



REPORT
FROM THE
ANGLICAN
COMMUNION
OFFICE AT
THE UNITED
NATIONS

Report on the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations' Attendance at the Global Refugee Forum 2019



United Nations, Geneva

#WELCOMINGTHESTRANGER
#REFUGEESWELCOME

16 - 18 DECEMBER 2019

REPORT ON THE FIRST GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM

OVERVIEW

The first Global Refugee Forum was a 3-day event that marked the first opportunity for stakeholders to offer concrete pledges and commitments and share examples of good practice relating to the achievement of the goals set out in the Global Compact on Refugees, which was agreed by UN Member States in 2018. The high-level element of the Forum focused around a number of key issues related to the realisation of the Global Compact, particularly: burden and responsibility sharing, education, jobs and livelihoods, energy and infrastructure, protection capacity and solutions.

By the end of the Forum, almost 800 pledges and commitments had been received by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, with more expected to be published after the Forum. More than 50 pledges came from faith actors. Despite the number of pledges, there was still a sense of frustration at the lack of political will and ambition offered by stakeholders, particularly wealthier Member States. Progress towards the ambitions of the Global Compact on Refugees will be (at best) incremental if more is not done – particularly in terms of burden and responsibility sharing. The on-going burden and responsibility placed on poorer states must be addressed urgently; otherwise the impact of other pledges and commitments will be severely limited.

The Permanent Representative to the UN represented the Anglican Communion at the Forum. The PR was able to monitor discussions on a range of issues, as well as highlighting the pledges made by different Anglican entities, through a variety of platforms. The Anglican Communion Office at the UN also co-sponsored a side event with a number of faith actors, including Caritas Internationalis, ACT Alliance, Islamic Relief Worldwide and International Catholic Migration Commission. The side event focused on how faith-based organisations can



generate impactful pledges in support of refugees towards the Global Refugee Forum. A speaker during the Spotlight Session on Community Sponsorship also included a representative of a [sponsorship initiative led by a Church of England parish in the Diocese of Exeter.](#)

PLEDGING

When the concept of pledging was announced earlier in 2019, the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations invited around a dozen Anglican provinces and dioceses already engaged in work with refugees to consider submitting pledges to the Forum. This would enable provinces and dioceses to highlight the extremely important work that they have been undertaken over long periods, whilst also committing themselves to further work on issues of importance. At the time of the Forum, the Anglican Communion Office at the UN was able to submit four pledges on behalf of The Anglican Church of Canada, The Anglican Archdeaconry of Cyprus, The Church of England the Refuge Egypt (Anglican and Episcopal Diocese of Egypt).

The Anglican Church of Canada
pledges
Refugee Sponsorship: A Canadian Anglican Perspective
At current rates of sponsorship, it is expected that dioceses across Canada will continue to submit applications to resettle 400-500 people per year for the next several years.
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The Anglican Church in Cyprus
pledges
The Anglican Church 'welcoming the stranger' in Cyprus: co-ordinating policy and practice
By promulgating an alternative narrative of hope underlining the mutual blessings of hospitality and inclusion; preaching, teaching and modelling welcome and hospitality as biblically-based and practical expressions of support; and sharing good practice among individual churches, and with other faith-based and secular organisations.
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The Church of England
pledges
The Church of England's support for Community Sponsorship
Since the UK Government announced the introduction of a Community Sponsorship system as part of its resettlement programme for Syrian (and subsequently other groups of) refugees, the Church of England has been at the forefront of delivery of this particular scheme.
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Refuge Egypt
pledges
comprehensive support of refugees in Egypt
Refuge Egypt aims to build self-reliance in the refugee populations of Greater Cairo, through humanitarian assistance and development activities, in order to prepare refugees for integration and/or resettlement abroad.
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The full text of these pledges is available on the [Anglican Communion website](#), as well as being listed on the official [Global Compact on Refugees Digital Platform](#).

The Forum is **not** a deadline for pledges and contributions, but rather a catalyst for stakeholders all around the world engaged in support for refugees to commit their future activity towards the goals of the Global Compact on Refugees. The Anglican Communion Office at the UN will continue to work with provinces, dioceses and agencies across the Anglican Communion to identify suitable pledges that can support the aims of the Global Compact on Refugees.

DISCUSSIONS AT THE FORUM

It is impossible to capture the breadth of discussions during the Global Refugee Forum. In line with the content of Anglican pledges ahead of the Forum, the Anglican Communion Office at the UN focused on participating in discussions related to resettlement, solutions, return and reintegration and protection capacity.

During the Opening Plenary, both the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Secretary General offered strong words to the international community, urging them to do more to support refugees and those who are most vulnerable. The High Commissioners despaired about the ‘manufactured panic’ about refugees in many rich countries when many Global South states have been demonstrating exceptional hospitality towards refugee communities. Both urged stakeholders to be bold and concrete in their pledges, with the Secretary General appealing to those present to remember that ‘solidarity runs deep in human character’.

During a Spotlight Session on Community Sponsorship, there was a strong recognition of the leadership by faith communities as sponsors, not only in response to recent displacements such as from Syria, but over the past 30-40



years. It was noted that those who are resettled have begun to go on to be community sponsors themselves. The link between community sponsorship and stronger integration outcomes was also highlighted. There were government and civil society speakers representing both Canada and the UK, mirroring pledges from the Anglican Church of Canada and the Church of England. For more information about community sponsorship, visit: <http://refugeesponsorship.org/>

One of the more positive and ambitious efforts highlighted during the Forum is UNHCR's own [Three-Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways](#). The strategy has a vision to grow resettlement, advance complementary pathways, and build the foundation by promoting welcoming and inclusive societies. Churches all around the Anglican Communion, but particularly in countries that are, or could be, resettling countries, can contribute to the aims of this strategy. The Strategy suggests actions for different stakeholders. Faith-based organisations are encouraged to:

- Advocate with local and national authorities for the establishment and expansion of programmes through demonstrating their benefits;
- Mobilise citizens and harness local actors' initiatives to directly engage in supporting refugees arriving through resettlement and complementary pathways, including through community-based sponsorship models;
- Bring refugees and local communities together through sponsorship models, volunteerism, mentorship programmes and inter-faith and inter-cultural events;
- Ensure that reception and integration programmes respond to the specific needs of refugees and their capacities;
- Include and partner with refugees and diaspora.

Throughout many of the sessions and speeches, there was a strong reminder that protection of refugees is built on a



fundamental recognition of and respect for the human rights of those who are refugees. In too many situations, these rights are not being upheld – whether through indefinite or child detention, undermining non-refoulement, failing to provide adequate education or health services, or leaving those displaced vulnerable to physical or other forms of abuse. Reasserting the inherent and inalienable rights and dignity of all refugees is something that all must be committed to.

Another growing area of concern is how existing international law and practice related to refugees can respond to the changing landscape faced by those who are displaced. While there are good reasons to oppose re-opening the 1951 Refugee Convention for amendment, given the current hostility to towards refugees and migrants, there need to be innovative approaches taken to protect those displaced by climate shocks or longer-term climate change and environmental degradation. One particularly stark example came from South Africa, where over 90 percent of those seeking protection have been displaced due to famine or food security-related issues. In all of the discussions through the Forum, there was a strong concern for those at risk of falling through the cracks in the refugee protection architecture, and the need to find urgent solutions to these emerging challenges.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

The First Global Refugee Forum has now taken place. Pledges have been announced, commitments have been made. The next opportunity to review these pledges and commitments will be at the ‘First Mid-Term Senior Officials Meeting’ in 2021, with the Second Global Refugee Forum taking place in 2023.

There are a number of actions that the Anglican Communion Office at the UN will take in the coming years to support this process and build wider support for the Global Compact on Refugees around the Anglican Communion:



1) Monitoring of existing Anglican commitments:

- Each of the pledges submitted will be followed-up at one of the review moments mentioned above. The ACOUN will support those who have submitted pledges for the 2019 Global Refugee Forum to monitor progress on these pledges and advice on opportunities to update UNHCR and other stakeholders on progress being made.

2) Encouraging more Anglican commitments:

- The Forum is **not** a deadline for pledges and contributions, but rather a catalyst for stakeholders all around the world engaged in support for refugees to commit their future activity towards the goals of the Global Compact on Refugees. The Anglican Communion Office at the UN will continue to work with provinces, dioceses and agencies across the Anglican Communion to identify suitable pledges that can support the aims of the Global Compact on Refugees.

3) Mapping Anglican support for refugees and other displaced populations:

- There would be significant benefit in having a more authoritative understanding of where and how Anglicans are supporting refugees and others who have been displaced. Mapping this activity would open up more opportunities to work with other actors, as well as provide better data to understand the overall contribution of Anglicans towards the goals of the Global Compact on Refugees.
- It is hoped that by the time of the Second Global Refugee Forum, this work would be advanced enough to be able to submit Anglican pledges at a global level, or joint pledges across multiple Anglican entities.

4) Partnership with UNHCR and faith actors:

- Following the agreement of the Global Compact on Refugees, UNHCR began a process of updating its partnership principles relating to faith-based actors. This work has not yet been completed, but the ACOUN will continue to engage in this work as it progresses.



- The ACOUN will continue to promote UNHCR's Welcoming the Stranger multi-faith affirmations, which ground the commitment to support refugees in different faith traditions.
- The ACOUN will partner with other faith actors who are supporting the goals of the Global Refugee Compact, particularly offering support towards the planned Lutheran World Federation-Islamic Relief Worldwide conference on refugees in 2020, and strengthening our working relationship with ACT Alliance and their Community of Practice on Migration and Displacement.
- At the regional level, the ACOUN will also continue to support initiatives to strengthen coordination around refugee response, for example continuing to offer support to the newly formed group in Latin/Central America, and the work of CAPA on migration and displacement.

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