TOWARD EQUITABLE AND PREDICTABLE RESPONSIBILITY SHARING
An Analysis of State Pledges at the Global Refugee Forum

APRIL 2021
ABOUT INTERACTION

Founded in 1984, InterAction is the largest U.S.-based alliance of international NGOs and partners. We mobilize our Members to think and act collectively to serve the world’s poor and vulnerable, with a shared belief that we can make the world a more peaceful, just, and prosperous place—together.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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### KEY FINDINGS

#### DONOR STATE PLEDGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial/Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>161</strong> total financial or material pledges committed by <strong>65</strong> states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.5 billion USD</strong> committed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The top 3 financial pledgers—Germany, the European Union, and the Netherlands—comprised **75%** of the total financial amount pledged.

#### CRISIS-LEVEL PLEDGES

| **299** pledges committed by **69** states to address the world’s top refugee crises |
| **Refugee-hosting countries** made up an overwhelming majority—**70%** of all the top crises pledges—most of which were refugee-inclusive policy commitments |

The neighboring refugee-hosting countries of Venezuela and the DRC crises committed the most pledges, **72** and **64** pledges, respectively.

| **Countries of origin** comprised **17%** of all the top refugee crises pledges, most of which were policy commitments |

Countries of origin CAR and Somalia committed the most pledges, **18** and **14**, respectively.

| **Donor countries** comprised **13%** of all the top crises pledges, most of which were financial and material commitments |

The Syria and South Sudan crises had the most donor financial/material pledges, **15** and **12**, respectively.

| **“Areas of Focus”** |
| “Statelessness” pledges constituted almost a quarter (70) of pledges, reflecting the significant number of pledges included from the High-Level Segment on Statelessness held in October 2019 |

Following statelessness were protection, solutions, and education pledges which comprised 47% of all pledges made toward crisis regions.
BACKGROUND

The first-ever Global Refugee Forum (GRF), held December 17 and 18, 2019, was the first major test for the new framework for international cooperation espoused by the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). InterAction’s analysis of state-level GRF pledges aims to assess whether the international community is on track to achieve the GCR’s goal of more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing for supporting refugees. The analysis aggregates data from the state-level pledges to draw conclusions about the balance of donor and host-state commitments and contextualizes these findings where possible by comparing them to past contributions.

The Global Compact on Refugees: A Framework for More Predictable and Equitable Responsibility-Sharing

The Birth of the GCR Process

Assessing progress on the GCR’s responsibility-sharing goal begins with an understanding of the global political context from which it emerged. The GCR was forged while crises driving displacement became more widespread and increasingly protracted, with fewer refugees returning home than in decades prior.

The GCR and its antecedent, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, emerged in the wake of an increasingly large and protracted Syrian refugee crisis and an unprecedented flow of refugees to Europe in 2015. Skyrocketing global displacement due to protracted conflict and the recognition that refugee-hosting countries could not bear the brunt of crises without more regular and substantial support from the global community pointed to the need for a more robust and formal effort to “share responsibility” for refugees worldwide and to take longer-term approaches to assist the communities that host them.

The GCR Compromise

Despite widespread support for the GCR, text proposing more ambitious mechanisms to ensure State responsibility-sharing was removed during the drafting process. For example, States objected to language proposing that the distribution of a “fair share of responsibility” among them that could be measured by examining their refugee-hosting, financial, or other commitments toward solutions. Similarly, States rejected language proposing a guide to encourage them to resettle a fair share of refugees in need of resettlement.¹

The Compact was further weakened by the States’ insistence that it be strictly voluntary and non-binding. Critics have highlighted this deficiency, drawing comparisons to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, which legally obligated states to the non-refoulement principle. The GCR’s proponents argue that it builds upon the existing refugee protection regime, aiming to fill the “implementation gap” of responsibility-sharing by way of an institutional architecture that facilitates international cooperation in a

practical manner. This approach recognizes that responsibility-sharing is driven by national development priorities and shared strategic interests. Ultimately, many agree that the non-binding GCR was the best possible outcome in a global political context characterized by rising national populism and xenophobia.

Additionally, the GCR included a multi-stakeholder and partnership approach as a core element of its responsibility sharing framework while “recognizing the primary responsibility and sovereignty of States.” This “whole of society” approach also featured prominently at the GRF and in UNHCR’s efforts to “broaden the base” of pledging entities. This was achieved with participation from government, development, civil society, academic, private sector, and other actors.

**The Final Framework**

Amid these challenges, the United Nations General Assembly affirmed the final terms of the GCR on December 17, 2018, ushering in a new framework to more “equitably and predictably share the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world’s refugees.” Four key objectives guide this aim:

- Ease the pressures on host countries.
- Enhance refugee self-reliance.
- Expand access to third-country solutions.
- Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

To facilitate more equitable responsibility-sharing, the GCR established regional support platforms, an asylum capacity support group, a three-year strategy on resettlement and complementary pathways, and a global academic network. The GCR also called for a ministerial-level GRF to be held every four years for stakeholders to make pledges, highlight good practices, and assess progress made toward the Compact’s goals.

Not long after the first-ever GRF was held in December 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic spread worldwide, severely disrupting refugees’ incomes, educational opportunities, and access to asylum. The virus and its secondary impacts—the scale of which are still unknown and unfolding—pose additional challenges to the GCR’s tenet of responsibility sharing. 85% of field protection clusters report increased stigmatization of displaced and other marginalized people. There are examples of xenophobia and stigma against refugees intensifying fear of the “other” and reinforcing inward-looking national policies. In Bangladesh, for example, host communities have blamed refugees for introducing the virus. Worldwide, the disproportionate impact of the virus on vulnerable and marginalized populations has highlighted unequal access to healthcare services and socio-economic support. Nonetheless, this moment presents an

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3 The GCR specifically names refugees and host communities, humanitarian and development actors, the U.N. system, local authorities, local actors, cities and municipalities, parliaments, civil society, faith-based actors, public-private partnerships, global academic network, sports and cultural activities.


unprecedented opportunity for donor and refugee-hosting countries to include vulnerable refugee populations in national and global efforts to defeat the virus and buffer against related economic impacts.

The Global Refugee Forum: The first responsibility-sharing test

One year after the Compact was affirmed, the first-ever Global Refugee Forum was held on December 17 and 18, 2019. Approximately 3,000 attendees gathered in Geneva and committed over 770 pledges (approximately 1,400 when UNHCR included the Statelessness pledges). Though slated as a ministerial-level event for states, attendees hailed from a wide range of sectors, including private companies and NGOs. The diversity of attendants aligned with the “whole of society” or multi-stakeholder and partnership approach espoused by the GCR. Approximately 1,160 entities from a broad range of sectors and disciplines committed pledges spanning a wide range of actions not limited to financial and resettlement contributions made by States.

At the time of writing, few quantitative analyses of the GRF pledges have been conducted outside the examination undertaken by UNHCR in its Outcomes of the Global Refugee Forum 2019 publication. UNHCR’s analysis provides a:

- Breakdown of some 1,400 pledges by:
  - Pledging entity: member states, international organizations, the private sector, international financial institutions, NGOs, refugees, etc.
  - Area of focus: education, energy and infrastructure, jobs and livelihoods, protection capacity, responsibility-sharing arrangements, solutions, and others.
  - Contribution Type: policy, material, financial, resettlement, or other.
  - Region and area of focus.

- Summary of financial commitments made by pledging entities.

In contrast to UNHCR’s analysis of all GRF pledges, InterAction’s pledge analysis focuses exclusively on State-level pledges. This analysis and subsequent recommendations are based on the premise that states are positioned to deliver the most impactful contributions to the GCR’s responsibility-sharing goal. Refugee-hosting government policies have the most direct impact on refugees’ prospects for durable solutions. If these policies are sufficiently buttressed by donor countries’ contributions, they could have a transformative impact on refugees’ daily lives.

The analysis provides a detailed breakdown of the following types of State-level pledges:

1. Donor countries offer resettlement pledges to expand third-country solutions.
2. Donor countries commit more funds to ease pressure on hosting countries.
3. Hosting countries improve refugee local integration and reliance through their national policies.
4. Countries of Origin take policy stances that facilitate safe, voluntary, and sustainable return.
METHODOLOGY

Dataset Used

This paper analyzes the pledges extracted from the [UNHCR GRF dashboard](#). This dataset was downloaded on October 16, 2020, and included 1,395 total pledges. After filtering “Submitting Entity Type” by “States” only, 786 pledges remained. An additional 29 pledges submitted by “International Organisations” was added to this dataset to include state-level unions such as the E.U., African Union, Organization of American States (OAS), etc., bringing the total number of pledges examined to 815.

Analysis of Donor Financial, Material and Resettlement Pledges

InterAction analyzed donor countries’ financial, material, and resettlement pledges. The dataset was filtered for pledges whose “Contribution Type” was self-reported as any combination of “financial,” “material,” “resettlement,” and “other.”

These self-reported categories, however, were often unclear or inconsistent, posing a major challenge to analysis. Therefore, InterAction created precise definitions for the categories under “Contribute Type” and systematically re-labeled each pledge. The “Area of Focus” categorizations were left as self-reported by states due to their marginal importance for the purpose of this analysis. InterAction removed a small number (seven pledges) that did not meet these definitions and contained no actual commitment.

The remaining pledges were then aggregated for the following analysis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial and Material Pledges</th>
<th>Resettlement Pledges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Number of financial and material pledges</td>
<td>Number of resettlement pledges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 USD Committed</td>
<td>Number of resettlement places committed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Number of total donors</td>
<td>Number of total State donor pledges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 States pledging the most USD</td>
<td>States pledging the most resettlement places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 States receiving the most USD</td>
<td>States receiving the most resettlement places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Percentage of numerable commitments</td>
<td>Percentage of numerable commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Breakdown by area of focus</td>
<td>Breakdown by areas of focus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 Appendix A
8 Appendix B
InterAction developed additional internal guidelines to systematically calculate:

1. Financial commitments.
2. Financial commitments by the E.U. and its member states to avoid double counting.
3. Resettlement commitments by the E.U. and its member states to avoid double counting.³

**Analysis of Top Crisis-Level Pledges**

InterAction also analyzed state pledges made toward the 10 countries from which 83% of all people displaced across borders originated, according to the 2019 UNHCR Global Trends Report.¹⁰ Central America pledges were included in the analysis as an 11th crisis because the region’s Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (known by its Spanish acronym, MIRPs) was one of the three regional support platforms launched at the GRF.¹¹

Along with MIRPs, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) for the East and Horn of Africa and the Support Platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) for Afghan refugees are platforms that mobilize political commitments, financial and material assistance, and resettlement pathways, in addition to facilitating coherent responses to refugee crises. As key vehicles for promoting improved responsibility sharing at the regional or crisis level, pledges made for these crises provide insight into crucial gaps and opportunities for progress.

InterAction began the analysis by filtering the GRF dashboard for state pledges made toward the refugee-hosting countries and countries of origin for these top crises. Refugee-hosting country pledges were included if the country hosted 18,000 or more refugees according to UNHCR data at the time of analysis.¹² ¹³ This low threshold allowed InterAction to capture a wide breadth of refugee-hosting countries across the world’s top refugee crises.

The pledges made toward addressing these refugee crises were aggregated for the following analysis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Crisis-Level Pledges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Number of inclusive policy pledges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Breakdown by region or crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Breakdown by State type (host, donor, origin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Breakdown by Contribution Type (financial/material, resettlement, policy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Breakdown by area of focus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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³ Appendix C
¹² InterAction includes displaced Venezuelans when using the term “refugees” in this report.
¹³ Appendix D
Limitations

GRF Dashboard Updates

The UNHCR GRF Dashboard is a living database and has been continuously updated with new and revised pledges following the GRF in December 2019. This analysis does not include revisions or additions made to the dashboard after October 16, 2020, when the data for this report were extracted.

This analysis also excludes state contributions addressing refugee crises outside the commitments included on the dashboard (e.g., The United States did not make a pledge at the GRF despite being the highest financial contributor to ODA globally).

Quantifiability

Of the 161 financial and material pledges committed, almost half (48%) lacked a quantifiable financial or material commitment. The following pledges, for example, can’t be meaningfully included in any systematic analysis.

*The Government of Finland is committed to raising the level of funding for humanitarian assistance. We acknowledge that if protracted crises are to be dealt with effectively, there has to be good coordination between peacebuilding, humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. This can be enhanced through more flexible funding of humanitarian assistance and development cooperation and by enabling multiannual funding arrangements. Finland is committed to providing a large proportion of its humanitarian funding as non-earmarked core funding and this commitment is reiterated in the revised humanitarian policy from this year. Finland’s objective is to remain a flexible donor that facilitates effective and timely humanitarian funding and therefore assistance.*

*Germany continues its support for improving WASH and energy infrastructure benefitting refugees. In addition, this support will create long-term benefits for host communities, applying sustainable and cost-efficient schemes and suitable, reliable and affordable technology solutions in refugee contexts.*

It should, however, be noted that legitimate factors prevented some states from announcing precise amounts at the GRF. These include budgetary and planning cycles (e.g., E.U.’s budget cycle, which begins in 2021), which are typically much longer for development financing than for humanitarian contribution. Also, the GRF coincided with elections in several States, precluding them from making concrete commitments (e.g., Canada and Denmark).

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Additionality

InterAction was unable to systematically assess whether the pledges were genuinely new. Most pledges appear to have been previously committed from initiatives continuing from prior years. For example, this Canadian pledge describes funding already committed in 2018 as part of an education initiative for girls:

*The Charlevoix Declaration on Quality Education for Girls, Adolescent Girls and Women in Developing Countries, adopted in 2018 during Canada’s G7 presidency, galvanized global action on quality education and led to a $3.8B dollar investment with five other donors (The World Bank, UK, EU, Japan and Germany), including a Canadian pledge of $400M over three years...”*

Timeframes

Timeframes were also inconsistent or missing from many pledges, further complicating analysis. For example, it is unclear whether this E.U. commitment is new or simply a restatement of past efforts:

*EU support to health programs aims to restore or reinforce disrupted essential health services and provide additional services, including mental and psychosocial support. In countries affected by the Syrian crisis, EU support to health care amounts to over €1 billion. The EU supports humanitarian water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interventions, with annual allocations of some €200 million to WASH in recent years.*

Statelessness Pledges

The dataset also included the 290 state pledges that UNHCR added from the High-Level Segment on Statelessness held in October 2019. For ease of analysis, InterAction categorized the “Country Type” of statelessness pledges according to the refugee “hosting,” “origin,” and “donor” definitions outlined in Appendix A, though these categories are not well suited for all stateless populations.
RESULTS

Donor Financial and Material Pledges

A total of 65 states committed 161 financial and material pledges. The combined financial commitments amount to approximately 6.5 billion USD. To contextualize this figure, UNHCR’s 2019 budget alone was approximately 8.6 billion USD.\(^\text{15}\) In addition, the total financial amount pledged is likely inflated as states frequently included amounts that included their entire humanitarian budgets, without specifying what percentage was allocated for refugee crises. In these cases, the entire financial amount contained in the pledge was counted.

The top 10 state-level financial pledging entities and their total commitments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pledging Entity</th>
<th>Funds Committed (USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Germany</td>
<td>2.1 b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 European Union</td>
<td>2 b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Netherlands</td>
<td>723 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Canada</td>
<td>451 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Ireland</td>
<td>316 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Denmark</td>
<td>203 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Kuwait</td>
<td>173 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Switzerland</td>
<td>138 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Republic of Korea</td>
<td>72 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Costa Rica</td>
<td>70 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.5 b</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The top three financial contributors pledged a combined total of 4.9 billion USD or 75% of the total financial commitments at the GRF. While these pledges do not provide a complete picture of all financial contributions toward addressing refugee crises, the high concentration of state-committed funds in the top three financial pledging states indicate a marked lack of aspiration in equitable responsibility-sharing going forward. Given that providing financial resources for refugee response is one of the primary mechanisms that non-refugee hosting states can utilize toward the realization of this goal, it is particularly concerning. The lack of a timeframe in pledges also diminishes the significance of the 6.5 billion USD total committed by States as it is unclear over what period these commitments will be dispersed.

The most commonly designated region for financial/material pledges was “Global/Multiple,” but many of these commitments were for UNHCR or IOM. UNHCR or IOM was named 22 times as pledge recipient, out of 111 pledges with designated recipients, and received 1.8 billion USD in commitments. Despite being among the top recipients of GRF financial/material pledges, UNHCR’s funding gap as of August 2020 was 51%. The following pledges are some examples of significant pledges made to these agencies.

Germany pledges to continue to provide a significant level of funding for UNHCR in 2020. Our pledge for the initial 2020 funding for UNHCR for its humanitarian activities amounts to 99.5 Mil EUR. And we are committed to maintaining the level of our un-earmarked core contribution and to providing multi-year and softly-earmarked situational level funding to UNHCR to grant the flexibility and predictability needed to fulfill its mandate in the best possible way. The planned core contribution in the amount of 24 Mil EUR is included in the total amount of the pledge. The provision of the allocation depends on the availability of the full amount of the allocations in the budget of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany for the 2020 financial year.

Ireland pledges to increase core funding to the International Organization for Migration to € 1 million in 2020. IOM plays a central role in the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

Norway will offer approximately 8.8 million NOK for UNHCR in 2020 to enhance UNHCR’s resettlement capacity.

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17 InterAction copied the pledge language directly from the dashboard. The only alterations InterAction made to the pledge language was to fix misspellings and remove formatting to improve readability.
Africa and the MENA region were the second most popularly designated regions, which together comprised 25% of all financial/material pledges. There were many strong state-level pledges in these regions:

*Germany will continue to substantially fund its Partnership for Prospects Initiative (P4P) for job opportunities in the Middle East. P4P facilitates both temporary and longer-term job opportunities for Syrian and Iraqi refugees, IDPs and host communities in respective neighboring countries. In 2019, Germany has allocated approximately 300 million EUR for this initiative.*

*Denmark is developing a new multi-year program to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity among affected communities across the Sahel region and the Horn of Africa... The overall budget will amount to DKK 200 million per year for five years, subject to parliamentary approval.*

*Saudi Arabia pledges 1,000,000 USD toward the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees in Yemen.*

**Donor Resettlement Pledges**

At first glance, the donor state resettlement pledges are the most underwhelming commitments from the GRF. A total of 23 States made 31 resettlement pledges. **Of these, only seven States committed numerable resettlement pledges, amounting to just 60,860 resettlement places overall.** These seven States made up 35% of the resettlement pledges (11) containing a concrete numerical commitment. The remaining pledges were vague or focused on integration efforts for already-resettled refugees. The top two pledging entities, the E.U. and Canada, comprise a full 75% of the total resettlement places pledged. As with all the pledges, there was also no commensurable timeframe for resettlement commitments. Some States made commitments that spanned multiple years, meaning the 60,860 resettlement places pledged were not solely designated for 2020.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pledging Entity</th>
<th>Resettlement Places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 European Union</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Canada</td>
<td>19,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 United Kingdom</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Norway</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Switzerland</td>
<td>1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Japan</td>
<td>1,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Iceland</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60,860</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Given that the estimated 65,000 people resettled to third countries in 2019 met just 4.5% of the 1.44 million global resettlement places needed, the total number committed at the GRF is woefully insufficient.\(^{18}\) It also falls short of the yearly target set out in the Three-Year Strategy (2019-2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathway to achieve its vision of three million third-country solutions for refugees by the end of 2028. According to the strategy, the 2020 target is 70,000 resettlement places across 31 countries. By comparison, the GRF pledges capture a commitment of 60,860 resettlement places across just seven countries. Further, widespread COVID-19 border closures in the first half of 2020 were a major blow to progress on the Three-Year Strategy as asylum applications decreased by 33% in the first half of 2020.\(^{19}\)

However, an examination of the two top pledging entities’ commitments reflects some hopeful progress on global refugee resettlement. The E.U.’s commitment of 30,000 places for 2020 is a bright spot, considering that only 41,300 refugees were resettled in Europe between December 2017 and December 2019.\(^{20}\) Moreover, in September 2020, after the GRF—and despite the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic—the European Commission’s new Pact on Migration and Asylum extended the E.U. target of 30,000 refugees with a strong political commitment to maintain or increase resettlement to Europe going forward.

Similarly, Canada’s increased acceptance of refugees in recent years was a welcome development, particularly in light of the precipitous decline in refugee admissions in the neighboring United States. In 2018, Canada accepted 28,000 refugees, supplanting the United States in its historical role as the largest receiver of resettled refugees globally. And in October 2020, Canada announced further increases in its refugee resettlement levels as part of its 2021-2023 Immigration Plan, reinforcing its commitment to accepting higher numbers of refugees in the coming years.\(^{21}\)

While the pledged sum of 60,860 resettlement places alone may not indicate significant progress, the commitments from the top two pledging entities signal a positive shift in responsibility-sharing for refugee resettlement. Hopefully, this trend will be supported by the United States returning to higher resettlement numbers under the Biden Administration, which has committed to accepting 125,000 refugees annually—a figure that the U.S. has not reached since the early to mid-1990s.\(^{22}\)

However, a great deal of progress must be made on the resettlement front to move toward more equitable responsibility-sharing for refugees. After the E.U. and Canada, the remaining 18 states that made resettlement pledges offered only a combined 16,000 resettlement places at the GRF. The striking lack of commitment outside of the E.U. and Canada reflects a significant gap in shared responsibility for refugees by donor and non-hosting states. Not only is there a dramatic gap between the provision of resettlement


slots and the need for them, but it also sends a demoralizing signal to states hosting large numbers of refugees on their territory. Focused advocacy on increasing the refugee resettlement commitments from the states that have ample scope to establish programs or increase their resettlement numbers should be a major component of the next GRF.

**Area of Focus (Financial, Material and Resettlement Pledges)**

Over half of the Financial, Material, and Resettlement pledges were self-reported as education or responsibility sharing, while protection, jobs, and livelihoods comprised another 30% of the pledges. These areas of focus are all self-reported, resulting in a wide variety of interpretations of what pledges fit in the categories. The first GRF emphasized six thematic areas: arrangements for burden and responsibility sharing; education; jobs and livelihoods; energy and infrastructure; solutions; and protection capacity. In the lead up to the GRF, each thematic area had alliance groups led by co-sponsors that produced frameworks to guide the pledging process. The education group was particularly effective, with the greatest number of donor pledges after statelessness and a *prominent presence* at the forum itself.
Top Refugee Crises Pledges

Analysis of pledges made toward the top ten refugee crises and Central America provides insight on the balance of donor, hosting country, and country of origin pledges made at the GRF. A total of 69 states committed 299 pledges to address these crises.

Hosting countries made up an overwhelming majority of the pledges made toward the examined crisis regions, most of which were policy pledges. The proportion of donor and country of origin pledges is significantly smaller. Given the underwhelming total sum of donor State financial commitments discussed in the prior section, this uneven State- and pledge-type distribution is a cause for concern. Overall, the low total sum of donor financial commitments globally, the low quantity of donor financial/material pledges in the crisis areas, and the relatively higher quantity of refugee-hosting inclusive policy pledges reflect an upholding of the status quo of uneven responsibility sharing.

Some crises may have received more host country pledges because of the region’s greater number of neighboring host countries. For example, the Venezuela crisis has the highest number of neighboring host countries (11) compared to the other crises examined. However, some hosting countries were also more engaged in the pledge-making process than others. The Venezuela crisis’ high number of pledges were also driven by a large number of commitments made by Mexico (18) and Argentina (16).

Similarly, African hosting states made many pledges, particularly toward the crises in the DRC and South Sudan, with host countries Angola, Zambia, and Kenya making significant quantities of pledges. On the other hand, some crises received few or zero pledges from hosting countries. Notably, Iran and Pakistan did not make any pledges which contributed to the Afghanistan crisis’ low numbers of GRF commitments. Similarly, Bangladesh and Malaysia did not make any pledges at the GRF for the Myanmar crisis.

In some cases, there were strong, inclusive policy pledges:

**Costa Rica pledges to provide insurance for universal access to health services for refugees and asylum seekers, namely basic health services (first level), as well as care in an emergency (second and third level). This is through international cooperation with UNHCR. Currently, 5,700 vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers have been secured. The average monthly investment per person is USD 63.**

**Uganda’s progressive refugee policy has long included refugees into its national education system. At the current scale of the refugee population, it will continue to do so through the prioritized investments outlined in the Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities (ERP). Uganda pledges to further increase access to quality education for 579,000 refugee and host community children and youth by implementing the Plan (Para. 68-69 of the Global Compact on Refugees).**

There were also many pledges from hosting countries that were vague, making commitments to “engage” or “promote” certain actions:

**The Royal Thai Government hereby commits to promote access to education for stateless children.**

**South Africa intends to resolve the backlog in refugee status determination and promote durable solutions for deserving asylum seekers and refugees.**

**Sudan: Integration of refugee education in national education system in a gradual manner.**

**The United Republic of Tanzania pledges to continue to work with UNHCR and other stakeholders to improve the quality of education for the refugees.**

While the majority of pledges made toward the examined crises were host country policy pledges, the balance among state and contribution type varied. In the Syrian, Afghanistan, and South Sudan crises in particular, there was a higher number of donor financial/material pledges made relative to hosting state

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24 Appendix D
Many of the countries of origin in Africa—CAR, Somalia, DRC, South Sudan, and Sudan—also made significant numbers of pledges. For example, the Central African Republic pledged to:

*Improve access to birth registration procedures and strengthen institutional capacity of civil registration services in return locations of returnees and IDPs.*

*Facilitate access to documentation of proof of nationality for returnees of Central African origin.*

Similarly, Somalia made strong pledges toward integrating returnees:

*Federal Government of Somalia commits to: Creation of 250,000 new jobs within 5 years (25% for IDPs and Refugee-Returnees) through creating an environment that will enable the private sector to generate jobs in the following sectors that hold the greatest potential for both value-addition and employment growth in the short to medium term: (a) Agriculture: fisheries, meat and milk, fruits, sesame (b) Light manufacturing: agro-food, leather, renewable energy (c) Construction: public works and housing.*

*Federal Government of Somalia commits to: Relocation and Reintegration for 5,000 Refugees (800 HHs), 25,000 Refugee-Returnees (4,000 HHs) and 50,000 IDPs (8,000 HHs) within 5 years (based on NDP9 timeframe 2020-2024) across Federal Member States, including provision of protection and basic services.*

Notably, countries of origin Afghanistan, Eritrea, Syria, and Venezuela did not make any pledges. While Myanmar made one pledge, it was to “facilitate” voluntary returns for Rohingya refugees in Thailand. Furthermore, in cases where a state was both a hosting country and a country of origin, those states were more inclined to make pledges about their stance toward hosting refugees as opposed to making pledges about facilitating returns. This was observed in South Sudan, Sudan, and the DRC.

Further contextual analysis is needed to assess the quality of pledges made for each region. Overall, there seems to be a wide range of pledge quality, from policy changes that genuinely promote refugee integration to perfunctory statements of minimal value. More focused crisis and State-level analysis would help to assess gaps and priority areas for future pledges. Moreover, revising the pledging template to require great specificity, including numerical targets and timeframe, would improve the overall quality of pledges.
DEEPER DIVE: MYANMAR CRISIS PLEDGES

A deadly crackdown by Myanmar’s army on the Rohingya in August 2017 caused hundreds of thousands to flee the country. Today, more than 1.6 million people are displaced by the crisis, primarily in Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Thailand.25 The situation has taken on added urgency as Bangladesh begins moving Rohingya, against their will, to Bhasan Char island in the Bay of Bengal.26

There were only ten pledges committed toward the Myanmar crisis at the GRF, making it the second-lowest recipient of pledges of the eleven crises examined in this analysis.

There were only two State-level donor pledges committed toward the Rohingya crisis. Ireland “dedicated funding” to the Rohingya crisis without specifying an amount, and Kuwait pledged $22 million in combined funding to the Syrian and Rohingya crises. As of October 2020, the Bangladesh Joint Response Plan and the Myanmar Humanitarian Response Plan were still underfunded by half a billion dollars.27 To close this gap, the U.S., E.U., and U.K. hosted another conference in late October and received $600 million in commitments.28

Despite estimates that hundreds of thousands of Rohingya are eligible for resettlement, there were no major pledges made at the GRF to increase the number of resettlement spots for them. The Philippines pledged to “explore” the development of complementary pathways but made no quantifiable commitment.

Hosting countries for the Rohingya crisis were not active at the GRF. Bangladesh and Malaysia made no pledges. While Thailand made pledges at the GRF, the pledges were vague:

*The Royal Thai Government hereby commits to promote access to education for stateless children*

*The Royal Thai Government hereby commits to expedite process to address statelessness among the elderly.*

As mentioned above, Myanmar made a single pledge committing to “facilitate” voluntary returns for Rohingya refugees in Thailand.

InterAction also examined pledges made toward the crisis regions through the lens of thematic area. Pledges coded as dealing with “statelessness” constituted almost a quarter of all the pledges made toward the crisis regions. However, many pledges in this category were added from the High-Level Segment on Statelessness held in October 2019.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Identify Priority Crisis and State-level Pledges

- Produce a crisis and state-level analysis of commitments already made at the GRF and other pledging conferences to assess gaps and priority areas for future pledges. There are many pledging conferences, diminishing the incentive to make new pledges with each additional conference. An analysis of what has been pledged so far would help identify gaps and priority areas for States to commit pledges at the next GRF. UNHCR has already undertaken such analysis at the country level for Ethiopia and Sudan. The upcoming High-Level Officials meeting (HLOM) slated for December 14 and 15, 2021, would be a prime opportunity to present such an analysis.

- Leverage the regional support platforms to identify priority pledges with a higher level of specificity. Urge hosting and origin States in the IGAD, MIRPs, and SSAR platforms to make policy pledges that translate the priorities of the regional support platform plans into concrete commitments. Donor States should buttress those pledges with financial commitments to foster the political momentum needed for transformative results.

- Establish a “core group” for other refugee crises without dedicated regional support platforms, particularly those among the top 10 refugee crises, or leverage existing stakeholders implementing comprehensive refugee response frameworks (CRRF) at the country level to identify priority State-level pledges for the next GRF.

- Engage NGOs to “ground truth” progress on previous pledges. While there was a significant NGO presence at the first GRF, NGOs’ knowledge and expertise could be better utilized. In June 2020, pledging entities began reporting on the progress of pledges as “fulfilled,” “in progress,” or in the “planning stage” through the GRF Dashboard. NGOs are well positioned to “ground truth” progress on pledges with much greater nuance and specificity. In particular, local and refugee-led NGOs are best placed to identify refugees and host communities’ priority needs and determine what policies need to be advanced with their governments.

Facilitate Priority Pledges

- Propose aspirational financial and resettlement commitments to donor states based on gross domestic product (GDP), population, and current level of responsibility-sharing. InterAction’s examination of donor State financial commitments in particular indicates a marked lack of progress from the status quo. Thus, the primary focus—and pressure—in the next GRF should be on donor States to increase their financial and resettlement contributions. Proposing specific country commitments based on a global responsibility-sharing index would put some necessary pressure on donor states, which as a group failed to shift the needle on the current state of responsibility sharing.

- Redouble efforts to match pledges so that priority origin and refugee-hosting state policy pledges are complemented by financial pledges that will facilitate their implementation. The process of brokering these kinds of interlocking commitments would encourage more aspirational and impactful pledges.
in the spirit of responsibility sharing. However, member state pressure to hold the first GRF in a short time frame provided limited opportunity for these negotiations to happen. Furthermore, lower- and middle-income countries (LMIC) unfamiliar with formulating pledges could benefit from increased and tailored support. This important work requires a much greater investment in time and capacity and should be a key focus leading up to the next pledging forum.

- Leverage the thematic area coalitions. The first GRF emphasized six thematic areas in particular: arrangements for burden and responsibility sharing; education; jobs and livelihoods; energy and infrastructure; solutions; and protection capacity. Alliance groups were formed around each thematic area, which produced global guidance on pledging. Yet, the pervasive vagueness of State-level pledges emerged as a major issue among the GRF commitments. Nevertheless, the GRF mobilized broad participation among states and presents a starting point to advocate for more concrete pledges in the future. Leading up to the HLOM and the next GRF, these thematic area coalitions could focus on clarifying priority “asks” of hosting, donor, and origin states to facilitate contextualized pledges that address specific barriers over specific periods of time across these thematic areas.

Revised the Pledging Template for Quantifiable, New, and Timebound Pledges

InterAction applauds UNHCR for creating the publicly accessible GRF pledges and contributions dashboard. A historical challenge in past pledging conferences has been the lack of public data on progress made by member states toward their pledges. The availability of quality data is essential for stakeholders to determine a clear picture of global responsibility sharing for refugees and inform and engage donors, hosts, and origin governments.

Quantifiability

While the GRF pledges are easily accessible and transparent, analyzing them is challenging. The pledges were largely submitted in an open text format, making it time-consuming to extract relevant data for analysis. However, much of the relevant pledging data, such as the number of resettlement places committed and financial resources pledged, is compatible with closed-ended formats that would ensure that quantifiable commitments are easily aggregated and compared.

Where the pledging template did utilize a closed-ended format (i.e., checkboxes), it lacked clear definitions for the available categories. For instance, pledging entities self-reported their pledge as “financial,” “material,” “resettlement,” “policy,” or “other,” yet there was no clear definition for these categories. The result was inconsistent categorization that required a time-consuming verification process.

To facilitate analysis and foster greater accountability for pledge implementation, a revised pledging template should:

- Require pledging entities to report their quantifiable financial or material commitment in a closed-ended entry box so that total financial/material commitments can be aggregated with ease.
- Require pledging entities to report their quantifiable resettlement places commitment in a closed-ended entry box so that total resettlement place commitments can be aggregated with ease.
Provide clear definitions for “Contribution Type” and “Area of Focus” so that there is less inconsistency within these self-reported categories. This may require a backend verification process to rectify incorrectly categorized pledges.

Additionality

Many of the GRF pledges were vague, upheld the status quo, and were in some cases repackaged descriptions of past actions taken. For there to be a true shift in responsibility-sharing and tangible progress forward, the pledges must be new. A revised pledging template should:

- Deter statements of past efforts in pledge descriptions and allow pledging entities to only state new commitments. A process for justifying new pledges and backend due diligence to verify that they are actually new may be necessary.

Timeframe

Many pledges spanned a range of time periods, and some pledges did not include any timeframe. To foster greater accountability on implementation, the pledges must also be timebound. A revised pledging template should:

- Require a timeframe in a closed-ended entry box so pro-rata/yearly calculations can be made. This will facilitate a more accurate assessment of total commitments made over a defined period and better enable tracking of progress to meet them.

For commitments to be truly effective, they must be quantifiable, new, and timebound. While it is questionable whether the below pledges from Canada and Norway are new, they are good examples of financial pledges with distinct timeframes and quantifiable commitments. Future GRF pledges should aim to model the conciseness and clarity of these pledges:

Canada pledges to renew its long-term institutional support to UNHCR. This global funding support will maintain Canada’s existing annual level ($12.6 million) of unearmarked funding support to UNHCR, and will extend the duration of this support to four years (2020 to 2023) for a total amount of $50.4 million.

Norway commits an unearmarked contribution to UNHCR’s general budget with 380 million Norwegian kroner for 2020.

In the lead up to the GRF, InterAction’s Forced Displacement Working Group advocated for a list of minimum standards for entities making pledges, including criteria for new, timebound, and concrete pledges. Though UNHCR may be unable to reject pledges outright, these simple revisions to the template and guidance around future GRFs would promote the transformative commitments needed to make progress toward the goals enshrined in the GCR and ensure accountability for results.
InterAction Country Type Definitions

To enhance our analysis of equitable burden and responsibility sharing, InterAction created definitions that allowed us to code pledges as donor, origin, or hosting country. In many cases, the same country made pledges in more than one category (e.g., DRC made both hosting and origin country pledges). Some pledges were double-counted across multiple Country Type categories, particularly when state unions (e.g., African Union, European Union, etc.) made pledges that applied to their membership consisting of a mix of hosting, origin, and/or donor countries.

- **Hosting**: Refugee-hosting states that made commitments toward addressing refugee crises within their borders.

- **Origin**: States from which refugees are fleeing that made commitments toward promoting conditions for safe, voluntary, and sustainable return.

- **Donor**: States that are neither refugee-hosting nor countries of origin making commitments toward addressing refugee crises. Most donor pledges were addressed to refugee crises outside the donor state’s borders, with rare exceptions.
APPENDIX B

Contribution Type and Area of Focus Definitions

InterAction Contribution Type Definitions

Due to states’ inconsistent self-reporting of “Contribution Type” and “Area of Focus,” InterAction decided to create precise definitions for policy, material, financial, and resettlement pledges.

- **Resettlement**: Pledges that commit to providing permanent residence status (resettlement) or the provision of safe, regulated avenues for lawful stay of refugees (complementary pathways) in a third country. Pledges that promote welcoming and inclusive societies for the long-term integration of resettled refugees were also counted.

- **Financial/Material**: Pledges that commit monetary assistance or resources to refugees, refugee-hosting countries, or refugee programs. Though UNHCR coded financial and material pledges separately, InterAction combined them into one category for ease of analysis. While host country commitments to provide refugees with basic services entail financial implications, InterAction coded them as policy pledges. Pledges where host countries requested international financial support to implement a policy but did not commit funds themselves were not counted as financial/material pledges.

- **Policy**: Pledges that commit to courses of action or policies that promote refugee inclusion into the host countries’ legal, rights framework, labor market, or basic services. Alternatively, pledges that commit to courses of action or policies that promote conditions for safe, voluntary, and sustainable return to a country of origin.

Area of Focus

For the most part, InterAction did not change the self-reported “Area of Focus” categories: statelessness, protection, solutions, education, jobs and livelihoods, responsibility-sharing arrangements, energy, and infrastructure, other, and multiple. However, InterAction re-categorized “health” pledges in its own group as they were subsumed under the broad “energy and infrastructure” category. Given the challenges posed by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (and opportunities for advancing refugee inclusion in healthcare systems), albeit after the GRF took place, this additional analysis may be valuable.
Financial, Material, and Resettlement Pledge Calculation Rules

In many pledges, countries restated their past humanitarian financial, material, or resettlement contributions. InterAction only included amounts or places that were allocated for 2019 or later and did not include any restatements of past efforts. While the GRF was held in December 2019, including 2019 commitments allowed InterAction to capture pledges that could have planned in the lead up to the pledging forum.

Furthermore, if a pledge included a country’s total humanitarian commitment or other large programs that included aid not entirely for refugee or refugee-hosting countries, efforts were made to only include the amounts that were explicitly allocated to refugees or refugee-hosting countries. However, many pledges did not disaggregate refugee-specific allocations, in which case the entire commitment was counted.

In rare cases, InterAction re-attributed pledges where hosting countries made financial commitments that were funded by another country. Where InterAction was unable to verify this, it left the pledges attributed to the original entity that submitted the pledge.

InterAction developed specific rules for dealing with pledges made by the European Union (E.U.) and its member states upon consultation with UNHCR. European Union financial commitments were considered exclusive from its member states’ individual contributions. Therefore, the financial commitments made by the E.U. and those made separately by its member states were treated as separate pledges and added together when calculating totals. However, the number of resettlement places committed by the E.U. were inclusive of the resettlement pledges of its individual member states. Therefore, InterAction only included the E.U.’s commitment of 30,000 resettlement places in calculation and did not include the resettlement places committed by individual E.U. member states to avoid double-counting.

All financial amounts were converted to USD according to currency conversion rates on December 17, 2019, the first day of the GRF.
Top Refugee Crises Pledge Calculation Rules

InterAction analyzed the policy, financial, material, and resettlement pledges made toward the top ten countries of origin of displaced people across borders according to the UNHCR Global Report 2019. Central America pledges were included in the analysis as an 11th crisis because the region’s Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (known by its Spanish acronym, MIRPs) was one of the three regional support platforms launched at the GRF.

The below figures for displaced people across borders from these top countries of origin are up to date as of November 12, 2020, when the data was extracted from the UNHCR website. Refugee-hosting country pledges were included if the country hosted 18,000 or more refugees at the time of analysis. This low threshold allowed InterAction to capture a wide breadth of hosting countries across the world’s top refugee crises.

In some cases, a country could be both a country of origin and a refugee-hosting country. For example, South Sudan hosts refugees and, at the same time, many South Sudanese refugees are hosted in neighboring countries. In these situations, the nature of the pledge was examined to determine whether it was a refugee-hosting pledge that promoted local integration or a country-of-origin pledge toward promoting conditions for safe, voluntary, and sustainable return.

1. **Syria – 6.6 million**
   - Turkey
   - Lebanon
   - Jordan
   - Egypt
   - Iraq

2. **Venezuela – 3.6 million**
   - Colombia
   - Chile
   - Peru
   - Ecuador
   - Argentina
   - Brazil
   - Panama
   - Mexico

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Dominican Republic
Guyana
Costa Rica

3. **Afghanistan** – 2.7 million
   Pakistan
   Iran

4. **South Sudan** – 2.2 million
   Uganda
   Sudan
   Ethiopia
   Kenya
   DRC

5. **Myanmar** – 1.1 million
   Bangladesh
   Malaysia
   Thailand

6. **Somalia** – 0.9 million
   Kenya
   Yemen
   Ethiopia
   Uganda
   South Africa
   Djibouti

7. **DRC** – 0.8 million
   Uganda
   Burundi
   Rwanda
   Tanzania
   Zambia
   Kenya
   South Africa
   Angola
   Congo

8. **Sudan** – 0.7 million
   Chad
   South Sudan
   Ethiopia
   Egypt
   Cameroon
9. **Central African Republic – 0.6 million**
   - Cameroon
   - DRC
   - Chad
   - Sudan
   - Congo

10. **Eritrea – 0.5 million**
    - Ethiopia
    - Sudan

11. **Central America –**
    - El Salvador (country of origin)
    - Honduras (country of origin)
    - Guatemala (country of origin)
    - Mexico
    - Costa Rica
    - Panama
    - Belize


