

Open Letter to Governments Attending the High Level Officials Meeting: A Call to End Discrimination in Refugee Responses

Dear Distinguished representatives,

We write to you ahead of the High-Level Officials Meeting to call for your action and support to tackle discrimination and recommit to equitable and inclusive responses to all groups of refugees and stateless persons.

The recently released Global Compact on Refugees Indicator Report evidences the progress made by the international community since the development and affirmation of the Compact. However, the report also speaks to the magnitude of the protection and poverty crisis that refugees and stateless persons are facing. This crisis has hit some groups of refugees and stateless persons particularly hard, especially those who were already discriminated against due to their age, gender, disability and other diversity factors, increasing their exclusion from decision-making and their challenges to access services.¹²³⁴

The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) articulated specific measures to empower, protect and support refugees through an age, gender and diversity (AGD) approach in long-term solutions for refugees.

At the Global Refugee Forum, several Member States, NGOs and UN agencies committed to supporting disability inclusion, refugee children and gender equality. Since then, actors across constituencies have worked to adapt financing and delivery of programmes to different groups of refugees to reduce inequalities and improve the inclusiveness of refugee responses.⁵ Refugees and host communities have also taken a leading role, often with very few resources, in advancing local responses that tackle discrimination based on age, gender and diversity with regards to education, protection and durable solutions, gender equality and inclusion of refugees with disabilities.⁶⁷

However, age, gender and diversity-centred responses are still inadequately prioritized across pledges and in the implementation of the GCR. Financial and political support for gender equality, child protection, diversity and inclusion have not matched the scale of the challenge and are failing to bring sustained change for groups excluded based on their age, gender and other factors. An analysis of the Global Refugee Forum pledges revealed that 70 per cent of pledges do not mention gender equality, with even fewer referring to children, disability or LGBTQI.⁸

Therefore, we call upon your government at the HLOM to:

- **Step up your commitment and contribution to make gender equality, child rights and inclusion, a priority in your pledges.** This includes revising, to the extent possible, existing pledges to include complementary and concrete actions that support the protection,

¹ Plan International '[Close to Contagion: the impact of COVID-19 on displaced and refugee girls and women](#)',

² CARE, [Magnifying inequalities and compounding risks. The Impact of COVID-19 on the health and protection of women and girls on the move](#).

³ Save the Children, [Progress Under Threat: Refugee education one year on from the Global Refugee Forum and the impact of COVID-19](#),

⁴ WRC, [Addressing Sexual Violence against Men, Boys, and LGBTIQ+ Persons in Humanitarian Settings](#)

⁵ Examples include the rollout of UNHCR's policy on Age, Gender and Diversity and the creation of UNHCR policy on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

⁶ See CARE International's [Rapid Gender Analysis](#) and [Women Leadership in Emergencies](#)

⁷ WRC, [Strengthening the Role of Women with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action: A Facilitator's Guide](#)

⁸ UNHCR, [Global Compact on Refugees Indicator Report](#), 2021

empowerment and full, equal, and meaningful participation of diverse groups of refugees. This may entail, but is not limited to, tailored funding for policies and interventions that facilitate diverse refugee groups' inclusion in national systems, increased investments in child protection and the prevention, response and mitigation of gender-based violence in all refugee responses.

- **Make gender equality, child rights and inclusion a clear and measurable priority for all follow-up mechanisms post HLOM, as well as for the next Global Refugee Forum in 2023.** Pledge matching processes, for example, should have specific goals and outcomes on age, sex, gender and disability and other excluding factors. Any agreed follow-up action to accelerate the implementation of commitments on the Global Compact on Refugees should be matched by increased financial support.
- **Ensure monitoring of the implementation of commitments** on the Global Compact on Refugees. This must include the collection and analysis of sex, age and disability disaggregated data for clear and measurable indicators to assess progress. The role of civil society organizations (CSOs), as well as of refugee and women-led organizations, in this process is essential. These CSOs should be protected and supported to contribute.
- **Support and promote the full, equal, and meaningful participation and leadership of refugee and host community women-, child- elderly and youth-led groups.** This can be done by incorporating specific actions in pledge implementation plans such as increasing the volume and quality of funding to their organizations and supporting their institutional development and organizational strengthening. It is also essential to create an environment that enables their full, equal, and meaningful participation in refugee response coordination and decision-making structures. This includes tackling the specific age, gender and diversity obstacles limiting diverse refugees' effective participation.

We hope governments will be able to leverage their political will before, during and after the HLOM to make gender equality, child rights and inclusion a clear and measurable priority for support and hope to support you in furthering this agenda together.

Signatories:

AsyLex

CARE International

European Network on Statelessness

Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights

Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts

International Rescue Committee

Jesuit Refugee Service

Oxfam

Plan International

Save the Children

Settlement Services International

Terre des Hommes International Federation

Women's Refugee Commission