

Statement by Local Government Organizations
Delivered to the Second Formal Preparatory Meeting of the 2023 Global Refugee Forum
17 May 2023

- Excellencies, distinguished delegates, I am pleased to take the floor on behalf of the community of local government organisations, including the Mayors Mechanism, the Mayors Migration Council, United Cities and Local Governments, and the Geneva Cities Hub.
- Local governments are critical leaders in refugee inclusion and the achievement of the GCR, as acknowledged in paragraphs 37-38.
- The vast majority — more than 70 percent — of all forcibly displaced people live in urban areas. Every day, cities around the world are taking action to support refugees.
- Local governments are ready to bring this practical experience and their political leadership to the Global Refugee Forum in December.
- To harness this city action and localise the GCR and the GCM together, the Mayors Mechanism partners — UCLG, MMC and the UN Migration Agency, IOM — worked with UNHCR to launch a Call to Local Action for Migrants and Refugees.
- Through this process, last May at the International Migration Review Forum, we delivered 70 pledges and good practices from local governments and their networks to the President of the General Assembly.
- This included pledges from the Mayor of Zurich, Switzerland who committed to create a welcome centre for Ukrainian refugees and to provide 500,000 Swiss Francs from the city budget to support refugee reception in countries bordering Ukraine.
- And the Mayor of Barranquilla, Colombia who pledged to expand a job centre helping to connect Venezuelans to work.
- And the Mayor of Nyamagabe, Rwanda who pledged to work in partnership with UNHCR to create green jobs for refugees to improve energy for his town and the refugee camp.
- Our Call to Local Action partners are actively mobilising to scale up this effort. We intend to announce new, tangible city pledges at the GRF and to support the in-person participation of local governments at the GRF.
- We are pleased to see the program outline and have three requests where we ask for your support:
- First, welcome local governments at the GRF. We call on UNHCR, the co-hosts and co-convenors to welcome mayors in all segments of the GRF programme to share their

pledges and expertise, including in the high-level plenary and through a dedicated side-event on urban issues and local government action.

- Second, partner with local governments. We call on Member States to submit joint pledges with their local governments, to invite your cities to pledge directly through the Call to Local Action, and to include local governments in your national delegation as a concrete avenue to advance the whole of government principle enshrined in the GCR.
- Third, consult with local governments on policy solutions. From financing, to inclusion, to climate action, to reception, local governments are policy leaders in many of the thematic areas presented today. We call on Member States and all stakeholders to use the GRF as an opportunity to advance urban policy solutions to these thematic priorities in partnership with local governments.

We stand ready to make the GRF a success and work closely with the co-conveners, the co-hosts and all other interested Member States.

I thank you for your attention.