The Global Compact on Refugees and Identity

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51 million
70+ million
85 per cent of the world’s refugees are hosted in countries in developing regions

1/3 are hosted in the world’s least developed countries

In the first 6 months of 2018 only 124,100 refugees returned home
The Global Compact on Refugees

• In December 2018, the UN General Assembly affirmed the Global Compact on Refugees, after extensive consultations with Member States, international organizations, refugees, civil society, the private sector, and experts.

• A framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing, for a multi-lateral sustainable solution to refugee situations.

• Provides a blueprint for governments, international organizations, and other stakeholders to ensure that host communities get the support they need and that refugees can lead productive lives.
The Global Compact on Refugees

- UNHCR is exploring how Digital ID for refugees can contribute to the goals of the Global Compact on Refugees, such as:
  - easing the pressures on host communities
  - enhancing refugee self-reliance
  - expanding access to third-country solutions
  - supporting conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity

See Virtual Consultation: [www.unhcr.org/idecosystem](http://www.unhcr.org/idecosystem)
“We want every refugee to have a unique digital identity. This will enhance accountability and facilitate two-way communication between refugees and service providers.”

The High Commissioner, Opening Speech at the UNHCR Executive Committee (ExCom), 2 October 2017
Asylum seekers, refugees and legal identity

- **1951 Refugee Convention** provides that host States:
  - shall provide identity papers to any refugee in their territory who does not possess a valid travel document (Art. 27)
  - shall provide travel documents to refugees who are lawfully resident, with exceptions (Art. 28)

- If States are unable/unwilling, UNHCR, with the consent of the authorities of the asylum country, can certify that a person is considered a refugee within UNHCR’s mandate
  
  (cf 1951 Convention Art. 25 and 1950 UNHCR Statute)
Key GCR Objective 1: Registration and Documentation

• Registration and Documentation
  - Crucial role of registration and documentation recognized for assistance and protection, integrity, fighting corruption, fraud and trafficking in persons and solutions
  - UNHCR’s commitment:
    - Provide resources and expertise to contribute to national capacity for registration and ID, including for women and girls
    - Promote digitalization, biometrics and other relevant technology
    - Collect, use and share of quality registration data, disaggregated by age, gender disability and diversity in line with relevant data protection and privacy principles
Uganda Emergency

Key Facts

- **65** verification sites
- **+350** staff
- **+6K** daily rate
- **+75%** verified

Verified on 24 October 2018

Total verification: 1,091,024

Map showing verified sites in Uganda, with a focus on Kampala.
Key GCR Objective 2: Civil Registries

- UNHCR will support the inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees in States Civil Registration and ID systems, promoting legal identity for all.

- Key measures:
  - Provide resources and expertise to strengthen national civil registration and ID capacity to facilitate timely access for refugees and stateless persons to civil and birth registration
  - Digital technology and mobile solutions
  - Respecting data protection and privacy principles

- Example: Interoperability between PRIMES applications used by Government Refugee Departments and the host State’s Civil Registration/Integrated Population Registries (e.g. Kenya)
UNHCR PRIMES
(Population Registration and Identity Management EcoSystem)
PRIMES: Registration and case management

10.5 Million individuals

119 Operations

Select the tool
- Biometrics
- GDT
- proGres v4
- Rapp

Select the year of deployment
- 2012
- 2019

Count of countries per tool
Since 2002
Afghan returns

Widespread roll-out
Africa / Asia

Syria Situation
Cash/Food/NFI delivery

2015 DPP
Access and Transfer

Today.
PRIMES: Biometrics

7.7 Million records

63 Operations
Biometrics coverage

8 in every 10 refugees registered by UNHCR now has a biometric identity
PRIMES: Global Distribution

Irrefutable linking of food collection to refugees, even by remote.

Efficiency savings

Centralized and real-time reporting
POLICY
on the Protection of Personal Data of Persons of Concern to UNHCR
Data Access: Data Sharing

[Logos of various organizations]
Strengthening integrity in refugee resettlement processes

- Data Access throughout processing
Key GCR Objective 3: Cash based transfers, Economic inclusion and livelihoods

• Move away from assistance in kind to increasing the use and coordination of cash based interventions, including digital platforms

• 2016-18 UNHCR distributed $1.8bn in cash based assistance (95% unrestricted cash and 5% vouchers)

• Promotion of the economic inclusion of refugees, contributing to host communities and facilitating inclusive growth

New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, GCR and SDG Target 8.10.2
Gaps in trust in asylum seeker and refugee ID for connectivity and financial services

Survey data of 20 States hosting refugees
ID requirements assistance services

SIM registration

Asylum Seeker ID
0 recognized / 4 seldomly recognized / 16 not recognized

Refugee
10 recognized / 7 seldomly recognized / 3 not recognized
Gaps in trust in asylum seeker and refugee ID for connectivity and financial services

Mobile money

Asylum Seeker ID
2 seldomly recognized / 16 not recognized

Refugee
6 recognized / 8 seldomly recognized / 4 not recognized
Gaps in trust in asylum seeker and refugee ID for connectivity and financial services

Bank Accounts

Asylum Seeker ID
3 seldomly recognized / 17 not recognized

Refugee ID
10 recognized / 7 seldomly recognized / 3 not recognized
Key Recommendations - UNHCR

- Promote good practices in Government ID issuance & Policy
- Facilitate faster biometrics registration & documentation
- Explore eKYC and other digital authentication means
- Meet privacy and data protection standards
- Encourage Service Providers to be 'Refugee Ready'
Key Recommendations - Governments

- Include forcibly displaced in Foundational ID Platforms
- Clarify existing Customer Due Diligence ID requirements
- Coordinate across Government with Humanitarian Partners
- Issue ID more expeditiously and assist authentication
- Consider tiered approaches (accounts with limits) to increase access
- Ensure policy change is well managed
Conclusions

- Strengthening capacity in refugee registration and ID will be a crucial enabler to realise the goals of the Global Compact on Refugees

- UNHCR will work with States providing direct operational support in all registration contexts or through digital tools.

- UNHCR will work with States to ensure that the enabling regulatory environment both protects refugees and provides access to key services.