

**Global Refugee Forum:
*Recommendations from InterAction's Refugee Policy Working Group***

The affirmation of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) by nearly all Member States on 17 December 2018 marked a historic demonstration of political will toward a more effective and comprehensive response to the global refugee crisis. The Compact presented a rare opportunity to establish better mechanisms for the express goal of international responsibility-sharing for the first time since the adoption of the 1951 Refugee Convention. The first Global Refugee Forum (GRF) scheduled to take place one year later in Geneva will be a critical test for the Compact.

Thus far, preparations for the GRF have included an effort to consult various stakeholders, including refugees and civil society representatives. To date, InterAction members have provided feedback on draft indicators that will be used to assess progress toward the Compact's objectives. We view the indicators as the single most important tool for defining, measuring, and monitoring the Compact's impact and the realization of its intent over time. Together with the pledging template, the indicators form the basis of the GCR's accountability framework.

Yet these tools in their current form are not likely to catalyze new responsibility sharing commitments nor adequately measure progress toward the objectives of the GCR. This presents a significant risk of undermining the only accountability measures that exist in the GCR, thus jeopardizing the credibility of the Compact. These tools should be designed and aligned in a way that promotes coherence with the GCR objectives and adequately captures progress towards them. Otherwise, Member States will likely continue to take actions and allocate resources on an ad hoc and voluntary basis with little accountability toward the objectives that they agreed to in the GCR.

There is still time before the first GRF to build a meaningful monitoring and accountability framework. Specifically, the InterAction Refugee Policy Working Group puts forth the following topline recommendations:

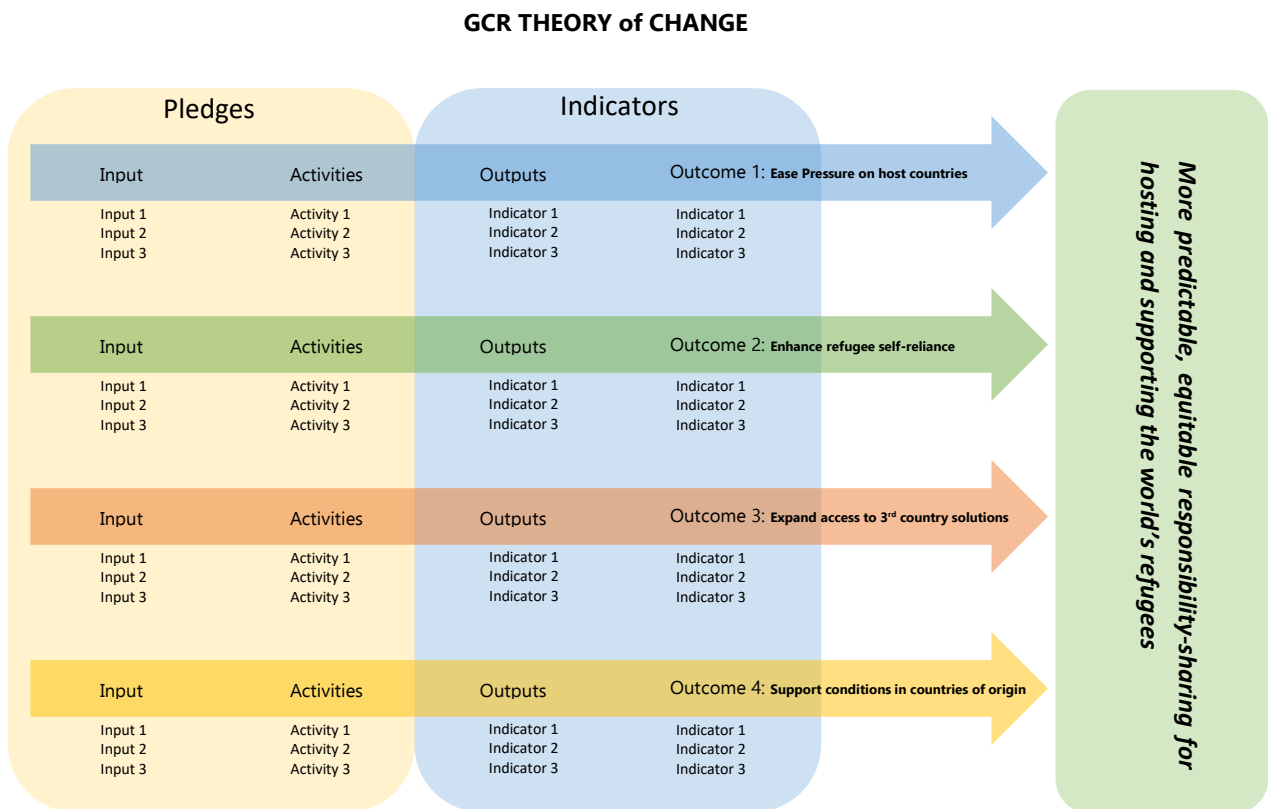
1. **Revise the indicators to be outcome-oriented with a clear line of reasoning.** The indicators currently lack a sound theory of change, or a logical map towards the four GCR objectives. A theory of change model is vital for guiding change efforts going forward, measuring progress against concrete milestones, and demonstrating the cumulative impact of collective efforts toward the GCR objectives.

The four GCR objectives are: 1) Ease pressure on host countries, 2) Enhance refugee self-reliance, 3) Expand access to third country solutions, and 4) Support conditions in countries of origin. The GCR is undergirded by the hypothesis that achieving these objectives will result in more predictable, equitable responsibility-sharing for hosting and supporting the world's refugees, the overarching goal of the Compact.

While the four objectives define the "what" that stakeholders need to deliver, a robust theory of change model would outline "how" transformation would be achieved by further mapping the

key factors, drivers and actions needed to achieve each of the four outcomes. By identifying these preconditions (e.g. inputs, activities, outputs) and mapping their causal linkages, change efforts would be more focused, strategic and well-sequenced.

The below illustration is an example GCR theory of change framework that broadly maps key elements, their causal links and the cumulative impact of efforts toward the overall GCR goal.



2. **Establish a baseline.** An understood “starting point” is necessary for the final indicators to help policymakers and stakeholders determine priorities for early action and track progress over time. This will require a data collection strategy and a clear path for how the data will help policymakers make decisions. Without a well-planned data collection strategy, UNHCR will be left piecing together unharmonized, non-interoperable data and anecdotal information. The UNHCR-World Bank Joint Data Center could serve as a hub and provide technical support towards this effort.
3. **Align the pledging guidance to the indicators.** The pledging template should align clearly with the indicators to guide Member States and other stakeholders toward making pledges that will contribute toward concrete progress on the four main GCR objectives. Without establishing clear “commitment categories” to pledge against, the GRF may result in a cacophony of commitments that are not trackable or comparable and which could ultimately result in a more fractured picture of how responsibility is being shared. It will also stymie efforts to measure progress over time and from one GRF to the next if the commitments can come in an infinite variety of forms.

Furthermore, there should be clarity on how the “thematic areas of focus” align with the four GCR objectives and efforts to ensure that contributions toward them can be tracked over time.

4. **Ensure continuity and quality commitments.** The Pledging Template should encourage new commitments at GRFs, ensuring that these events result in additionality and do not serve as a platform to repackage existing commitments. Encouraging meaningful and relevant pledges from a broad base of contributors should also be the principle role of the GRF co-sponsors and/or co-conveners. Future GRFs should be used to report on progress toward the pledges and to make new ones where gaps persist. Given that the first GRF in 2019 will not allow in this retrospective view, relevant Member States should be encouraged to report on commitments that they made at the 2016 Leaders’ Summit on Refugees as those commitments align with the objectives of the GCR. This will also promote transparency on progress made given that there has been limited visibility on actions taken by Member States since they made the commitments.
5. **Make the data collected on indicators and pledging public.** The data collected on pledges and indicators following GRFs should be made public to enable transparency on where progress is being made and to determine where efforts are falling short. Civil society organizations play a critical role in exerting normative influence over Member States, but without the ability to access and analyze the data, they will lack the information to catalyze change. Making the data public and transparent would provide a measure of much-needed accountability to encourage tangible action on this non-binding compact.