop International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics (IRRS). The IRRS, which represent the first comprehensive international standards for reporting on refugees and related populations, were endorsed by the Statistical Commission in March 2018.<sup>5</sup> They establish an agreed framework for the production and management of data and statistics on refugees and persons with a refugee background, providing the basis for consistency and comparability in refugee data, and for the inclusion of refugees in national statistical systems. The Recommendations notably provide agreed statistical definitions for refugee categories, indicators for reporting on refugee populations, and methodologies for collecting and analysing refugee statistics.
4. International recommendations for IDP statistics will be finalized in 2019 and presented to the UN Statistical Commission for adoption in March 2020.
5. In the SDG context, UNHCR continues to support indicator disaggregation by migration status, and to recommend the inclusion of an indicator reflecting refugee numbers. This reflects the guidance provided in the IRRS, which recommend disaggregation by refugee and asylum status and provide guidance for monitoring and reporting on progress on achieving the SDGs in line with the agenda of "leaving no one behind". The EGRIS has accordingly identified twelve SDG indicators, under the key policy priority areas of basic needs and living conditions; livelihoods and economic self-reliance; and civil, political and legal rights, which are recommended to be prioritized for disaggregation by displacement status (for refugees and IDPs), with a view

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<sup>1</sup> See UNHCR, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2017*, June 2018, available at [www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2017](http://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2017).

<sup>2</sup> Approximately 19.9 million under UNHCR's mandate, in addition to 5.4 million Palestinian refugees registered by UNWRA.

<sup>3</sup> A/73/12 (Part II). See notably Part 3.3 'Data and evidence' at p8 ff.

<sup>4</sup> The EGRIS steering committee currently comprises, alongside UNHCR, the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS), Statistics Norway, Turkstat, and the UN Statistical Division. The EGRIS was established by the UN Statistical Commission in 2016 and comprises more than 40 national statistical authorities, 20 international and regional organizations, and other technical experts. Its overall objective is to improve the quality and availability of official statistics on refugees and IDPs.

<sup>5</sup> Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Person Statistics (EGRIS), *International Recommendations on Refugee Statistics*, March 2018, available at [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Principles\\_and\\_Recommendations/International-Migration/2018\\_1746\\_EN\\_08-E.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Principles_and_Recommendations/International-Migration/2018_1746_EN_08-E.pdf).

to informing policy and planning decisions and supporting the integration of refugees and IDPs into national development plans.

6. UNHCR has continued to work with national authorities and international organizations to support the inclusion of refugees and IDPs in national population registers and statistical systems.
7. The World Bank and UNHCR are in the process of establishing a joint data centre with UNHCR to improve population and socio-economic data on forced displacement and to strengthen the sustainability of a global data collection system.

### **Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Refugee Forum**

8. The Global Compact on Refugees was affirmed by member states of the UN General Assembly on 17 December 2018, in its annual Resolution on the work of UNHCR,<sup>6</sup> following a two-year period of extensive consultations led by UNHCR with UN Member States, international organizations, experts, civil society and refugees.
9. Though the products of distinct and separate processes, the Global Compact on Refugees (Refugee Compact) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (Migration Compact) are both grounded in the recognition that greater international cooperation is needed to better manage human mobility in all its dimensions. Both compacts have in common the clear acknowledgement that international development has a key role to play in addressing the root causes and consequences of migration and forced displacement. Indeed, both Compacts call on the international community to invest in enhanced efforts to alleviate poverty and provide development assistance to countries of origin in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
10. In the case of refugee situations, with which the Refugee Compact is centrally concerned, there is increasing consensus that the early engagement of development actors is essential in helping host States manage the impact of large-scale refugee situations, including through investment in jobs, education and resilience.<sup>7</sup>
11. The Global Compact on Refugees calls for a number of arrangements to translate the principle of international solidarity into concrete action and generate commitments by States and other stakeholders to better support host communities and to ensure that refugees can thrive alongside their hosts. Chief among them, at the global level, is the Global Refugee Forum, where Governments, development partners, businesses, international organizations, civil society, local authorities, and others can work together and achieve tangible benefits for refugees and host communities by announcing concrete pledges and contributions. Once implemented, these pledges will change the lives for refugees and their host communities for the better, and will pave the way for longer-term solutions to be found, including by supporting conditions for return in safety and dignity to the refugees' countries of origin. Development cooperation is crucial in this regard: job opportunities enable refugees to become more economically self-reliant and contribute to the communities where they live; support to host communities builds their resilience and relieves them of what is really a global responsibility.
12. In addition to facilitating more strategic and dedicated development engagement—including better coherence and coordination between development actors in responses to refugee situations—the Global Refugee Forum will also aim to catalyze partnerships and projects to better collect and analyze data, including on refugees, mixed flows and their effects on host communities, in order to improve the evidence base, inform policy development and plan solutions.

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<sup>6</sup> A/73/12 (Part II).

<sup>7</sup> For examples, in the context of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework that forms the backbone of the Refugee Compact, see UNHCR, *From Commitment to Action: Highlights of Progress towards Comprehensive Refugee Responses since the Adoption of the New York Declaration*, August 2018, notably at pp 4-7 and ff.

13. Finally, the Global Refugee Forum, which will be convened by UNHCR every four years at ministerial level starting in 2019, will also be an opportunity for all of the participants to learn from each other's experiences and exchange good practices, both with respect to specific country or regional situations as well as at the global level.

### **Climate change and disaster displacement**

14. UNHCR has contributed to work towards SDG 13 (urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts) through its ongoing work on climate change and disaster displacement in four main areas: legal advice, guidance and normative development; promoting policy coherence; addressing research and knowledge gaps; and field activities to avert, minimize and address internal and cross-border disaster displacement. The Global Compact on Refugees<sup>8</sup> adopted by the UN General Assembly on 17 December 2018 calls for stakeholders with relevant mandates and expertise to protect persons forcibly displaced by disasters linked to natural hazards, and articulates concrete measures to reduce disaster risk. Further, UNHCR has provided technical support to the UNFCCC process since 2008 through the Advisory Group on Human Mobility and Climate Change,<sup>9</sup> and as a member of the Task Force on Displacement<sup>10</sup> mandated by the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage, contributing to the development of recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement linked to the adverse effects of climate change in 2018<sup>11</sup> that were endorsed by the Parties at COP24.
15. UNHCR continues to actively engage with the Platform on Disaster Displacement<sup>12</sup> as a standing invitee to its Steering Group in follow-up to the Protection Agenda<sup>13</sup> produced by the Nansen Initiative. As part of the Platform's Workplan, in 2018 UNHCR undertook the study: 'In Harm's Way' examining the protection provided to people displaced across borders in specific situations in the Horn of Africa and the Americas in the context of nexus dynamics between conflict or violence and disaster or climate change.<sup>14</sup> The study identifies policy and practical solutions to strengthen the implementation of refugee-law-based international protection in nexus situations. Over the coming months, UNHCR will work with States and other partners to develop guidance on the applicability of refugee law in the context of climate change and disasters.

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<sup>8</sup> A/73/12 (Part II).

<sup>9</sup> See [www.unhcr.org/557ad0429.html](http://www.unhcr.org/557ad0429.html).

<sup>10</sup> [www.unfccc.int/wim-excom/sub-groups/TFD](http://www.unfccc.int/wim-excom/sub-groups/TFD).

<sup>11</sup> See [www.unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/2018\\_TFD\\_report\\_17\\_Sep.pdf](http://www.unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/2018_TFD_report_17_Sep.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> See [www.disasterdisplacement.org](http://www.disasterdisplacement.org).

<sup>13</sup> Nansen Initiative, *Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change*, December 2015, available at [www.disasterdisplacement.org/the-platform/our-response](http://www.disasterdisplacement.org/the-platform/our-response).

<sup>14</sup> UNHCR, *In Harm's Way: International Protection in the Context of Nexus Dynamics Between Conflict or Violence and Disaster or Climate Change*, December 2018, [www.refworld.org/docid/5c2f54fe4.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/5c2f54fe4.html).