



Securing SDG progress and inclusion for refugees

‘As we embark on this great collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind... we wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. And we will endeavour to reach the furthest behind first.’¹

The success of the Global Goals depend upon ensuring meaningful progress for everyone. Yet, refugees are already being left behind. They are neglected in pursuit of the Global Goals because they are rarely counted in national surveys or included in SDG progress reports.

Now, as the spread of COVID-19 across the globe plunges countries into health and economic crisis, refugee progress towards the Global Goals is in peril. Countries affected by fragility, conflict and displacement, with limited health and welfare systems, will struggle to respond or find the much needed resources to protect refugee populations from hunger and economic hardship.² This will have ramifications across the SDGs. It is only by taking urgent action now, that we can still ensure that no one is left behind.

Business has a key role to play in contributing to the achievement of the SDGs for refugees. In countries affected by crisis business can create economic opportunities and bring knowledge, resources, funding, capacity and infrastructure. When numbers of refugees increase in stable contexts, businesses can contribute to their economic inclusion by providing employment and training opportunities.

While refugees strive to recover from crisis and rebuild their lives, they are still suffering the effects of systemic racism. Businesses everywhere have been stepping forward to call for racial justice.³ That call must include putting an end to decades of racist and xenophobic hostility against refugees. The private sector must be a driving force for change in building more inclusive and equitable societies.

We, the undersigned, recognise this role of business in improving the lives of refugees. To this end, we are committed to and supportive of measures such as: hiring refugees; integrating refugees into core business activities; developing vital goods and services; providing investment and funding for humanitarian response and livelihoods; and building strong, collaborative partnerships to benefit refugees.

In order for businesses to build on their current efforts, to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19, and secure progress and refugee inclusion in the SDGs, we call on governments to:

1) Create and support a policy environment open to refugee employment and economic inclusion by:

- Enabling entrepreneurship and permitting labour market access and the right to work, thereby increasing refugees’ access to decent work and self-reliance.
- Prioritising and resourcing refugee women’s economic empowerment as a vital step towards achieving gender equality and inclusive economic growth.
- Increasing access to financial services and social protections for refugees, including through the use of humanitarian cash transfers.

2) Prioritise effective and inclusive financing strategies as part of the COVID-19 emergency response and recovery by:

- Ensuring the provision of additional multi-year, flexible financing that can tackle both immediate needs and support economic recovery for all.
- Prioritising financing for frontline response, including meeting health and humanitarian needs.
- Ensuring economic stimulus and COVID-19 recovery efforts reduce existing inequalities (along the lines of race, gender, refugee/migration status and more) to rebuild inclusive societies and lessen social and economic divides.

3) Measure refugee progress towards the SDGs by:

- Including refugees in national and sectoral plans, as well as SDG progress reports (Voluntary National Reviews).

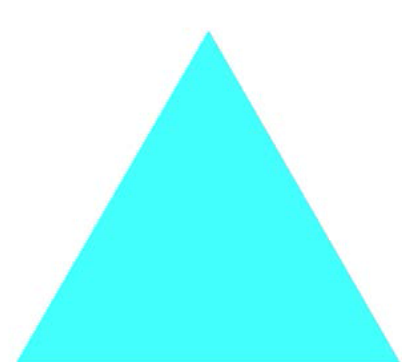
¹ A/RES/70/1 – Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, United Nations.

² It is estimated that US\$1.7 billion in additional funding is required in 2020 to prevent more people going hungry in countries affected by fragility, conflict and displacement. IRC, The Cost of Living: COVID-19 Humanitarian Cash Transfers to Prevent Hunger and Hardship, 2020.

³ Ben & Jerry’s ‘We must dismantle white supremacy’ 2020

Business takes a stand for refugees

We, the undersigned, recognise the role of business in improving the lives of refugees and call on governments to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 and secure refugee progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.



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