

World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim Statement at UN General Assembly High-level Event, The Global Compact on Refugees - A Model for Greater Solidarity and Cooperation

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Transcript

Thank you very much, Filippo. It's an honor to be here.

First of all, let me recognize your really wonderful leadership in bringing us together with the Global Compact on Refugees. Let me say that when you took over, we knew you had very large shoes to fill. As I've said many times, it was Antonio who really brought us into a much closer working relationship with UN agencies. I have to say; our collaboration has grown since you've taken over and we think that this is a great example of how multilateralism can and should work in the future – in a difficult time – for multilateralism.

I want to commend the commitment and dedication of all our humanitarian partners who are on the front lines protecting refugees, saving lives, and alleviating suffering every day.

Since the New York Declaration was adopted two years ago, refugee crises around the world have continued to rage, each serving as an urgent reminder that we need to respond more forcefully: 68.5 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide at the end of 2017, an increase of 16.2 million in one year – that’s equivalent to an average of 44,400 people being forced to flee their homes *every day* in 2017.

And refugee crises are becoming increasingly protracted. There are now almost 10 million people around the world who have been displaced for over 5 years. When you consider that 52 percent of refugees today are under the age of 18, the consequences of inaction will haunt us for generations.

From humanitarian emergencies to enduring social and economic challenges, the Global Compact lays out a pathway for us to manage each individual crisis better—grounded in a much closer partnership between the humanitarian and development communities that makes good use of our complementary expertise and approaches.

In July I visited Bangladesh with Secretary-General Guterres, and I saw for myself the severity of the crisis for Rohingya in Cox’s Bazar. We first announced 50 million dollars for health and nutrition services for the Rohingya refugees. We will now provide up to half a billion dollars in total to help Bangladesh address priorities such as education and psycho-social support. In my mind, this is an example of how humanitarian and development partners can engage early and work together from the start. In this spirit, I want to thank Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. We met with her; she has been following the response to the Rohingya crisis on a daily basis and knew it in great detail. We are all grateful for the generosity of the Prime Minister and the Bangladeshi people in receiving the Rohingya refugees.

I’m confident that the Global Compact will provide incentives for us to find more and better ways to collaborate. We are encouraged by the comprehensive response that the Global Compact envisions, and I want to

emphasize three key areas where development approaches have the potential to make a significant contribution:

First, data and evidence as a key tool for delivery. We're working with UNHCR and other partners to set up a new data center, supported by Denmark – thank you very much to the Danish government – that will improve the collection, analysis, and dissemination of *micro data*—data on income, consumption, skills, health status, and economic activity, and other areas. Today, we don't know enough about the welfare of refugees or hosts, but this is critical to make sure that policies and programs target the right people in effective ways.

Second, country leadership in developing a comprehensive response. We know from our development work that institutions and policies matter. We're working with host governments to encourage policy changes – such as letting refugees work and start businesses – which can open up new economic opportunities for refugees and hosts alike.

Third, opening up national education systems for both refugee and host community children, and expanding education especially for girls. We're preparing to announce our Human Capital Project next month, an ambitious effort to accelerate more and more effective investments in people. We want to make sure that no children are left behind – including refugees or young people in host communities.

Many host countries are already taking important steps to achieve the goals of the new Global Compact. For example, Ethiopia, the 7th largest refugee-hosting country in the world, is preparing to offer a range of rights for refugees, including the right to live out of camps, work, access education and legal documentation, as well as the ability to open bank accounts, so that they can rebuild their lives. We're excited to see how these steps can pave the way to grow new economic opportunities.

We're working with governments, UNHCR and other partners, to support the implementation of the Compact. Ethiopia is one of 9 low-income host countries so far that are receiving support from IDA—our fund for the poorest countries. IDA will provide 2 billion dollars over three years to help host countries invest in poor areas where they care for large numbers of refugees. For middle-income countries, the Global Concessional Financing Facility, has leveraged 2.5 billion dollars in concessional financing to support refugees and host communities in Lebanon and Jordan, creating jobs and expanding public services and infrastructure. In this context, later today with the Tent Foundation, we will be doing an event showcasing how private sector companies have pledged to open businesses and create jobs in Lebanon and Jordan.

To ensure that we achieve the objectives of the Compact, we're committing to collaborate with governments, international organizations, and NGOs to measure the impact of hosting and protecting refugees, and on developing indicators to assess progress.

Finally, we need to remember that this is about people: Refugees, deserving of safety and security, who dream of better lives for themselves and their families; and host communities – the vast majority of which are in low and middle-income countries – that themselves aspire to grow and thrive.

Working together, we have a historic opportunity to change the way the global community responds to refugees – sharing the responsibility of supporting refugees and their hosts – so that refugees and hosts alike can prosper and have a chance to achieve their highest aspirations.

Thank you.