

Grand Bargain in 2020:
Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary

Name of Institution: UNHCR

Point of Contact Hiroko Araki
araki@unhcr.org

Date of Submission: 16 February 2021

(NB. Please limit your answer to no more than **5 pages in total** – anything over this word limit will not be considered by ODI in their analysis. Please respond to all of the questions below.)

Grand Bargain in 2020

Question 1: Reflecting on the information you have provided in the Excel spreadsheet, please highlight the 2 or 3 key outcomes or results relating to the Grand Bargain that your institution achieved in 2020?

Against its commitments made at the occasion of the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, UNHCR has met the following commitments prior to 2020:

Localization

To provide 25% of programme expenditure. Achieved in 2019, increased to 28% in 2020.

Cash

Double from the 2015 baseline. Achieved in 2019, maintained in 2020

Management cost

Reduce procurement cost by 10%. Achieved in 2019, maintained in 2020.

In 2020, UNHCR met an additional commitment to have biometrics for refugee registrations in 75 operations globally (against the 2016 baseline of 34 operations). More than 8 in every 10 refugees currently registered by UNHCR have a biometrically anchored digital identity. Over 10 million individuals have been enrolled since UNHCR started to use biometrics. It takes 5 seconds to identify refugees who are registered with biometrics.

Question 2: How has your institution contributed to the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment¹ in humanitarian settings through its implementation of the Grand Bargain? What results/outcomes have been achieved in this regard? (please outline specific initiatives or changes in practice and their outcomes/results). Please refer to the Guidelines for definitions of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, which are included in this self-report template package.

Compliance with UNHCR's [2018 Age, Gender and Diversity Policy](#) is mandatory across the agency. Implementation of the policy continued in 2020 with UNHCR country operations integrating the policy's core actions on AGD-inclusive programming, Accountability to Affected People and the Commitments to Women and Girls in the operational responses. An overview of recent implementation efforts is provided in the [UNHCR 2018-2019 AGD Accountability Report](#) released in July 2020. Here most UNHCR operations reported engaging

¹ Refer to the IASC definitions of gender equality and women empowerment, available [here](#).

women in leadership structures, committees of persons of concern and community management structures. Although discriminatory social and cultural norms, burdensome household and caring responsibilities as well as time away from livelihood and income generating activities continue to limit women's participation in many contexts. UNHCR operations, including Djibouti, South Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Venezuela, Pakistan reported on efforts to increase the meaningful participation of women and girls through for example collaboration with female outreach volunteers, capacity building, support for camp community elections and community leadership structures.

The COVID-19 pandemic has proven to have a significant gendered impact with forcibly displaced women and girls often being especially at risk. UNHCR operations have focused on ensuring continued access to essential services and information for forcibly displaced women and girls, while promoting their leadership throughout the response. UNHCR has for example collaborated with women's networks, female community leaders and outreach volunteers to support community initiatives in response to the pandemic as well as to ensure accessible and inclusive communication materials and modalities, and the continued provision of essential services. For more information see ["Protecting Forcibly Displaced Women and Girls during the COVID-19 Pandemic"](#).

In 2020, UNHCR published a [Gender Equality Toolkit](#), which provides practical guidance on gender equality integration across UNHCR's operational work including specific guidance on how to increase and enhance the meaningful participation of women and girls. UNHCR also released its new policy on the [prevention of, risk mitigation, and response to gender-based violence](#), which includes a strong focus on addressing gender inequality, discrimination and unequal power relations in order to prevent GBV from occurring in the first place.

In 2020, UNHCR commissioned a [Gender Audit of the High Commissioner's Dialogue](#) on Protection Challenges: "Protection and Resilience during Pandemics", which took place from October to December 2020. The High Commissioner's 2020 Dialogue provided an important opportunity to document how gender equality has been integrated in the COVID-19 response and highlight the need to advance gender equality and improved protection of women and girls in future responses and protection efforts. An Audit Team monitored and documented how the Dialogue sessions integrated gender equality; age, gender and diversity; and GBV considerations. The Audit Team was convened by academics from the University of New South Wales and was comprised of a group of refugee women. A report including the findings and recommendations from the Audit will be published shortly.

Question 3: How has the humanitarian-development nexus been strategically mainstreamed in your institutional implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments? Please explain how your institution has linked commitments 10.1 - 10.5 with other commitments from other workstreams.

The UNHCR-WBG partnership continued to thrive throughout 2020, through close cooperation on policy and programme development and implementation, data, evidence and analytics, knowledge management, and human resource development. By 30 June 2020, the US\$ 2 billion under the WB's IDA18 Refugee Sub Window had been allocated to 14 eligible countries in Africa and Asia, with 35 projects approved. As part of the IDA19 policy package for Fragility, Conflict, and Violence (FCV), a financial allocation of US\$ 2.2 billion was allocated under the WBG's Window for Host Communities and Refugees (WHR). In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the WBG committed to provide WHR-eligible countries up to US\$ 1 billion (out of the US\$ 2.2 billion under the WHR) in 100% grant terms during the fiscal year 21 (1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021) as an exceptional measure to encourage eligible refugee-hosting countries to include host and refugee communities when planning their responses to address the various impacts of COVID-19. At the end of 2020, six projects had been approved. Concerning the Global Concessional Financing Facility (GCFF), a concessional financing tool aimed at alleviating pressure on refugee-hosting middle income countries, UNHCR continued to work with host Governments and the WB, advising on modalities and policies that ensure that these investments result in tangible benefits for refugees and migrants, when possible.

Grand Bargain 2016-2020: Overall achievements and remaining gaps

Question 4: What are the 2-3 key achievements/areas of most progress by your institution since 2016? Please report on your institutional progress for the period 2016-2020, **even** if your institution did not become a signatory until after 2016.

Cash

UNHCR invested in the cash-based interventions between 2016 to 2020, based on "[UNHCR Strategy for the Institutionalisation of Cash-Based Interventions 2016-2020](#)". Compared to the 2015 baseline figure of 33, by the end of 2020, over 100 operations were providing cash assistance. For COVID response, 65 operations either scaled up or launched cash assistance to cover increased needs.

For more details, see [UNHCR cash assistance 2020 report](#).

UNHCR/NGO partnership arrangement

UNHCR continued to work on reforms to its framework for implementing with partners aimed at better mitigation of risk and increased attention to ensuring quality results in the most efficient and effective manner possible. The COVID19 pandemic and the associated social distancing and travel restrictions necessitated the acceleration of several of these reforms. UNHCR promptly issued instructions that provided partners greater flexibility to make course correction and adjustments to respond to COVID19. UNHCR has mainstreamed several of these reforms for 2021 and beyond. The reforms ensure controls that are embedded within funding agreements are commensurate with the level of risk associated with the project which includes consideration of the capacity of the partner and the risk inherent within the operating context. The reforms aim to simplify procedures including for local partners who have often-times in previous years faced challenges in complying with UNHCR's requirements.

Question 5: What, in your institutional view, have been the main achievements of the Grand Bargain signatories, as a collective, since 2016? Please indicate specific commitments, thematic or cross-cutting issues or workstreams where you think most progress has been made collectively by signatories.

Localization

Question 6: What has the Grand Bargain not been able to achieve in its five year tenure? What outstanding obstacles, gaps, areas of weakness still remain after five years, in terms of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian action? Please indicate specific commitments, thematic or cross-cutting issues or workstreams where you think there remain key gaps or obstacles.

The core commitment 4.5 to reduce individual donor assessments did not see advancement for lack of political will. UNHCR/Japan commissioned an independent review of individual donor assessments and established that these assessments doubled since the Grand Bargain was launched in 2016.

Risk and the Grand Bargain

Question 7a: How has risk (financial, operational, reputational, etc) affected your institution's implementation of the core commitments since you became a signatory to the Grand Bargain?

From UNHCR point of view, there were no direct risks associated with the organization's capacity to implement agency specific core commitments. As evidenced in the detailed excel report and mentioned earlier in this document, UNHCR had addressed the full spectrum of the Grand Bargain commitments.

Question 7b: How has your institution sought to mitigate or address these risks to enable implementation of the core commitments?

To address one of the donor specific commitments to reduce individual donor assessments, UNHCR started its "integrity briefing" in December 2018 and since 2019, these briefings have taken place on a quarterly base. Donors that have contributed more than USD 20 million are invited to these meetings. As part of an established commitment to transparency and open communication, UNHCR continued with this practice to brief the major donors on integrity challenges and risk management in 2020. Regular updates and themes included investigations trends, key audits and trends, oversight measures, progress in the prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, managing risk in the COVID response and progress and key actions being taken across the organization to continuously strengthen the integrity of UNHCR's humanitarian response. The Q4 integrity briefing occurred on 17 December 2020.