



The Mayors Mechanism is co-steered by:



Statement from the Local and Regional Government Constituency on the Preparations for the 2023 Global Refugee Forum

6 March 2023

Geneva - The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) recognizes the essential role that Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) play in supporting refugee reception and socio-economic inclusion¹, and the LRG Constituency welcomes the words of the High Commissioner Filippo Grandi, who has emphatically acknowledged ‘the leading role of cities in the push towards a new approach to hosting refugees, based on openness and inclusion’². Indeed, we cannot hope to achieve the GCR without LRGs and their networks: with 70 percent of the world’s displaced seeking refuge in urban areas³, LRGs are crucial partners to help advance durable solutions.

Upon the adoption of the GCR and Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) in 2018, LRGs demonstrated their commitment to implement both Compacts in unison and endorsed the [Marrakesh Mayors Declaration](#). To turn this political commitment into tangible action, the Mayors Mechanism partners, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the Mayors Migration Council (MMC) and the UN Migration Agency (IOM), in partnership with UNHCR, launched a [Call to Local Action for Migrants and Refugees](#) in May 2022.

Recognized by the UN Secretary-General⁴, the Call to Local Action offers a concrete avenue for LRGs to localise the GCM and GCR. So far, we received **70 local actions and pledges** that make a tangible difference to the lives of refugees and migrants and keep the world on track to meet the Global Compacts⁵. These actions are officially recognized in the GCR Pledging and Good Practices Platforms, and we look forward to announcing a new cohort of LRG pledges during the 2023 GRF.

¹ Specifically in para 37

² [UN refugee chief welcomes cities’ support for refugees](#)

³ [UNHCR Global Trends Report 2022](#)

⁴ [Secretary General’s 2022 GCM Report](#), para 16

⁵ For a full overview of all actions, please consult our Call to Action 2022 Report [here](#).

There will be no effective implementation of the GCR without fully acknowledging the efforts, solutions and challenges faced by LRGs. This is in line with the Secretary-General's '**Our Common Agenda**' where he calls for more systemic engagement of LRGs to build a stronger, more inclusive multilateral system⁶.

Since the 2019 Global Refugee Forum – where LRG participation was **scarce and ad hoc** – important steps have been made by UNHCR to include LRGs in the GCR discussions, such as the recognition of the Mayors Mechanism as a GCR Initiative, the creation of an informal UNHCR – city stakeholder group and the ongoing consultations of UNHCR regarding its renewed Urban Policy.

Building onto this momentum, we count on your willingness, as the Coordinator of the Second GRF, to ensure meaningful engagement of LRGs in the GRF and we invite you to consider the **following recommendations**:

1. **Design** the GRF modalities for participation so that they allow for LRG registration in their own capacity as distinct from national government, civil society and other stakeholders.
2. **Call on Member States** to consult with LRGs and their networks ahead of the GRF and submit joint pledges and call on UNHCR to foster pledge matching between LRG pledges and those of others.
3. **Create meaningful opportunities** for exchange between LRGs and Member States, UN Agencies and others throughout the high-level Programme, such as speaking opportunities for LRGs in the plenary and thematic dialogues, as was successfully done in the 2022 International Migration Review Forum.
4. **Actively encourage** Member States to invite LRGs as part of their national delegation to the GRF.
5. **To dedicate a specific spotlight session** in the GRF Programme to the Call to Local Action, which will elevate the new 2023 local pledges as well provide space for a strategic discussion amongst LRGs, Member States and others on how to leverage the true potential of LRGs in future GCR implementation.

We stand ready to discuss these proposals in further detail.

⁶ [Our Common Agenda](#), para 106

This statement has been elaborated and endorsed by:

The Mayors Mechanism:

Established in December 2018, the Mayors Mechanism (MM) – co-steered by [United Cities and Local Governments \(UCLG\)](#), the [Mayors Migration Council \(MMC\)](#), and the [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\)](#) – is designed to bring the expertise, priorities and concerns of Local and Regional Governments into the thematic agenda, deliberations and outcomes of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and other global processes on migration and forced displacement. In 2022, it launched a [Call to Local Action for Migrants and Refugees](#) as a concrete avenue for LRGs to localise the Migration and Refugee Compacts. For additional information, please visit: www.mayorsmechanism.org

The Global Taskforce on Local and Regional Governments:

The Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments is a coordination and consultation mechanism facilitated by UCLG that brings together the major international networks of local governments to undertake joint advocacy work relating to global policy processes. It was set up in 2013 to bring the perspectives of local and regional governments to the SDGs, climate change agenda and New Urban Agenda in particular. Local and regional governments are the only UN non-state stakeholder to have a mechanism such as the Global Taskforce to develop and coordinate inputs into all policy processes. In this way, the Global Taskforce serves to amplify the voice of the local and regional government constituency on the global stage. For additional information, please visit: <https://www.global-taskforce.org/>

Supporting partners:

The Geneva Cities Hub:

An organization promoting better inclusion of cities and other Local and Regional Governments in multilateralism, especially in “International Geneva”, a major centre for global governance and multilateral diplomacy, which gathers the United Nations and other international organizations, States, NGOs, academia and other stakeholders.

Cities Alliance:

The global partnership fighting urban poverty and supporting cities to deliver sustainable development. Hosted by UNOPS, the organization has 23 members including multilateral institutions, UN agencies, governments, non-government organizations, local governments and city networks. Its core topics of work include economic growth, gender equality, migration, climate resilience and innovation, with a focus on informality.



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