

**A Framework For Cooperation Between The
United States Department Of State, Bureau
Of Population, Refugees And Migration And The Office
Of The United Nations High Commissioner For
Refugees
2023-2025**

Table of Contents

A. Context and Shared Priorities	3
B. Strategic Objectives	4
1. Promote Protection Priorities	4
2. Improve Efficiency By Streamlining Budgeting and Reporting	8
3. Expand Humanitarian Diplomacy Toward Solutions and Inclusion	9
4. Improve Relief and Development Coherence	10
5. Strengthen NGO Partnerships and Advance Localization	11
6. Direct Food Aid to Those Most in Need	12
C. Oversight and Monitoring	14
D. U.S. Visibility and Messaging	15
E. Conclusion	15

A. Context and Shared Priorities

This Framework for Cooperation (the “Framework”) sets forth a shared understanding between the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration at the United States Department of State (hereinafter referred to as “PRM”) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (hereinafter referred to as “UNHCR”). PRM and UNHCR have been working in partnership through a Framework for Cooperation since the year 2000 to provide protection, humanitarian assistance, and facilitate durable solutions for people forced to flee and stateless people in accordance with UNHCR's mandate, conferred upon it through its statute¹ and by subsequent General Assembly resolutions on refugees, people forced to flee and stateless people. PRM and UNHCR have a unique relationship. The United States (U.S.) government, through PRM, remains UNHCR's top donor, while UNHCR has been PRM's largest funded partner.

This Framework lays out a shared agenda for the next three years (2023-2025) that PRM and UNHCR will work together to achieve. This document does not cover all aspects of the U.S.-UNHCR relationship but charts a course towards meaningful progress on a subset of shared priority issues. This Framework, in its entirety, is not legally binding.

As of January 2023, UNHCR counts more than 100 million individuals worldwide on the move, including refugees, asylum seekers, other forcibly displaced persons, and stateless people. In 2022 UNHCR responded to 37 new emergencies, or on average a new emergency every eight to ten days. These numbers demonstrate the scale of the problem of forced displacement and the urgency of addressing it.

Under this Framework, PRM and UNHCR will continue to work together to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our working relationship and strengthen UNHCR's capacity for efficient, effective, and accountable operational delivery. The Framework is aligned

¹ Resolution 428 (V), annex.

with [UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2022-2026](#), [the Global Compact on Refugees](#), and PRM's 2022-2024 [Functional Bureau Strategy](#), among other documents. It is guided by the priorities of the Executive Committee and its Standing Committee. As UNHCR's historically largest humanitarian donor, PRM expects at a minimum that UNHCR will convey humanitarian priorities based on need, demonstrate significant efficiencies in the management of operations to meet those needs, and provide transparent performance data to show the impact of UNHCR's work.

Accountability of UNHCR to affected populations first and foremost as well as to Executive Committee members, is a priority for PRM. This includes meeting or exceeding Grand Bargain commitments; completing the various reform initiatives UNHCR is undertaking, including the Business Transformation Programme, and demonstrating their impact; demonstrating how U.S. contributions are spent, including using data-driven decision-making; and maintaining a strong risk management system. The [five-year Accountability to Affected People \(AAP\) plan](#), now in its second year, reaffirms UNHCR's commitment to AAP and outlines the focus on four key pillars. Given the intersections of climate change, food insecurity, and displacement, PRM and UNHCR will continue to increase focus on climate action and adaptation regarding both the impacts of climate change on affected populations and the effects of humanitarian operations on the environment.

B. Strategic Objectives

1. Promote Protection Priorities

Purpose: Protection is at the core of PRM and UNHCR's humanitarian mission. UNHCR's strong leadership in the protection of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and stateless persons, as well as upholding protection principles and standards for these populations, in meaningful dialogue with people forced to flee and stateless people and Member States, is central to PRM's support for UNHCR. It is especially important to continue to integrate

protection for populations in particular situations of vulnerability, including LGBTQI+ individuals, women, children, and people with disabilities, among others, into assistance programs and reinforce these efforts. It is also important UNHCR provide needs-based protection and assistance to its affected populations and continue to prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility principles in its internal operations.

Outcomes: To advance this objective, UNHCR will provide to PRM information on trends in UNHCR performance in support of the following outcomes, as applicable. This information will be provided to the fullest extent possible, as part of existing public global reports, and using COMPASS indicators. If needed, UNHCR will provide additional information through PRM-specific global performance reports, and/or regular phone calls and meetings between PRM and UNHCR technical leads.

Gender-based Violence (GBV)

- Regular reporting on UNHCR's GBV programming and initiatives, including data (where possible) on the number of program participants, funds expended, and realized outcomes.
- Regular reporting on UNHCR's GBV risk mitigation measures across sectors; and,
- Increase membership of local women's organizations, including those led by refugee women and girls, within the GBV coordination mechanism in refugee settings.

Child Protection

- Regular reporting on UNHCR's child protection programming and initiatives, including data (where possible) on the number of program participants, funds expended, and realized outcomes.

- Regular reporting on UNHCR's child protection mainstreaming measures across sectors.

Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS)

- Regular reporting on UNHCR's MHPSS programming and initiatives, including data (where possible) on the number of program participants.
- Continued investment in MHPSS training and capacity building for field, HQ, and partner staff.

Statelessness

- Regular dialogue with PRM on statelessness programs and joint advocacy; and,
- Global Strategic Focus Area Plan for Statelessness developed, including priority country operations and a monitoring framework.

Internal Displacement

- Regular briefings on UNHCR's efforts to shape law and policy on internal displacement at the global, regional and country levels; and,
- Quarterly briefings on engagement in IDP settings, including on strategy and resourcing in furtherance of UNHCR's operational, coordination and leadership role in IDP settings.

Resettlement

- Increased referral capacity across all regions globally, and particularly among priority populations under the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP);
- Continue to build deeper, more effective and meaningful collaboration with the USRAP's NGO partners to expand resettlement opportunities globally;

- Increased collaboration, communication, and information-sharing so that approved cases can depart in a timely manner; and,
- Provide clarity on use of core funding for registration, individual casework, and resettlement processing.

Family Reunification and Complementary Pathways

- Reporting on global trends and initiatives, including data (where possible) on the number of refugee specific programs, facilitation measures including the lifting of obstacles such as acceptable travel documents or 'dual intent' provisions, and refugees departing or facing challenges to accessing complementary pathways and family reunification globally;
- Increased active participation of refugees in design and implementation of complementary pathways programs globally; and,
- Increased collaboration, communication, and information-sharing so that qualified refugees are able to benefit from opportunities.

LGBTQI+

- Regular information sharing on UNHCR's programming and initiatives to protect, assist, include, and support solutions for LGBTQI+ displaced people, including data (where possible) on benefitting individuals and considerations on the main outcomes;
- Continued investment in LGBTQI+ training for field and HQ staff; and,
- Expanded outreach and funding to LGBTQI+ and LGBTQI-led civil society organizations, especially at the local level, for assistance and support services to forcibly displaced LGBTQI+ persons.

2. Improve Efficiency By Streamlining Budgeting and Reporting

Purpose: PRM and UNHCR will work together to continue to support UNHCR's efforts to provide assistance and facilitate solutions for people forced to flee and stateless people, considering necessary measures to meaningfully engage with and support affected and hosting communities. This will include more detailed UNHCR reporting on its impact and the allocation of U.S. contributions, as well as better coordination with PRM on budgeting and planning at the country operation and regional bureau levels.

Outcomes: To advance this objective, UNHCR will provide to PRM analytical reports with data, disaggregated by population group, showing trends in UNHCR performance in support of the following outcomes, as applicable, and PRM and UNCHR will take other actions detailed below:

Performance and Impact Reporting

- UNHCR and PRM continue to engage with one another on key COMPASS developments;
- UNHCR tracks key PRM global outcome indicators, to the extent that they overlap with COMPASS and pre-determined indicators, and annually reports quality performance data for each indicator for select operations as relevant in Excel or other machine-readable format;
- UNHCR tracks global data on key PRM output indicators (where aligned with UNHCR's own output indicators) and shares quality data for each indicator in Excel or other machine-readable format to PRM twice per year (disaggregated by population and country as applicable);
- UNHCR submits financial reports on schedule as jointly decided; and, PRM strengthens the Country Operations Planning (COP) monitoring exercise and reports results to UNHCR in a timely and accessible manner.

Budgeting Outcomes

- PRM issues guidance to Refugee Coordinators and field staff on budget and planning coordination, in consultation with UNHCR;
- PRM explores multiyear planning; and,
- PRM assesses its earmarked contribution approach in order to determine ways it may be able to streamline earmarks and increase the proportion of U.S. contributions provided as flexible funding.

3. Expand Humanitarian Diplomacy Toward Solutions and Inclusion

Purpose: PRM and UNHCR reaffirm their shared intention to carry out humanitarian diplomacy aimed at achieving concrete solutions for people forced to flee and stateless people. PRM and UNHCR will leverage the 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF), the Regional Support Platforms as well as private sector engagement to advance solutions and inclusion to improve outcomes for affected populations. PRM and UNHCR understand solutions to include durable solutions *and* local solutions, and we understand inclusion to mean inclusion of displaced and stateless persons in national systems and services. In the lead up to the 2023 GRF, U.S. humanitarian diplomacy will be mainly targeted around three focus countries/regions where PRM and UNHCR are ramping up efforts towards solutions and inclusion.

Outcomes: To advance this objective, UNHCR will provide to PRM analytical reports with data showing trends in UNHCR performance in support of the following outcomes, as applicable, and PRM and UNCHR will take other actions as detailed below:

- UNHCR identifies solutions- and inclusion-oriented advocacy opportunities to be advanced through high-level engagement in various forums;
- PRM implements its pledge to match 10 self-reliance and inclusion pledges;

- PRM undertakes outreach to donor countries on potential pledges they could match, working with host countries;
- UNHCR and PRM review options for private sector engagement platforms and identify opportunities to improve refugee/IDP inclusion and participation in labor markets, reduce poverty, and facilitate access to labor mobility as a complementary pathway (e.g., the World Economic Forum, Welcome.US, Tent Partnership, Talent Beyond Boundaries, the International Finance Corporation (IFC)); and,
- UNHCR identifies key areas for PRM to focus humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy to advance solutions and inclusion for forcibly displaced individuals facing specific vulnerabilities.

4. Improve Relief and Development Coherence

Purpose: PRM and UNHCR both recognize the importance of effective coordination between relief and development actors, and the imperative to strengthen coherence between humanitarian and development approaches to assistance in the face of mounting protracted displacement and emerging crises. PRM strongly supports UNHCR in its efforts to build relationships with development actors and explore avenues for synergy with development responses, including through leveraging development actors such as bilateral development partners and international financial institutions. Through this work, PRM and UNHCR will promote an expanded evidence base which broadens support for inclusion of forcibly displaced and stateless people in development interventions. Strengthening humanitarian and development coherence within the U.S. government drives better outcomes for both, while improving collaboration with partners like UNHCR.

Outcomes: To advance this objective, UNHCR will provide to PRM information on UNHCR performance in support of the following outcomes, as applicable, and PRM and UNCHR will take other actions as detailed below:

- The World Bank-UNHCR Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement (JDC) curates and disseminates data to inform both humanitarian and development approaches in forced displacement contexts;
- UNHCR shares lessons learned from donor governments, and multilateral donors already prioritizing development approaches to forced displacement; and,
- PRM coordinates a joint visit, potentially with other U.S. government agencies, to review RDC efforts in a given regional or country context.
- PRM seeks to increase its engagement with USAID on inclusion of refugees in national systems and development programs where appropriate; and,
- UNHCR and PRM map opportunities for enhanced RDC engagement in three focus countries (Bangladesh, Kenya, Colombia) including existing programs, advocacy opportunities, and other avenues for improved coordination.

5. Strengthen NGO Partnerships and Advance Localization

Purpose: Maintaining effective partnerships with NGOs, including organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, is essential for UNHCR to deliver on its mandate and achieve our shared goals of assisting and protecting all forcibly displaced and stateless people, promoting accountability to affected people, and helping them achieve durable and local solutions. PRM and UNHCR also recognize NGOs' value as thought leaders, advocates, and stakeholders in humanitarian practice and promoting humanitarian principles. UNHCR intends to continue to include NGO partners in multi-year planning to encourage continuity and predictability in operations and leverage results-based reporting from partners to drive better outcomes and better partnership decisions. Partnerships with a diverse range of local, national, faith-based organizations and organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons will further drive improved impact and efficiency.

Outcomes: To advance this objective, UNHCR will provide to PRM information on trends in UNHCR performance in support of the following outcomes, as applicable, and PRM and UNCHR will take other actions as detailed below:

- Amount of funding distributed to local, national, or refugee-led organizations (in USD) – provided at least twice per year;
- Proportion of NGO partners involved in multi-year planning;
- Proportion of total UNHCR partnership funding that is disbursed to local and national responders;
- Strategic resource mobilization partnership between UNHCR and major NGOs drives more successful advocacy;
- Project Reporting Oversight and Monitoring Solution (PROMS) for partners implemented and preliminary impacts shared;
- PRM continues to build its relationship with U.S. Refugee Advisory Board and roles for refugee delegates in U.S. delegations; and,
- Both PRM and UNHCR focus on meaningful refugee participation in localization efforts, including through the implementation of grant agreements with organizations led by displaced and stateless people, updates on the Refugee-Led Innovation Fund and the Refugee Investment Network.

6. Direct Food Aid to Those Most in Need

Purpose: PRM and UNHCR collaboration on advocacy and funding promote transparent and predictable food assistance and corresponding efforts to sustainably improve the food security of refugees and others forced to flee and their hosting communities. Global shocks have impacted an already fragile food-security situation, driving up prices sharply while restricting critical supplies of food commodities from export. Nowhere are these impacts more evident and

prevalent than in the least developed countries, the world's poorest and most fragile 46 countries, of which more than two thirds are subject to fragility and/or conflict. Preventing famine and responding to global food insecurity necessitates a holistic approach to include investments and interventions across humanitarian sectors—health, nutrition, water, sanitation, and hygiene, and protection—as well as in development, technology, and trade, in addition to the provision of in-kind food and cash assistance to meet urgent food and other basic needs.

Outcomes: To advance this objective, UNHCR will provide to PRM information on trends in UNHCR performance in support of the following outcomes, as applicable, and PRM and UNCHR will take other actions as detailed below:

- UNHCR to provide PRM quarterly lists of operations suffering greatest food assistance shortfalls, including clear information on examples and details of ration cuts in the field;
- PRM coordinates with USAID and the World Food Program (WFP) on ration allocations;
- UNHCR continues to participate in regular four corners calls with PRM, USAID, and WFP;
- UNHCR works with WFP to expand the donor base for the Joint Hub and leverage the Hub to expand joint UNHCR-WFP collaboration to ensure a common understanding of refugee vulnerabilities to food insecurity and target food assistance to those in need in a protection-sensitive manner while expanding Agency efforts and partnerships to increase food security, self-reliance and inclusion;
- UNHCR reports in a timely manner on efforts to institutionalize the Joint Hub or otherwise support institutional collaboration on food security, self-reliance, food systems and inclusion with WFP; and,

UNHCR informs PRM of opportunities to advance refugee food security and inclusion opportunities through the use of humanitarian diplomacy, and proactively identifies specific areas for U.S. diplomatic engagement.

C. Oversight and Monitoring

Conducting UNHCR operations consistent with international humanitarian principles of neutrality, humanity, independence, and impartiality remains a shared priority.

UNHCR will continue to strengthen its internal governance and oversight processes, support the Inspector General, and continue to professionalize staff of the Inspector General's Office (IGO). The IGO's commitment to finalizing investigations reflects UNHCR's efforts to reinforce its systems to detect, report, and respond to cases of misconduct, including providing presentation and training to UNHCR personnel on misconduct and the investigative process; support to implementing partner staff on how to conduct investigations in line with industry standards; and training on conducting investigations on sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) for UNHCR personnel and partner staff.

PRM and UNHCR affirm the importance of risk management, including increasing coordination across UNHCR, and strengthening communication and engagement between PRM and UNHCR on risk management issues at the field and HQ levels. To prevent and respond to fraud, mismanagement, and abuse, as well as SEA, PRM and UNHCR intend to strengthen comprehensive management oversight responsibilities, as well as accountability to support the integrity of UNHCR's operations. PRM will support UNHCR in its allocation of sufficient human and financial resources to fully implement measures to improve accountability, transparency, oversight, and program management, and will request regular updates on progress through its governing structures. UNHCR will report on such actions to the Standing Committee and Executive Committee, and upon request to PRM.

A key component of PRM's leadership in coordinated humanitarian programming and diplomacy includes robust monitoring. PRM will use UNHCR's regular reporting and

coordination, including on policy and program issues identified in this Framework, to closely monitor the Organization's work. PRM seeks to support UNHCR in strengthening its capacity to monitor its own programs. PRM will continue to share the results of its monitoring and analysis with UNHCR and welcomes feedback from UNHCR in response to PRM findings and recommendations.

D. U.S. Visibility and Messaging

UNHCR will continue its efforts to substantially raise the profile and visibility of the United States as a donor. Deepening public understanding and informed commitment is a part of the global humanitarian response efforts.

- UNHCR will disseminate the attached, revised PRM-UNHCR Joint Visibility Strategy (JVS) and its corresponding visibility guidelines to all Regional Bureaus and field operations and work in coordination on the Strategy's implementation to reflect U.S. support in the field and in public information tools;
- UNHCR will continue to provide twice-annual donor visibility reports to PRM to demonstrate it is meeting the benchmarks decided upon in the JVS; and,
- PRM will disseminate the JVS to its Refugee Coordinators, for the purpose of monitoring UNHCR's implementation of the JVS in conjunction with PRM program staff.

E. Conclusion

In closing, PRM and UNHCR confirm their commitment to remain strong partners to protect and find durable solutions for the tens of millions of refugees, asylum seekers, other forcibly displaced and stateless people around the world. This Framework for Cooperation operative upon signature by PRM and UNHCR and is intended to cease on December 31, 2025.

FOR THE UNITED STATES
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Date:

FOR THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED
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