



**THE SUPPORT  
PLATFORM FOR THE  
SOLUTIONS STRATEGY  
FOR AFGHAN REFUGEES**

A Partnership for Solidarity and Resilience

**“ When dealing with such a complex situation as the one prevailing in Afghanistan, it is necessary to be fully aware of the past, to have an accurate knowledge of the present and to develop a vision of the future which is both realistic and ambitious.”**

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H.E. Lakhdar Brahimi, former Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

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# FOREWORD

Recently, we marked a tragic anniversary. It is now forty years since the first Afghan refugees left their country, in what would become one of the biggest displacement crises of our time. At the Islamabad Refugee Summit, convened by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in February 2020, the international community honoured the extraordinary resilience of Afghan refugees, and recognized the exceptional generosity and hospitality of their host countries and communities. Above all, participants reiterated the imperative for solutions – including through a broader partnership base built on solidarity and responsibility-sharing. The Support Platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees, which builds on the Global Compact on Refugees, aims to achieve just that.

There have been immense changes, across the region and globally, since the Support Platform was launched in December 2019 at the first Global Refugee Forum. In the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, insecurity persists, along with many other complex challenges, yet efforts to build greater stability are also in evidence. And across the region, the COVID-19 pandemic is pushing millions of vulnerable people further into poverty, with implications for population movements within the region and further afield.

The Support Platform can play an important role in driving potential solutions, including in the context of the peace process, and preserving and strengthening the investments and hard-won gains of the past. The needs of Afghans and their host communities are vast, calling for complementary, prioritised investments by a wide range of partners, to ensure the most efficient and impactful use of resources. This is where the Support Platform can help.

The integrated projects presented here are designed to respond to the most urgent priority needs. They have been identified jointly by the Islamic Governments of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, UNHCR and other stakeholders within the framework of the SSAR. The portfolio is geared towards building the resilience of individuals and communities, and enabling solutions, and is designed to be scaleable. Complementary investments are invited – by bilateral and multilateral development actors, international financial institutions, the UN system, the private sector, NGOs and civil society – in support of the Governments' efforts to address the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 on refugees, their hosts and other affected communities, and to make progress towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

In the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan, the projects support generous Government efforts to include Afghan refugees in national systems and social services, notably in the areas of health, education, youth empowerment and the development of human capital towards solutions. In the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the focus is on twenty priority areas of return and reintegration (PARRs). The United Nations system has recently committed to pursuing area-based humanitarian, development and peace investments in the PARRs, as a means of confidence-building and supporting the peace process. This common vision should create new momentum towards the establishment of conditions for sustainable return and reintegration, by tackling some of the drivers of displacement and humanitarian crises through a whole of society approach.

The generosity of the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan, as the two principal host countries, must be supported and sustained. For too long, they have shouldered a vastly disproportionate responsibility, and this must be accorded recognition, and more equitably shared. At the same time, the people of Afghanistan must not be abandoned at this critical moment in their country's recent history.

The Global Compact on Refugees was a response to the imperative of a more predictable and effective response to refugee flows, and more equitable burden-sharing, especially in large-scale protracted refugee situations. Now is the time to make that commitment real.

I encourage donors to help drive the Support Platform, both through direct support and by helping mobilise additional resources, including from development partners and the private sector. Through the Support Platform, we have the possibility to transform the lives of millions of refugees and their hosts, and to galvanise progress towards solutions. By contrast, the costs of inaction would be high - measured in generations still in limbo, increased population flows, and deepening socio-economic, peace and security consequences as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic resonates across the region. Now is the moment – if ever there was one – to stand in solidarity with Afghan refugees and their hosts, help build resilience and solutions, and avert another decade of displacement and despair.



**Filippo Grandi**  
United Nations High  
Commissioner for Refugees



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# FORGING A NEW PARTNERSHIP:

The Support Platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees

The **Support Platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees** is both a logical outgrowth of a long-affirmed regional strategy and a new departure under the **Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)**. Partners, both old and new, are invited to join with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan as we work toward greater resilience and durable solutions for Afghan refugees and the communities who host them.

## Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees

The **Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR)** is the result of an unprecedented quadripartite consultative process among the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan and UNHCR. Since its launch in 2012, the SSAR has served to jointly identify and implement approaches toward lasting solutions for Afghan refugees in the region. Building on a convergence of interests and reconciling the priorities of the country of origin and the principal host countries, the SSAR has provided a comprehensive strategic vision and operational framework for three overarching objectives: facilitating voluntary repatriation; enabling sustainable reintegration; and assisting the host countries and communities.<sup>1</sup>

### Three Pillars of the SSAR

Creating conditions conducive to voluntary repatriation through community-based investments in areas of high return

Building Afghan refugee capital based on livelihood opportunities in Afghanistan in order to facilitate sustainable return and reintegration

Enhanced support for refugee hosting communities, preserving protection space in host countries and resettlement in third countries

<sup>1</sup> See the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees, 2012, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/62341> See the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees, 2012, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/62341>

## Inspiring the Global Compact on Refugees

The SSAR pre-dates, and indeed inspired key elements of, the **Global Compact on Refugees**. It pursues an area-based and whole-of-society approach in refugee-hosting areas and areas of return. And it engages a broad variety of actors with complementary mandates and expertise, forging strong links between humanitarian assistance and long-term development.

Since its endorsement by the international community in 2012, the SSAR has served as a multilateral platform for solutions dialogue, consensus-building and partnership for Afghan refugees and their hosts.

The **GCR** reaffirmed the fundamental principles and approaches of the regional SSAR at a global level. It also recognized the urgent need for more predictable and equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing for hosting the world's refugees. Accordingly, it provided the international community with new tools and opportunities to galvanize support for large-scale and protracted refugee situations. Chief among these are regional approaches – such as the SSAR – and support platforms.<sup>2</sup>

UNHCR and the Governments of the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan launched a dedicated **Support Platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SP4SSAR)** in the context of the first **Global Refugee Forum** in December 2019.<sup>3</sup> Borne of the GCR's aspiration for enhanced solidarity, the Support Platform seeks to revitalize the international community's political and financial commitment to the Afghan refugee situation through investment in the implementation of the SSAR.

“ *The collective ability of the international community to deliver on the key objectives of the Support Platform will be a litmus test for the Global Compact on Refugees – its applicability to the most protracted refugee situations and its promise of greater responsibility-sharing with countries that have shouldered the burden.*”

Chairperson's Summary of the Islamabad Refugee Summit, February 2020<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Global Compact on Refugees, Section III, A, 2.2., available at <https://www.unhcr.org/5c658aed4>

<sup>3</sup> See the Joint Communique issued on the occasion of the launch of the SSAR Support Platform, December 2019, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/75621>

<sup>4</sup> Chairperson's Summary of the Islamabad refugee Summit, February 2020, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/75622>



## Revitalizing Partnerships

Building on the achievements of the SSAR over the past eight years, the Platform will draw from the objectives, commitments and momentum of the GCR as well as the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. These three frameworks are mutually reinforcing in their commitment to addressing the development impacts of displacement as integral to achieving solutions, and to “leave no one behind.”

“ *There is increasing recognition of the development challenges posed by large refugee situations and the advantages of shared and inclusive economic growth in refugee-hosting areas from which all can benefit, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*”

Global Compact on Refugees, para. 64

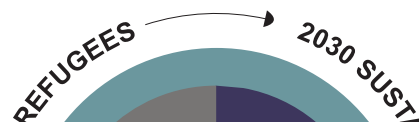
The Support Platform is poised to redefine how the international community responds to the Afghan refugee situation. This response must be rooted in recognition of three imperatives: the host countries’ progressive and inclusive policies, the needs of host communities, and the Government of Afghanistan’s staunch commitment to create an environment conducive to voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration at a time of historic political, peace and security junctures.<sup>5</sup>

The Platform provides opportunities for committed partners to forge strong and sustainable multi-year humanitarian and development responses across the region. The important contributions of long-standing donors and operational partners will be complemented by a broader base of stakeholders, including non-traditional donors, bilateral and multilateral development actors, international financial institutions, civil society and the private sector. All interested stakeholders can contribute -- whether through political, financial or material support-- in line with the operational priorities of the SSAR.<sup>6</sup>

**This document** provides an overview of the dynamics in the sub-region. It then highlights urgent needs and opportunities in the priority sectors of education, health and livelihoods, as identified by the three Governments and UNHCR in line with the SSAR’s objectives and Sustainable Development Goals 3, 4, 6 and 8. Finally, a country-specific portfolio of projects is provided in annex, with both standalone and scalable interventions that need financial and technical support from committed donors and partners in the near- to medium-term.

**This specific portfolio of projects is one piece of the support that is needed:** it complements the critical investments of others. Other interested stakeholders may use this document to inspire their own engagement within the Support Platform, with a view to forging synergies, building on comparative advantages and complementary approaches.

“ *We know the solution lies in Afghanistan. Working towards solutions for the Afghan people is not just a sign of solidarity; it is in the world’s best interest.*”



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