



UNHCR AND THE 2030 AGENDA - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

This preliminary guidance note provides basic information about the Agenda 2030 and on UNHCR's approach to the Sustainable Development Goals.

This preliminary guidance document has been produced by an inter-divisional team in consultation with the bureaux. It is intended to serve as a quick reference and guidance note for field operations and will be followed by more thematic guidance.

Key Messages

- 1 UNHCR is committed to fully leveraging national and global 2030 Agenda processes through active involvement in relevant **planning, operationalization, data collection and advocacy undertakings**.
- 2 The 2030 Agenda promise to leave no one behind is pivotal for the inclusion of refugees, IDPs and stateless persons in regular development planning.
- 3 Refugees and IDPs are specifically mentioned in the 2030 Agenda, but are not singled out as a specific group under any of the 17 Goals. Stateless populations are not mentioned in the 2030 Agenda, nor under the Goals. It is therefore incumbent upon UNHCR Representatives to ensure that **persons of concern to UNHCR feature prominently in the national development plans** aimed at implementing the 2030 Agenda.
- 4 This note outlines initial requirements for UNHCR Country Offices in relation to the 2030 Agenda.

The 2030 Agenda

What is the 2030 Agenda?

On 25 September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly formally adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (hereinafter '2030 Agenda'), consisting of a Declaration, 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and 169 associated targets.¹ The SDGs were drafted to ensure that 'no one is left behind' and aim to realise 'human rights for all'. The Declaration sets out the ambition to ensure that **all nations** and **all people everywhere** are **reached and included** in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It is important to underline that refugees and IDP are specifically mentioned in the 2030 Declaration, which forms part of the overall 2030 Agenda, but not in the 17 goals that are referred to as the Sustainable Development Goals.

“ The SDGs and targets are integrated and indivisible, global in nature and universally applicable, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.”

Why is the 2030 Agenda significant?

It is universal: The 2030 Agenda offers a universal, integrated, transformative and human rights-based vision for **sustainable development, peace and security**, which is applicable to all countries, including the most developed. In recognition of the fact that the Millennium Development Goals were not truly universal, the 2030 Agenda makes an explicit **pledge to leave no one behind**.

It is long term: The Sustainable Development Goals will guide and focus action by States and by the UN for the next 15 years. As such, they provide a long-term framework.

¹ UN General Assembly, Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 21 October 2015, para. 23. Available at: <http://goo.gl/rgzQUj>. The indicators may still change as they will be approved by the UN General Assembly in the second half of 2016.

The Agenda is owned by countries: Unlike the Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda is intended to be fully “owned” by governments. While all UN agencies are mandated to contribute to the progress, and some have selected specific goals to focus on, the **national plans of action**, which will be developed by the state authorities to ensure that the national development goals are in line with the 2030 Agenda, will form the framework for the implementation of the SDGs.

It forms the backbone for UN engagement: The UN system as a whole is aligning its programmes to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including its country-based support for national authorities. For this reason, new guidance for UNCTs and the UNDAF process have been developed. Refugees, stateless populations and IDPs are specifically mentioned as stakeholders and beneficiaries in the current UNCT guidance.

88 countries with an ongoing United Nations Development Frameworks (UNDAF) have requested UN support with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

2030 Agenda Timeline

2013-15

- Ending of MDGs
- Preparation of SDG Framework

2015

- Adoption of 2030 Agenda, Goals and Targets

2016

- Adoption of Indicator Framework
- Implementation of SDGs at country level

2016-30

- SDG implementation

The 2030 Agenda and Refugees, IDPs and Stateless people

The Declaration of the 2030 Agenda includes two paragraphs which commits member states to the inclusion of persons of concern to UNHCR in the 2030 Agenda ambitions, no matter where they are:

Paragraph 4 of the Declaration pledges that:

“ ... no one will be left behind and that Goals and targets will be met for all nations and peoples and all segments of society.”

Paragraph 23 of the Declaration states that:

“ Those whose needs are reflected in the Agenda include all children, youth, persons with disabilities (of whom more than 80% live in poverty), people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants. We resolve to take further effective measures and actions, in conformity with international law, to remove obstacles and constraints, strengthen support and meet the special needs of people living in areas affected by complex humanitarian emergencies and in areas affected by terrorism.”

In promoting the 2030 Agenda the UN Secretary General has clearly articulated that the Agenda:

“ must not exclude migrants, refugees, displaced persons or persons affected by conflict and occupation.”²

Stateless populations are not explicitly referred to in the 2030 Agenda. However, as the Agenda is intended to ensure that no one is left behind, UNHCR will shortly issue specific guidance to assist country operations to ensure that this population group is taken into account when the SDGs are developed at country level.

UNHCR's Position

UNHCR welcomes the 2030 Agenda, which builds on principles of universality, equality and human rights of all, with “no one will be left behind” as the overriding principle. **UNHCR is fully committed to engage in the 2030 Agenda processes at the country level to leverage the SDGs for increased protection and solutions for forcibly displaced populations** (ie. forcible displaced populations).

To achieve this, UNHCR Representatives and Country Offices must be fully aware of the 2030 Agenda and be able to advocate for the inclusion of refugees and other persons of concerns in a consistent and dedicated manner.

“ The SDGs are an important step forward...[T]he principle of universality, the pledge that no one shall be left behind, and the explicit recognition that refugees and internally displaced people are among the most vulnerable, are a key entry point for ensuring the conflict dimension is not overlooked.”

UNHCR's High Commissioner, October 2015

In the lead up to the 2030 Agenda, UNHCR worked together with other humanitarian agencies, mainly OCHA and IOM as well as the SG's Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, the Special Representative on Migrants, and the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Development, to ensure that persons of concern were included in the vision behind 2030 Agenda.

UNHCR's comparative advantage, underscored by its mandate, in protecting and facilitating solutions for displaced and stateless people provides UNHCR with the credibility to engage with the 2030 Agenda. Persons of concern and UNHCR's related inputs should be reflected in the national action plans to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

With the 2030 Agenda processes in the early stages at country level, programmatic implications will have to be assessed in light of UNHCR's strategic reorientation as part of aligning advocacy and key messages with the 2030 Agenda.

² United Nations, Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General On the Post-2015 Agenda, The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet, 4 December 2014. Available at: <http://goo.gl/xwHqUR>.

While the SDGs represent a new set of global targets, many of the issues addressed within them have in the past been directly or indirectly undertaken by UNHCR and partners in their work with and for displaced and stateless populations.

Where relevant, within the framework of protection and solutions, UNHCR offices have been engaging on issues formulated in the individual Goals, particularly relating to poverty reduction (SDG 1), food security (SDG 2), health (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), water and sanitation (SDG 6), energy (SDG 7), livelihoods (SDG 8), urban displacement (SDG 11) and peace and justice (SDG 16).

This ongoing engagement on issues relating to the SDGs underlines the relevance of the SDGs to UNHCR's work with displaced and stateless populations. UNHCR views the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals as critical frameworks that can help strengthen the protection of and solutions for displaced and stateless people.

UNHCR is also closely following the discussions on humanitarian and development financing and will be issuing guidance to address these issues. While UNHCR welcomes the pledge to "leave no one behind," additional work remains, both on the political and the practical level to ensure that displaced and stateless persons are systematically included in the roll-out of the 2030 Agenda.

As of 2016, governments and UN agencies are preparing to start implementing the 2030 Agenda. There are a number of possible entry points for UNHCR to engage with the SDGs at country level. The most appropriate means for UNHCR to engage will depend on the country context, the processes and plans in place, as well as the protection and solutions parameters.

“ Global health threats, more frequent and intense natural disasters, spiralling conflict, violent extremism, terrorism and related humanitarian crises and forced displacement of people threaten to reverse much of the development progress made in recent decades.”

2030 Agenda, Paragraph 14

Key entry points for UNHCR's engagement with the 2030 Agenda-SDGs

1

National planning processes: To ensure that UNHCR is able to advocate for the inclusion of refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons, country offices should ensure that UNHCR engages in the **development of national action plans**. Forcibly displaced and stateless populations should be considered as stakeholders and active participants in the process. As the national action plans are developed by the national line ministries, with which UNHCR may not have frequent contact, it is important to reach out to sister agencies and development actors (bilateral donors, international financing institutions and NGOs) about how best to engage. Most countries are likely to draft these plans within their own development aid coordination mechanism, often led by Ministry of Finance or Economy and key development actors.³ **At a minimum, the refugee, IDP and stateless populations should be included under the relevant goals (poverty reduction; access to food, health, education, energy, etc).** Specific efforts may also be needed to ensure that they are included in the baselines statistics, UN advocacy documents, and programming tools intended to support national governments.

2

Regional Platforms: Regional mechanisms and frameworks that are coordinating national positions are important avenues where UNHCR should advocate for the inclusion of displaced and stateless persons' needs. These meetings are often driven by member states, most of whom have clearly expressed support to refugees and other displaced populations. Ensuring that UNHCR is present and making explicit references to the inclusion of persons of concern in accessing national services, protection and inclusion is crucial.

³ These should be line with the Paris declaration, which can be found through the following link: <http://www.oecd.org/development/effectiveness/busanpartnership.htm>

3

UNDAF processes: The processes for developing the next phases of UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) will be built around the SDGs. It is anticipated that countries operating under “Delivery as One” will be asked to move quickly into aligning their UNDAFs with the SDGs.

4

Data and statistics: Tracking progress against the SDGs will be done through defined indicators and targets, which will be adopted by the General Assembly in mid-2016. Governments will be responsible for data collection using national processes and tools. One of the main challenges for national authorities is their capacity to ensure the collection of accurate **sex, age and diversity-disaggregated data on refugees, IDPs, and stateless persons**. UNHCR is developing a handbook on refugee statistics and has worked with national statistics offices and has put forward a request to the UN Statistical Commission to ensure the inclusion of refugees in national data. In line with these developments, UNHCR offices should advocate for the **inclusion of persons of concern in national statistics**.

What do UNHCR offices need to do?

1

Familiarize staff with the ongoing processes on the 2030 Agenda and identify entry points for your operation:

- **Familiarize yourself with the 2030 Agenda**, particularly the Declaration’s paragraphs 4 and 23, as well as the 17 SDGs;
- **Identify the most important SDGs for your programme** and review the targets (and indicators when they are released);
- **Identify what UNHCR can offer to the national process** on the 2030 Agenda in the form of information and data, knowledge and expertise or other context-specific resources;

2

Engage in regional and national 2030 Agenda planning processes and action plans: UNHCR Representatives should acquaint themselves with the national 2030 Agenda planning and implementation processes which State authorities set up and advocate that these are inclusive of refugees and other persons of concern to the extent possible.

- **Acquaint yourself with the national planning process** related to SDGs and make sure that UNHCR participates in these processes.
- Ensure that your regular government counterparts as well as the **appropriate line Ministry and the UNCT/HCT are aware of the fact that UNHCR requests that refugees, stateless and other persons of concern are included in the national planning process**, timeline and key events – request invitation to participate in the process;
- **Focus on inclusion of diverse persons of concern**, while highlighting how UNHCR and partners can assist in preventing and preparing for any form of displacement, building capacities for resilience and emergency response;

3

Focus on disaggregated data:

- UNHCR’s preferred position is to **advocate with national statistics offices to include refugees, IDPs and stateless persons** in national poverty assessments.⁴
- In the interim, **where UNHCR has these statistics, they should be shared with the national authorities**, recognizing that in many countries neither the national statistics nor those gathered by UNHCR fully adhere to the standards of the most developed countries.
- In any case, **UNHCR should ensure that basic, age, sex and diversity disaggregated data** on refugees, IDPs and stateless persons is available in an easy format and share this in an open and transparent manner, in full respect of data protection rules.

4 Goal 17 provides for capacity building support to developing countries, for high quality timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts. Although UNHCR does not consider refugees as migrants, for statistical purposes refugee data currently forms part of the UN’s ‘migrant stock’. “Other characteristics relevant” is an entry point for the inclusion of stateless populations.

Integrate SDGs into your operations plan, advocacy messages and internal processes

- **Integrate** implementation of the relevant SDG targets into your annual programming.
- **Use the information** and data to communicate around your programme, frame your agenda and advocate for inclusion in local, regional and national development programmes;
- **Remain updated** as information is released on indicators for measurement and funding opportunities for the SDGs and incorporate the indicators and pursue funding possibilities.

Resources

UNHCR Guidance

- UNHCR will develop further guidance on specific goals and approaches, including funding opportunities. The Guidelines on Goal 4, concerning Education (available at: <http://goo.gl/JDHuZi>, as well as the Briefing Note on the SDGs and Statelessness (available at: <http://goo.gl/bK8wKV>).

Primary Resources

- *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, Finalized text for adoption, August, 2015. Available at: <http://goo.gl/TvL68T>
- *Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - Reference Guide to UNCTs*, United Nations Development Group. Available at: <http://goo.gl/8qWOZZ>

- *Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Reference Guide to UN Country Teams*, February, 2016. Available at: <http://goo.gl/upmRuy>

- *Interim United Nations Development Assistance Framework Guidance*, 2016. Available at: <http://goo.gl/UdPwyJ>

Views from other stakeholders

- *Implementing the SDGs with Local Priorities In Mind: The 2015 Development Cooperation Report And The Role Of Partnerships*. Available at: <https://goo.gl/iRXW4y>
- WFP: *SDGs – Quick Guide for WFP Staff*. Available at: <http://goo.gl/miUju5>
- UNICEF: *Global Goals for Every Child*. Available at: <http://goo.gl/hndzyz>