

**“Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development”  
March 2022**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (hereinafter referred to as UNHCR) refers to the letter dated 26 November 2021 by which it was invited to provide substantive inputs to the 2022 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on its review of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 14 (life below water); 15 (life on land) and 17 (partnership for the goals), and the 2022 theme.

***Assessment of the situation regarding the principle of “leaving no one behind” against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic and for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, within the respective areas addressed by your intergovernmental body;***

This year will still be shaped by three C’s— conflict, COVID-19 and climate change – and by how the world will respond to it. All three have long lasting effects on the most vulnerable population groups, including refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons.

Although the pandemic slowed the rate of new displacements, in the first half of 2021, more than [84 million individuals were forcibly displaced](#) worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, violence or human rights violations. That was an increase of 1.6 million people from the previous year, and the world’s forcibly displaced population remained at a record high. 86% of those who fled are hosted in developing countries with limited resources underscoring **the need to align humanitarian action with development efforts**. Moreover, 90% of refugees and 70% of internally displaced persons are from countries **more vulnerable to climate change**. Climate change amplifies inequality. Displaced women and girls are more vulnerable to climate change impacts than men as they are less likely to access finance and information, and natural resources necessary for survival such as land, food and water that climate change directly impacts. Often, displaced women and girls face greater health and safety risks as water and sanitation systems become compromised.

**Gender equality** is fundamental to the well-being and rights of forcibly displaced and stateless women and girls. Women and girls represent 48% of all people displaced across borders. Gender inequality is a root cause of forced displacement, a consequence of it and compounded in situations of forced displacement. Gender inequality is also a root cause of gender-based violence (GBV) and intersecting forms of discrimination are increasing risks of violence for forcibly displaced women and girls. While violence against women and girls occurs at an alarming rate globally<sup>1</sup>, forcibly displaced women living in humanitarian crisis and armed conflict are at heightened risk with estimates pointing at 1 in 5 women having been subjected to sexual violence while [recent research](#) indicated a 20% higher risk of intimate partner violence. In 25 countries around the world, **women are still not able to pass on nationality to their own children. Gender inequality in nationality laws can create statelessness**, that can be prevented<sup>2</sup>. [Girls lag behind boys](#) when it comes to access to education. Particularly, adolescent girls face pressures to drop out of school and support their families – pressures

---

<sup>1</sup> Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, it was estimated that almost 1 in 3 women were subjected to gender-based violence during their lifetime.

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/statelessness-around-the-world.html>

only made worse by the pandemic's economic devastation carrying further risks of being subjected to child labor and child marriage.

Without a concerted, integrated response from the international community, UNHCR anticipates the number of persons of its concern will continue to grow and new emergencies will overlap with the existing ones. **Forced displacement is not only a humanitarian concern; it is also a development challenge with long term economic and social impacts.**

**Social and economic inclusion implies giving all members of society**, including non-citizens and vulnerable and underserved groups, **access to labour markets, finance, entrepreneurial expertise, and economic opportunities. Economic inclusion starts from the moment an influx begins (both internal displacement and refugee settings).** If humanitarian assistance, development interventions and access to basic rights, especially education, are well-directed from the start, they can create better outcomes for refugees and IDPs in later phases of displacement. The first short-term support provided by humanitarian assistance helps displaced persons to meet basic needs and obtain adequate protection.

In the medium and long-term, assistance should secure the inclusion of refugees in programmes and services offered by governments, development actors, private sector, academia and other key stakeholders. Participation in market systems (through wage- or self-employment, for example) depends not just on access to finance, training, access to education at all levels, coaching, job placement, and a wide range of other support services, but also on the presence of an enabling environment whose rules and regulations protect rights and security. **Refugees who enjoy economic inclusion are more likely to be self-reliant and resilient, to meet their needs in a safe, sustainable, and dignified manner, to avoid aid-dependency and negative coping mechanisms, to contribute to their host economies, and to be prepared for the future, whether they return home, integrate in their country of asylum, or resettle in a third country.**

***Progress, experience, lessons learned, challenges, and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of SDGs 4, 5, 14, 15 and 17 from the vantage point of your intergovernmental body, bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the SDGs and targets, including policy implications of their synergies and tradeoffs;***

On 14-15 December 2021, UNHCR organized its first [High Level Official Meeting \(HLOM\)](#), which together with the [Global Refugee Forum](#) (GRF) aims at assessing progress towards the achievement of the four objectives of [the Global Compact on Refugees \(GCR\)](#).<sup>3</sup> Participants identified progress, challenges and areas where further engagement might be needed to increase support, self-reliance, and access to solutions for refugees, taking into consideration the challenges posed by the pandemic. Priorities identified included expanding support for refugees and the countries who receive them; advancing implementation of the pledges made at the first Global Refugee Forum and directing efforts to the areas in need of further support<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup> (i) ease pressures on host countries; (ii) enhance refugee self-reliance; (iii) expand access to third country solutions; and (iv) support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

<sup>4</sup> Further information on these priorities can be found in the [Reflecting on progress and charting the future infographic](#).

Priorities for the first HLOM:



**Expanding support for refugees and the countries who host them.**

Broadening the engagement of States, the private sector, and development and other actors is critical to achieving the goals of the GCR. Participants at the HLOM will reflect on progress made and consider how to:

- bring more actors to the table to increase support for refugees and host communities;
- facilitate innovative approaches to partnership and solidarity;
- strengthen national arrangements to address refugee situations comprehensively; and
- leverage further regional arrangements, such as the support platforms, to mobilize greater support and concrete outcomes for refugee and host communities.



**Advancing implementation of the pledges made at the first GRF.**

At the first Global Refugee Forum (GRF), States and other actors made pledges to increase support, self-reliance, and solutions for refugees in line with the GCR. Participants at the HLOM will reflect on progress made and consider how to:

- advance on the implementation of pledges and address the challenges faced;
- ensure that general or thematic pledges are directed to specific refugee situations; and
- ensure that pledges made by host countries to protect and include refugees can be implemented with financial, technical, and material support.



**Identifying areas in need of further support.**

Participants at the HLOM will identify where future action is needed to address challenges, opportunities, and gaps, including through:

- the further implementation of current pledges;
- the development of new pledges, including joint pledges, that could be announced at the next GRF;
- the cultivation of new partnerships and engaging new actors; and
- strengthened engagement in refugee situations.

[A virtual roundtable on Self-Reliance](#) – held on 29 November 2021 as part of the lead-up to the HLOM – reaffirmed the importance of inclusive approaches to education, livelihoods, and health. **Self-reliance can only be sustained when efforts are made to foster peaceful coexistence and social cohesion** between refugees and host communities. Refugees are best placed to speak about their predicament, needs, and aspirations for the future, which must be considered in creating conditions for long-term peace. The power of faith organizations needs to be adequately harnessed to strengthen genuine resilience, help address root causes of conflict, and mitigate risks. The roundtable further highlighted the **importance of ensuring protection frameworks are in place to enable self-reliance. Age, gender, and diversity considerations need to be mainstreamed in all relevant data, programming, and GRF pledge areas.** Further matching of pledges within the [Asylum Capacity Support Group framework](#) is needed to support States in strengthening their asylum systems.

To pave the road to the HLOM, UNHCR produced the [first indicator report for the GCR](#). The report charts how far the international community has come since the development and affirmation of the compact and how far still need to go to realize its vision. In a world where displacement has continued to grow, durable solutions are in short supply, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is being felt acutely in countries that host the largest populations of refugees, the message that emerges from data is clear. **While much has been achieved, responsibility-sharing must be stepped up to meet the challenges we are facing – both now and in the years to come, not least as we prepare for the medium to long-term impacts of the pandemic.** The Global Compact on Refugees, with the multi-stakeholder approach and practical arrangements that it provides, is now more crucial than ever.

Initiatives like the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) hosted [Global Concessional Financing Facility \(GCFF\)](#) and the World Bank's [Window for Host Communities and Refugees \(WHR\)](#) are important financial mechanisms for promoting inclusion and positively impacting forcibly displaced, their hosting communities and countries. Private sector engagement is also key to find solutions in fragile and/or refugee contexts, as demonstrated by the [PROSPECTS Partnership Initiative](#). This initiative, generously funded by the Government of the Netherlands and implemented by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank in eight countries – Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Iraq, [Jordan](#), Lebanon, Sudan and Uganda – enables the development of private sector initiatives and investments addressing the market opportunities that benefit both communities – hosting and forcibly displaced.

***Actions and policy recommendations in areas requiring urgent attention in relation to the implementation of the SDGs under review and policy recommendations, commitments, and cooperation measures for promoting a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive recovery from the pandemic while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda;***

However, **there is still a need for further targeted support to reduce poverty and mitigate the impact of the pandemic on refugees and host communities.** Refugee poverty is a reality in many contexts. Continued efforts to promote inclusion, as well as targeted support to address specific vulnerabilities, are needed to promote self-reliance and address refugee poverty. **Policies to enhance freedom of movement, the right to work, property rights, and other aspects of the regulatory and institutional environment are especially important where refugees are in unsustainable or economically dependent situations.** There has been progress in livelihoods, with three-quarters of refugees in countries surveyed have legal access to key attributes of decent work<sup>5</sup>. However, access in practice to decent work remains far more limited, due to high employment rates, informal economies, administrative challenges, and other barriers. Participation in the social and economic life of host countries depends on freedom of movement and choice of residence. However, one-third of refugees do not enjoy freedom of movement under existing regulations. Self-reliance and resiliency of both refugees and host communities have in addition deteriorated in the context of the pandemic. **A growing body of evidence shows that mitigating the long-term socioeconomic impacts of displacement and addressing poverty require targeted health (including mental health), educational and other basic services, particularly for women and children<sup>6</sup>.**

**Quality socioeconomic data is necessary for engaging governments and development organizations to plan and sustainably finance programmes that promote resilience:** supporting outcomes related to employment, education, social protection, and wider human development objectives described in the SDG, among others. **The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic shock further highlight the value of comparable socioeconomic data to inform an evidence-based and inclusive response** – some 90 percent of refugees are hosted by developing countries, which are themselves facing slower recovery prospects, according to the International Monetary Fund. Thus, **understanding the socioeconomic recovery of forcibly displaced and stateless communities, compared to surrounding hosts, is necessary to ensuring an equitable recovery.**

Half of the refugee population is below the age of 18. Many of these children live in protracted crises, yet roughly half of them did not have access to school prior to the pandemic.<sup>7</sup> They often spend long periods, an average of 5 years and a median of 10.3 years, in displacement.<sup>8</sup> The pandemic has been disruptive for all children and youth, with an estimated 24 million children and youth from pre-primary to university levels at risk of not returning to school globally as a result of the pandemic and associated school closures.<sup>9</sup> For refugees and

<sup>5</sup> [UNHCR 2021 Global Compact on Refugees – Indicator Report 2021](#) (page 13)

<sup>6</sup> [UNHCR 2021 Global Compact on Refugees – Indicator Report 2021](#) (page 7)

<sup>7</sup> UNHCR.2021 “[Staying the Course: The Challenges Facing Refugee Education](#)”

<sup>8</sup> World Bank Blogs. 2019. Xavier Devictor, “[How Long Do Refugees Stay in Exile? To Find out, Beware of Averages,](#)”

<sup>9</sup> UNESCO. 2020 “[How Many Students Are At Risk of Not Returning to School?](#)”

stateless persons – already facing significant obstacles to getting into school – it could dash all hopes of getting the education they need. Massive, coordinated efforts are needed to ensure the respect of this basic universal right. **A solution cannot be effective if it does not reach everyone. We need to extend this sense of interconnectedness and solidarity to how we respond to the refugee education crisis and strive towards leaving no child or youth behind.**

**Accelerating progress towards inclusive education** – at all levels – is both necessary and doable. Although a large share of countries has legislation and policies granting explicit access for refugees to national education systems on par with nationals – particularly at the primary level – important practical barriers remain.<sup>10</sup> In fact, comparing enrolment for host country and refugee learners reveals significant disparities in access. For example, enrolment for refugees stood at 59 per cent at the primary level in Jordan,<sup>11</sup> while the corresponding figure for host country learners was 82 per cent<sup>12</sup> in 2019-2020. In Chad, enrolment for refugees was 78 per cent,<sup>13</sup> while the figure for host country learners was 89 per cent over the same period.<sup>14</sup>

At the secondary level, many barriers – most notably costs – are severely hampering access.<sup>15</sup> Secondary school is a time of growth and opportunities. It increases employment perspectives, leadership, independence while mitigating the risk of forced recruitment, forced labour, or child marriage. Yet, the gross enrolment rate for secondary stood at an average of only 34 per cent (against 68 per cent enrolled in primary education) in 2019-2020 for reporting countries.<sup>16 17</sup> When comparing access rates for refugees and host learners, the comparison is even more stark at this level. In Jordan, for example, the enrolment rate for refugees was 25 per cent at the secondary level,<sup>18</sup> while the figure for host learners was 65 per cent<sup>19</sup> in 2019-2020.

At tertiary level, enrolment rates for the same period were at 5 per cent<sup>20</sup>. In order to address low enrollment rates in higher education, in 2019, **UNHCR launched the 15y30 campaign, which aims to raise the enrolment figure of refugee men and women to higher university to 15 per cent by the year 2030.** Achieving that goal, however, depends heavily on ensuring that more refugees have access to quality enrolment. **Five key pathways can facilitate access to higher education – national universities, DAFI scholarship programme, technical and vocational education, and training (TVET), connected higher education and complementary education pathways for admission to third country.**

Key actions across these pathways are critical to increase access to higher education:

- **Admission pathways** strengthen the secondary to tertiary transition, particularly for women, by investing in alumni network and by providing transparent information;

---

<sup>10</sup> UNHCR. 2021 “[Global Compact on Refugees Indicator Report 2021](#)”

<sup>11</sup> UNHCR. 2021 “[Staying the Course: The Challenges Facing Refugee Education](#)”

<sup>12</sup> UNESCO-UIS (2021) UIS Statistic <http://data.uis.unesco.org/>

<sup>13</sup> UNHCR. 2021 “[Staying the Course: The Challenges Facing Refugee Education](#)”

<sup>14</sup> UNESCO-UIS (2021) UIS Statistic <http://data.uis.unesco.org/>

<sup>15</sup> UNHCR. 2022 “[Transition to Secondary Education](#).” Education Series: Research Brief

<sup>16</sup> 41 countries reported gross enrollment rates at the secondary level, this is not a global figure.

<sup>17</sup> UNHCR. 2021 “[Staying the Course: The Challenges Facing Refugee Education](#)”

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> UNESCO-UIS (2021) UIS Statistic <http://data.uis.unesco.org/>

<sup>20</sup> Based on all countries with available data. Innovation, partner action and improved data accessibility contributed to the increased enrolment rate.

- **Accessibility and Inclusion** promote inclusion of women, persons with disabilities, female leadership and accessible language and ICT opportunities;
- **Monitoring and reporting** build a standard reporting framework to collect and share reliable application, enrollment, cost, and entitlement data
- **Partnership** ensures participation of refugees and host communities in decision-making to strengthen cross-country and sector partnership and realize higher education GRF pledges
- **Policy and Education** Advocate for inclusive policies, replace restrictive documentation and credential validation processes and coordinate with development actors to include refugees in national development plans
- **Financial inclusion** Reduce financial barriers by increasing scholarship and financial support for refugees while providing cash-based opportunities for higher education directly to students

**The state of access to education for forcibly displaced girls also remains an issue.** Countries with gender disaggregated data, on average, have a secondary enrollment rate of 31 per cent for girls versus 35 per cent for refugee boys in 2019-2020.<sup>21</sup> COVID-19 has exacerbated the impact on the most vulnerable learners. This includes refugee girls who face particular challenges for continuing their education, such as the unequal distribution of unpaid care work or the prioritization of boys' education in contexts of constrained opportunities. The Malala Fund has estimated that in countries where enrollment rates for refugee girls were below 10% prior to the pandemic, and where gender disaggregated data is available on education access, all refugee girls are at risk of dropping out of school for good.<sup>22</sup> In some contexts, the response to expand access to education for girls has been to provide learning spaces exclusively for them. Other gender responsive measures include supporting safe journeys to and from school; adapting schools to girls' needs; incentivizing families to retain girls in school; and in some contexts, providing more female teachers.

Increasing access for some of the most vulnerable learners is not only a moral imperative, but also a realistic goal. A recent report on the cost of inclusive education for refugees shows the feasibility of this effort if it receives the support of the international community and host governments. The report is a crucial step towards understanding the needs of refugees and host countries; developing an adequate framework for response; and catalyzing renewed discussions around responsibility-sharing. It gives a message of hope: the global estimate of **US\$4.85 billion per year<sup>23</sup> for inclusive education for refugees is not out of reach.**<sup>24</sup> This average annual cost represents less than 5 percent of public education expenditure in developing nations hosting 85 percent of the world's refugees.<sup>25</sup> By committing to supporting education for all children and youth, we stand in solidarity not only with refugee populations but also with the host country governments and communities that have so generously opened their borders to the most vulnerable and are hosting them.

<sup>21</sup> UNHCR operations data, unpublished.

<sup>22</sup> Naomi Nyamweya, "[Displacement, Girls' Education and COVID-19](#)," Education for All (blog), June 26, 2020,

<sup>23</sup> This is a pre-COVID estimated cost of educating all refugees and is likely to increase as the impacts of the pandemic continue to unfold.

<sup>24</sup> UNHCR and World Bank, 2021: "[The Global Cost of Inclusive Refugee Education](#)"

<sup>25</sup> Funding is not the only condition for universal access and completion of education. While the report is focused on estimating the cost of access to education for refugee children, the importance of improving the quality of education cannot be ignored. The eradication of [learning poverty](#), that is, being unable to read and understand a simple text by age 10, applies to host country populations and refugee children alike.

The global pandemic - in addition to ongoing emergencies such as the climate crisis – reversed important gains in gender equality, women’s and girls’ rights and further exacerbated risks of gender-based violence<sup>26</sup> (GBV) for forcibly displaced and stateless women and girls<sup>27</sup>. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR [reported](#) a surge in intimate partner violence, child marriage, teenage pregnancy, and sexual exploitation and abuse<sup>28</sup>. It is estimated that an additional [13 million](#) girls are now at risk of forced marriages as a result of the pandemic, child marriages are already being resorted to by some refugee families buckling under debilitating poverty. Gender differences emerge in terms of health, education and employment<sup>29</sup>, while at the same time access to services such as health, child-care, GBV response and protection services were reduced during confinement periods.<sup>30</sup>

The negative impact of the pandemic has not only required scaling gender equality and GBV programs by UNHCR and its partners but also adapting approaches and adapt long-term strategies to mitigating the lasting impact. The need for GBV and gender equality programming has never been greater, but funding for gender equality and GBV remains limited. Strengthening gender equality and GBV programming and ensuring that forcibly displaced and stateless women and girls are integrated, contributes to sustainable peace and development. Forcibly displaced women and girls continue to be resilient and play a key role in the frontline response to and recovery from the pandemic. It is key to build on the strength and capacities of forcibly displaced and stateless women and girls and ensure their full participation in protection responses, decision-making and leadership structures. Supporting local responses and strengthening collaboration with women-led organizations, especially those led by refugee, stateless and internally displaced women and girls of all backgrounds is key.

To prevent violence against women and girls UNHCRs aims to ensure gender equality in all aspects of its work, which is underscored by UNHCR’s [Policy on the Prevention of, Risk Mitigation, and Response to Gender-Based Violence](#) and in [the Age Gender and Diversity Policy](#). UNHCR has continued to adapt its GBV programming to the different pandemic-related restrictions. In 88 of 125 countries (70%) GBV services were available to survivors in the context of COVID-19 in 2021. UNHCR also strongly support intergovernmental platforms, processes and interagency coalitions. UNHCR is a commitment-maker under four [Generation Equality Forum \(GEF\) Action Coalition](#)<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup>It was estimated that for every three months of lockdown measures around the world, an additional 15 million women and girls would be exposed to gender-based violence, [UNFPA Interim Technical Note on the Impact of the Covid Pandemic](#)

<sup>27</sup> [COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated risks of gender-based violence](#)

<sup>28</sup> A UNHCR-led report by the Global Protection Cluster found gender-based violence (GBV) had increased in 27 countries since the beginning of the pandemic, while over 80% of IDP operations describe the GBV situation in their context as severe or extreme. GBV against unaccompanied minors was also reported in many locations.

<sup>29</sup>UNHCR Blogs.2022. Theresa Beltramo, Masud Rahman, Ibrahima Sarr, Florence Nimoh. [“Compounding misfortunes – refugee women and girls lose even more ground during the COVID-19 pandemic”](#)

<sup>30</sup>ILO policy brief 2020 [“Protecting the rights at work of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons during the COVID-19”](#) Recommendations for Policy-makers and Constituents

<sup>31</sup> gender-based violence, economic justice and rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and feminist movements and leadership

## Key messages

Lastly, the considerations highlighted for last year's HLPF remains valid. To ensure a sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID19 pandemic and to build an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda the following are needed:

1. **Access to territory/protection by displaced persons:** States can and should ensure access to asylum, while protecting public health. This means that while States can legitimately impose limits on border crossings, it is essential to ensure those seeking international protection have access to territory – which can be subject to reasonable public health safeguards [including quarantine, testing, or other nondiscriminatory measures]. Many States have demonstrated that they can well manage arrivals consistent with public health imperatives.
2. **Adapted asylum and statelessness determination processes, including for documentation:** It is important to adapt asylum systems so that refugees and asylum seekers can continue to access international protection. This includes, for example, remote extension of documents, remote registration, adaptive measures in interviewing rooms, and remote interviewing. The continuation of processes to identify and provide stateless persons with a status is likewise important. Birth registration should also be considered an essential service and continue to operate to prevent more people from falling through the cracks and risking statelessness. The introduction of adaptive measures in asylum procedures does not necessarily require major financial or technological investments, especially if planned in advance. Unless asylum systems are properly adapted, there is a real risk of significant backlogs being created, which could impact the protection of individuals and protection space, going forward.
3. **Inclusive access to services and national responses:** Refugees, internally displaced persons, and stateless persons are at higher risks of exposure to protection concerns during the pandemic. Inclusive approaches that protect every individual's right to life and access to adequate health and other services, including vaccination, are critical. Including refugees, IDPs, and stateless persons in national responses is critical not only for the current situation, but also for any plans to address the medium and longer-term socio-economic impacts of the crisis.
4. **Promote access to the labour market and livelihoods:** Support the self-reliance of refugees and their host communities, including through promoting their right to work and inclusion in the labour market.
5. **Restrictions on freedom of movement:** States can legitimately restrict freedom of movement during a pandemic, but detention and other restrictions of movement, where they need to be imposed, must not be arbitrary or discriminatory. Restrictions on the exercise of rights should be non-discriminatory, necessary, proportionate, and reasonable to address the aim of public health; they should also be maintained no longer than necessary.
6. **Community-based structures:** The pandemic has challenged one of the key strengths in delivering protection – its proximity to communities – and stimulated the international community to explore alternative ways to engage with diverse groups across age, gender, and diversity. It also has clearly demonstrated the comparative advantage of prior



investment in community-based structures and the critical role played by displaced people in the COVID-19 response and can play in the recovery efforts. Strengthening the collaboration with and prioritization of resources to women-led organization, especially those led by refugee, internally displaced and stateless women and girls is key. It is also critical that host governments recognize women refugee led.

7. **Gender equality and the participation of forcibly displaced and stateless women and girls:** Refugees, returnees, internally displaced and stateless people should be able to enjoy their rights on an equal footing and be able to participate meaningfully in the decisions that affect their lives, families and communities. It is key to build on the strength and capacities of forcibly displaced and stateless women and girls and ensure their full participation and inclusion of expertise in the pandemic response, post pandemic recovery, decision-making and leadership structures in general. Recovery requires not only scaling up gender equality and GBV programmes, but also long-term strategic and gender-transformative approaches to mitigate the lasting impact.
8. **Gender-based violence, forcibly displaced and stateless women and girls:** Gender inequality is a root cause of forced displacement, a consequence of it and compounded in situations of forced displacement. Forcibly displaced women living in humanitarian crisis and armed conflict are at heightened risk: 1 in 5 have experienced sexual violence. National authorities and key stakeholders must continue their efforts to address gender inequality and prevent GBV, recognize effective gender equality and GBV programming as essential and ensure that refugee, internally displaced and stateless women and girls are included into national systems and services.
9. **Climate crisis, forcibly displaced and stateless women and girls:** The climate crisis impacts women and girls, in particular forcibly displaced women and girls disproportionately. Effective adaptation to climate impacts requires the specific vulnerabilities and capacities of women be considered. The climate crisis can only be solved with an intersectional approach.
10. **Under-recognized role of youth and adolescents:** Many adolescents and youth have mobilized to respond to the crisis. Young people can also help mitigate the impact and consequences of the crisis in the longer term and help in the recovery efforts including by engaging around issues such as promoting social cohesion, countering hate speech and xenophobia, and building strong and inclusive societies.
11. **Exacerbated child protection risks:** Include refugee children in national systems policies, and plans to ensure they receive the health, education, protection, WASH, and other services they need. The pandemic has led to the greatest disruption of education systems in history. UNHCR is calling on States to guarantee the right of all children, including refugees, to access primary and secondary education, and to ensure they are part of national educational systems and planning. In addition, states hosting large numbers of displaced people need assistance in building capacity - more schools, appropriate learning materials, teacher training for specialized subjects, support and facilities for teenage girls, and investment in technology and connectivity to close the digital divide.
12. **Scale-up protection and COVID-19 impact monitoring and the inclusion of refugees in national COVID-19 socio-economic impact assessments:** This provides the evidence base to inform the response of government and international actors. These socio-economic

data sets can be used to provide or update data baselines for the longer-term inclusion of refugees in government social protection programmes.

13. **Build on the good practice of including refugees to government COVID-19 health responses promoting national coverage, and ongoing government COVID-19 responses via social assistance and worker support programmes:** These successes and the pooling of international funding can support the inclusion of all living in refugee-hosting areas to government socio-economic COVID-19 responses.
14. **Channel COVID-19 social assistance support to refugees via existing government programmes that were already set up to include refugees before the onset of COVID-19, saving time and further contributing to build the long-term capacity of the programme:** Where possible, scale up access to civil documentation and digital identification, enroll refugees to government social registries and promote financial inclusion as part of receiving COVID-19 social protection benefits.
15. **Scale-up the assistance of international organizations:** To fill the gaps in government responses in refugee-hosting areas, fast-tracking support in areas with lower local government capacity, and ensuring this is aligned to government programmes wherever possible.
16. **Scale up partnerships with local responders and refugee-led, in particular women-led, organizations:** To increasingly foster their inclusion and engagement in the responses to the pandemic and reconstructions efforts.
17. **Inclusion of refugees to COVID-19 social protection responses:** This can provide best practice that is used as the template in the future for long-term international investments for scaling up coverage of government social protection programmes for all in refugee-hosting areas.