

## Norwegian Refugee Council statement – Grand Bargain annual meeting 2020

Dear colleagues, at the Norwegian Refugee Council we decided to invest in the Grand Bargain before it even became so, and once again we wish to reiterate the value and importance of the GB as the venue where dialogue on equal level happens for all constituencies. However, this dialogue alone is not enough, and we stress the importance for political will and leadership to advance the many good initiatives already underway.

As co-conveners, we can safely say that the progress made by WS 7+8 is the result of a truly collaborative approach combined with dedicated resources by all parties involved. To see the benefits of quality funding we need to reach a critical mass, and the only way to do so is by taking action. Reiterating the statement of workstream 7 and 8: the time for studies and researches is over. The catalogue of good practices, developed with DI and FAO, already includes a long list of examples of flexible and predictable funding mechanisms that can be replicated and scaled up. Now we need to deliver on our commitments and not forget the 30% target.

As stressed numerous times during the annual meeting, the sharing of risks is a necessary – BUT not sufficient – condition to move the transformative agenda forward. We need political will and leadership. We need bold leaders to say: YES, we are ready to change, and lead by example. By accepting more risk as part of providing more quality funding, or agreeing to pilot a harmonized reporting approach, or align their capacity assessments to that of others. It is initiatives like the Money Where it Counts for the harmonization of financial reporting that need the political buy-in to make it happen.

The Grand Bargain offers a unique opportunity for all of this to happen, but it is only as good as the efforts we put in it. At NRC we are ready to lead by example applying what we preach.

On the future of the Grand Bargain, we support most of ODI recommendations laid out in the think piece, including the establishment of a light pooled fund to resource the initiatives, a move we proposed a few months back to ensure progress is not hindered by a lack of resources. And while we understand the hesitation in allocating funds ‘away from the field’

during these times, we should not forget that as a community we have already invested massively in the GB, and as noted in the annual report the best performing workstreams are indeed those where dedicated resources — were made available. We strongly encourage all signatories to continue engaging at the highest level even with a potential new structure in place.

Finally, The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has commissioned an independent think piece to consider the humanitarian financing response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic serves as a “stress test” on the humanitarian financing system, demonstrating in real time how well the system performs under pressure. Moreover, the pandemic is a systemic crisis, which compounds existing risks and crises and as such it provides a powerful example of the scale, complexity and dynamic nature of crises governments and international actors should expect more of in the future.

The findings of this think piece are intended to influence discussions on future priorities for reform as international actors take stock of progress against the Grand Bargain and consider future directions and vehicles to build an effective international crisis financing system. The report will be available by the end of summer with a launch event planned for the beginning of September.