

Meeting the Challenges of the World's Refugee Crisis

CRS' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A PATH FORWARD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

More than 65 million people are displaced globally, outpacing the international community's ability to respond. Violence and instability around the globe have led to millions of individuals fleeing for their lives. Not only are more people displaced today, but they are displaced for longer, with the average duration of protracted refugee situations at the end of 2014 being about 25 years.¹ Refugees also increasingly live in host communities rather than refugee camps, with 60 percent living in urban settings.² Host communities are primarily in developing regions, balancing the needs of their own people with those of the displaced living among them.

We need to make changes to the way we respond to the changing landscape of the displaced, particularly refugees. The current humanitarian system and legal frameworks around refugees and migrants were created to respond to needs in the aftermath of World War II. Humanitarian response, including to the displaced, is generally designed to be lifesaving, providing basic necessities of food, water, shelter and sanitation— intrinsically short-term in scope. While the humanitarian system has seen improvements with the creation of the U.N. cluster system and consolidated funding mechanisms, among other changes, we are now at another point of inflection, as the humanitarian community attempts to respond to the significant challenges before us.

Following May's World Humanitarian Summit, two summits to tackle the issue of refugees will take place in September around the U.N. General Assembly. These summits will examine what systematic changes need to be made. Among the desired outcomes are pledges from host countries regarding education, livelihoods and resettlement that could provide longer-term solutions for the multitude of refugees.

1 UNHCR Global Trends: Forced Displacement 2014, p 11. <http://www.unhcr.org/556725e69.html>

2 [Urban refugees](#). UNHCR website. Accessed July 1, 2016.

Against this backdrop, CRS makes the following recommendations:

TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

- 1. Design and fund humanitarian interventions that integrate refugees over the long term.** Donors should fund projects that span 3 to 5 years that are flexible and responsive to opportunities, and that focus on helping refugee populations return to a normal way of life, through employment and education. The international community must also shift its mind-set and skill-set from solely providing short-term assistance to supporting longer-term, sustainable livelihoods more quickly. This includes investing in solutions beyond camp solutions for the displaced, as well as addressing their holistic needs. Peacebuilding and psychosocial programming must be integrated into existing responses.
- 2. Engage development actors.** To respond to the long-term needs of refugee populations, efforts to integrate refugee response into development goals and programs must not only be appropriately funded, they must adequately prioritize links between humanitarian and development actors.
- 3. Bring market-based assistance to scale.** This will require the U.S. government to plan for and fund the necessary supports for putting market-based systems in place, including supporting NGOs to build cash readiness of local partners, sharing learning, carrying out pre-market crisis assessments in high-risk environments within ongoing development programming, and pre-identifying multiple platforms for both cash and voucher programming that would also facilitate data sharing and stronger coordination.
- 4. Engage local actors as the norm.** The U.S. government's Grand Bargain commitment to apportion 25 percent of funding to local actors by 2020 will only become a reality if training and accompaniment is an essential part of the plan. This will require adequate funding for capacity building of local partners at the outset.
- 5. Boldly engage political solutions to end conflicts and other root causes of displacement.** As the majority of large-scale migrations are the result of political conflict, the U.S. government must continue to engage politically to end such conflicts, using all diplomatic tools to their utmost.

TO THE UNITED STATES AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY:

- 1. Recognize and respond to the needs of all vulnerable people, regardless of their legal status.** The drivers of displacement are neither simple nor singular. CRS recognizes the deep vulnerabilities of those whose life experiences span various legal definitions, and emphasizes the moral responsibility to meet the needs of *all individuals*, whether they are categorized as refugees, internally displaced persons, climate migrants, or otherwise. We further recognize a need for new international processes to create legal protections for the large numbers of internally displaced persons, climate refugees and the others fleeing danger who do not fit under existing legal rubrics.
- 2. Refocus the global humanitarian system to the local.** With less funding available to respond to growing humanitarian needs, the international community must work to find alternatives to the current systems to make them work better for those we serve. The U.S. and international donors must explore multiple funding mechanisms that ensure rapid and flexible funding to implementing agencies on the ground, including resources for preparedness. Lastly, assistance should be programmed through partners, local institutions and/or faith-based institutions, in whatever way necessary, to reach the intended beneficiary population most effectively and efficiently.

Dear migrants and refugees! Never lose the hope that you too are facing a more secure future, that on your journey you will encounter an outstretched hand, and that you can experience fraternal solidarity and the warmth of friendship! To all of you, and to those who have devoted their lives and their efforts to helping you, I give the assurance of my prayers and I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

—Message of Pope Francis for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2014³

PURPOSE

Reflecting on the commitments and advances made at the World Humanitarian Summit, and in advance of the United Nations General Assembly Summit on Refugees and Migrants September 19, and the U.S. Refugee Summit on September 20, Catholic Relief Services lays out its vision for refugee assistance in a rapidly changing humanitarian environment. CRS aims to be a voice for refugees, who do not have a voice in these processes yet are those most impacted by the decisions.

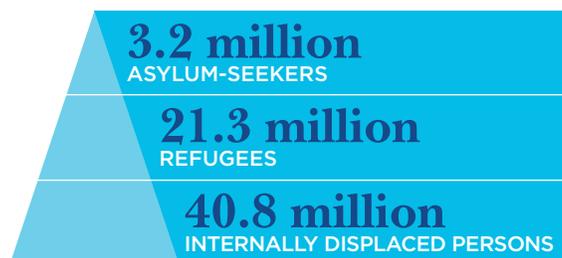
BACKGROUND

UNPRECEDENTED GLOBAL NEED, INSUFFICIENT POLITICAL WILL

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in 2015, 1 in every 113 people worldwide was forced to flee their home—either as a refugee, internally displaced person or asylum seeker.⁴ With 65.3 million displaced people around the world, global need has outpaced the international community’s ability to respond, logistically and financially, despite great generosity. Violence and instability around the globe, especially in Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia, have led to millions of individuals fleeing for their lives. As many as 400,000 Syrians have been killed in 6 years of civil conflict, and hundreds of thousands more are trapped in besieged cities. Other large-scale humanitarian crises in South Sudan, Yemen and Iraq have added to these numbers. Moreover, natural disasters exacerbated by climate change are also driving displacement.

Humanitarian response, including to the displaced, is generally designed to be lifesaving, and therefore, short-term. Provision of basic necessities—food, water, shelter and sanitation—are at the forefront of humanitarian response, yet millions of refugees and others forcibly displaced can live an entire generation in

Chart 1. 65.3 million displaced people



Asylum-seeker

A person seeking safety from persecution or serious harm in a country other than his or her own who is awaiting a decision on an application for refugee status under international and national instruments.

Refugee

A person who, “owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.”⁵

Internally Displaced Person (IDP)

A person who has been forced or obliged to flee his or her home or residence as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or man-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border

3 Pope Francis. “Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees.” Vatican: the Holy See. Vatican Website, 2013. August 5 2013.

4 Edwards, Adrian. “Global forced displacement hits record high.” June 20, 2016. UNHCR website.

5 UN General Assembly, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 28 July 1951, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189, p. 137, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3be01b964.html> [accessed 13 July 2016]

their community of refuge.⁶ Children make up 50 percent of the refugee population, and almost 50 percent are women or girls. In 2014, 86 percent of refugees lived in developing countries.⁷

Half of all refugees come from just three countries, with seven countries hosting more than half of all refugees. A startling 86 percent of refugees live in developing countries and, understandably, host governments are often unable to meet their longer-term needs. While Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon generously opened their doors to hundreds of thousands of Syrians fleeing violence in recent years, limited resources have impeded these governments' abilities to ensure livelihoods and education to the almost 5 million Syrians now within their borders. Often when governments seek to allow refugees to access education or livelihoods, bureaucratic hurdles get in the way. For example, in Turkey, children cannot get the paperwork needed to attend school, despite Turkish law, which grants the right for Syrian children to attend local schools. Similarly, the right to work is often impeded by the hurdle of getting a work permit. This requires a signed employment contract, which is hard for Syrian refugees to obtain.

For millions of refugees fleeing conflict and strife, weeks turn to months, and months to years, before they can return home. Short-term responses no longer meet the needs of such protracted displacement. Inadequate responses leave refugees and their children marginalized, at best. Often, children born in camps are stateless, creating an entirely new range of challenges for them.

Nor do refugees desire to rely on assistance indefinitely. While international aid organizations have provided significant assistance, with unprecedented funding from the U.S. and other donor governments, responses need to be better matched to the reality of needs on the ground.

Local integration will be the durable solution for most refugees. Unfortunately, the rate of refugees returning home has shrunk considerably—whether due to ongoing political instability, ethnic strife, squatters, land mines or other constraints. As the numbers seeking protection increase, the challenges to resettlement only continue to grow. For Syrian refugees, political will to increase resettlement to a more meaningful level has been met only by Germany, with significant pushback from the rest of the continent. In the United States, the debate over resettlement has been fraught with fear of terrorism in the post 9/11 era.

Protecting those who are internally displaced remains a critical problem without appropriate architecture. This subject is outside the scope of this paper, but merits its own international process.

The indelible image of the little boy of Aylan Kurdi¹⁰ washed up on the shores of Europe chillingly reminds us that people will risk everything to find any semblance of hope for

Table 1. Top 10 countries with refugee outflows⁶

COUNTRY NAME	2015
Syria	4.9 million
Afghanistan	2.6 million
Somalia	1.12 million
South Sudan	778,700
Sudan	628,800
Democratic Republic of Congo	541,500
Central African Republic	471,100
Myanmar	451,800
Eritrea	411,300
Colombia	340,200

Table 2. Top Refugee Hosting Countries⁷

COUNTRY NAME	2015
Turkey	2.5 million
Pakistan	1.6 million
Lebanon	1.1 million
Iran	979,400
Ethiopia	736,100

6 "Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015." UNHCR, page 20.

7 Ibid, page 2.

8 Ibid, page 16.

9 Ibid, page 15.

10 Aylan Kurdi was a 3-year old Syrian boy whose body washed ashore in Turkey after the boat he and his family were aboard to flee the Mideast capsized. In 2015, almost 300,000 took similar harrowing and often deadly journeys to flee conflict in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

their future. Yet the international community’s response to the plight of refugees has lacked sufficient political will to welcome the stranger. We must press for leaders around the world to act courageously to carry out their moral responsibility.

THE WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT—GOOD COMMITMENTS WITH UNADDRESSED GAPS

Amidst this backdrop of such unprecedented global need, the World Humanitarian Summit convened by the United Nations was the first of its kind. The summit set forth five core responsibilities that the global humanitarian system is grappling with. These include the need: (1) for political leadership to prevent and end conflict, (2) to uphold the norms that safeguard humanity, (3) to leave no one behind, (4) to change the way we work—from delivering aid to helping end need, and (5) to improve investments in humanity.



The outcomes of the summit are the start of a global effort to make changes to a system that cannot keep up with demand. Some promising commitments include: the Grand Bargain, where donors agreed to more flexible funding, while the United Nations, international agencies and NGOs agreed to more transparency and efficiency; the Education Cannot Wait Fund, which aims to meet the education needs of more than 13 million children in crises; and increased attention from the business and private sectors to meet expanding and complex needs. Additional funding was promised to existing mechanisms and new funding mechanisms were created to focus on humanitarian assistance, urban crises and innovation.

The summit brought forward commitments by donors and humanitarian organizations to take steps toward improving the system, and brought true input from civil society and those impacted by the humanitarian system, with over 3 years of global consultation. Yet the absence of G7 leaders at the summit left a gaping hole of necessary political will to prevent and end conflicts that drive displacement.

Further, despite broad recognition that the humanitarian system is “not broke, but broken,” neither the United Nations nor other actors made any commitments with an eye toward reform of the humanitarian system. This included a failure to address the humanitarian system’s structural inability to meet the needs of those in fragile contexts, and its siloed sector-based responses, not to mention the “uneven power relations, corrosive competition and perverse incentives” the international community has been criticized for.¹¹ Even if all the funding and other commitments of the Grand Bargain are met, unless existing systems for caring for refugees are reformed, the challenges we face as a humanitarian community will remain.

¹¹ Dickinson, Elizabeth. [Humanitarian system: Just broke, or also broken?](#) Devex, May 24, 2016.

DUAL SUMMITS ON REFUGEES—WHAT CAN WE EXPECT?

In September at the U.N. General Assembly, donors and humanitarian agencies will present their plans to implement their Grand Bargain commitments. The question of refugees and forced displacement are to be tackled in two summits—one at the U.N. General Assembly, which will focus on changes to the systems and structures that govern refugee response, and the second at a Leaders' Summit on Refugees co-hosted by President Obama and the leaders of Canada, Ethiopia, Germany, Jordan, Mexico and Sweden, as well as the U.N. secretary general.

The stated goals of the Leaders' Summit include: (1) increasing by at least a 30 percent financing for global appeals and international humanitarian organizations; (2) doubling the global number of those resettled as refugees or those afforded other legal channels of admission; and (3) increasing the number of refugees in school worldwide by 1 million, and the number of refugees granted the legal right to work by 1 million. "Reaching these ambitious objectives will be challenging; yet, the level of need demands no less...The Leaders' Summit will further that leadership and address a level of displacement the world has not witnessed since World War II."¹²

GOALS OF THE LEADERS' SUMMIT ON REFUGEES



Unlike the World Humanitarian Summit, the Leaders' Summit is focused only on governments, with little opportunity for input from civil society and refugees themselves. It is an attempt to bring donor and host countries to the table to make commitments that will benefit the large numbers of displaced. Whether the summit will attempt to address gaps in the overall humanitarian architecture is unclear.

Further, the United States has been criticized for merely bringing others to the table, while not truly providing leadership. The governments of Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey have hosted hundreds of thousands of refugees. Donor governments must do their part by helping to resettle their share of refugees. The United States committed to resettle an additional 10,000 Syrian refugees in fiscal year 2016—a paltry figure for a country that routinely resettles around 70,000 refugees every year.¹³ Although the Obama administration has pledged to increase the total number of resettled refugees from around the world to 100,000 by the end of FY 2017—an increase of over 40 percent since FY 2015—as a global leader we can, and we must, do better.

PRINCIPLES OF REFUGEE RESPONSE

The rights of refugees are internationally governed by the 1961 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. Additional Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement were created in 1998 to serve as

¹² ["Statement by National Security Advisor Susan Rice on Co-Hosts for President Obama's Leaders' Summit on Refugees"](#) White House Press Release. June 3, 2016.

¹³ ["The United States Announces Additional Pledges in Support of Syrian Refugees"](#) State Department media note. March 20, 2016.

the international standard for governments, international organizations and other relevant actors to provide assistance and protection to IDPs. While the guidelines are not binding, they are based upon international humanitarian and human rights law.¹⁴

The work of CRS also follows the tenets of Catholic social teaching, which approaches questions of human mobility from the point of view of human dignity rather than legal status or national interest. “Its key questions are not about legal obligations or defending sovereign territory, but rather how right relationships with self, God, others and creation, would call us—as individuals, communities, nations and international bodies—to respond to people on the move.”¹⁵

The main idea of the Catholic social teaching on migration is that those forced to move, particularly those who are most vulnerable, have a moral claim on the hospitality of others. Beyond deserving to have their immediate needs met, they are also entitled to have their rights protected and to expect “transformation of the causes of displacement.”

Further, the responsibility of nation states is to serve the human person—people must never be treated as means. Therefore, nations and international organizations must help people and groups who are forced to migrate to meet their needs and achieve their potential. Where nations do not uphold and respect this tenet, the international community has the responsibility to provide support and assistance.

CRS’ RESPONSE TO GLOBAL NEEDS OF REFUGEES

As the official international humanitarian and development agency of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, CRS works in more than 100 countries, providing assistance to people without regard to race, religion or ethnicity. In 2015 alone, CRS reached over 13 million people, investing \$264 million in 46 countries with humanitarian needs. CRS embraces and lifts up international laws, norms and standards as well as Catholic social teaching in our work responding to refugees and displaced people.

We continue to expand and adapt our programs to meet the growing needs of populations fleeing conflict or crisis around the world. CRS has supported more than 1 million Syrian refugees across the Middle East and Europe with a comprehensive range of support. In Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Egypt, CRS works with local partners to provide critical shelter, food, living supplies, medical assistance, children’s education and trauma healing. In Iraq, CRS has served over 150,000 displaced Iraqis with cash, food, shelter, water and sanitation, and education and psychosocial services for children. We are currently expanding programming in Kurdistan, Kirkuk and Bagdad. CRS education programs are developing rapidly, and through our partnership with the Ministry of Education, we will support formally recognized schools. For Iraqi refugees who have fled to Jordan, CRS provides vital shelter, living supplies, medical assistance and children’s education.

In Europe over the past year, CRS and our local partners have provided assistance to over 350,000 refugees and migrants in Europe. About 50 percent of them are Syrian



Caritas Athens, a partner of CRS, runs a soup kitchen and also provides clothes, vouchers for shelter and information for passing refugees and economic migrants. Afghan families eat a warm meal after arriving to the port in Athens earlier that morning.

Photo Elie Gardner for CRS

¹⁴ [Brookings LSE page on Internal Displacement](#)

¹⁵ [Catholic Social Teaching on Refugees & Asylum Seekers](#). Socialspirituality.net. Accessed July 1, 2016.

and a significant minority are Iraqi. Given the fluid nature of the crisis, including Balkan border closures in March, CRS has shifted programming across Greece and Balkan countries toward medium-term support to these vulnerable people living in limbo, with a focus on temporary shelter and cash for highly vulnerable families.

CRS also supports refugees from major conflicts in Africa. In Cameroon, CRS supports some of the 200,000 refugees who fled civil strife in the Central African Republic. This support includes critical emergency aid, food, water and living supplies. In Ethiopia, we support refugees fleeing South Sudan. We have constructed four schools in Kule and Terkendi camps, in the Gambella regional state, and which will support nearly 5,000 children. CRS also supported the construction of latrines and water points, and the provision of shelter and living supplies to thousands of people.

In Haiti, CRS has provided shelter, water and cash assistance to people who have been forced to return from the Dominican Republic because of changes in immigration law. And at the Colombia-Ecuador border, CRS works with vulnerable people fleeing decades of internal conflict, providing them with nutritious food and legal assistance, as well as helping to build their skills and providing psychosocial support.

Recognizing the role we play in the greater humanitarian system, CRS made its own set of commitments during the WHS,¹⁶ aligned with the Grand Bargain. They include:

- Allocating private resources to bridge funding gaps, particularly between humanitarian and development needs;
- Prioritizing the leadership of local partners through funding, training, accompaniment and other CRS-created platforms;
- Using cash, where appropriate, and building “cash readiness” of local partners;
- Concentrating on urban disaster risk reduction; and
- Leveraging innovative financing.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE WAY WE WORK

The current humanitarian system and legal frameworks around refugees and migrants were created to respond to needs in the aftermath of World War II. While the humanitarian system has seen improvements with the creation of the U.N. cluster system and consolidated funding mechanisms, among other changes, we are now at another point of inflection, with the humanitarian community attempting to respond to the significant challenges before us. Incremental change is not enough. In light of President Obama’s stated goals for the Leaders’ Summit on Refugees, CRS makes the following recommendations:

TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

The goal of a 30 percent increase in funding for refugee response from new donors, set forth by the Leader’s Summit, is a necessary objective to meet the unprecedented needs of 65 million people displaced globally. However, this funding must go to the right places, and cannot continue to fund business as usual. The U.S. government, one of the largest donors to refugee response, particularly to UNHCR,¹⁷ must be the first to invest in new ways of responding to the refugee crisis, as follows:

¹⁶ For the full list of commitments, please see: [Catholic Relief Services’ Commitments: World Humanitarian Summit](#).

¹⁷ In 2016, the U.S. government contributed \$685 million to the UNHCR, more than 2.5 times the next highest donor amount of \$260 million by the EU.

1. Design and fund humanitarian interventions that integrate refugees over the long term. The average duration of the 33 protracted refugee situations at the end of 2014 was estimated to be about 25 years, with most of these situations lasting more than 20 years.¹⁸ The “opportunities for voluntary repatriation are at the lowest level in decades ... [and] durable solutions are becoming more elusive for those who were part of large cross-border movements occurring years—even decades—ago.”¹⁹ The WHS brought together donors and aid organizations in the Grand Bargain to commit to funding and carrying out multi-year investments to strengthen local partners and respond to the development needs in humanitarian crises. We must make these commitments a reality.



Refugees line up waiting for relief items being distributed by the Red Cross in Belgrade, Serbia. From here they will board a bus to Kanjiza, the last stop before the Hungary boarder.

Photo Kira Horvath for CRS

One of the primary barriers to implementing quality, effective long-term programming is the ability to plan for longer time frames that will reflect the reality of the majority of refugee situations. Currently the Bureau of Population and Migration (BPRM) funding is available for 1 to 3 year periods, but criteria around funding time frames is unclear and inconsistently applied across diverse contexts of displacement. Organizations often seek shorter funding for such reasons, stitching together 12-18 month projects, which is not only time and resource intensive, but will prevent any long-term response from being optimally effective.

Donors should fund projects that span 3 to 5 years to respond to situations of protracted displacement, which is now the norm. Funding must be flexible and responsive to opportunities so programs can focus on helping refugee populations return to a normal way of life—this includes the ability to find a job, learn new skills and have their children in school.

Along with funding, **the international community must also shift its mind-set and skill-set from solely providing short-term assistance to supporting longer-term, sustainable livelihoods more quickly.** Responses must address the situation of most of the displaced, who live outside of camps in host communities, and the 60 percent of refugees who live in urban settings.²⁰ Because 86 percent of host communities are in developing regions, such approaches must provide opportunity for both refugees and host communities. Programmatic responses need to help build positive relationships between host and hosted communities, with a greater recognition and support for existing private capacity and investments. This includes infrastructure development, which will complement public services and build overall capacity to respond to future shocks and meet the needs of vulnerable populations over the long term.

Significantly increase investments in non-camp solutions for the displaced. While camps have long been the mechanism through which to respond to refugees, refugees increasingly avoid them. Camps “can only offer refugees a way of life that is permanently temporary.”²¹ Refugees often flee to urban settings in search of opportunities to establish new lives. CRS uses durable shelter solutions, as in

18 UNHCR Global Trends: Forced Displacement 2014, p 11. <http://www.unhcr.org/556725e69.html>

19 United Nations, General Assembly, [In safety and dignity: addressing large movements of refugees and migrants](#): Report of the Secretary General, A/70/59 (21 April 2016), available from undocs.org/A/70/59.

20 [Urban refugees](#). UNHCR website. Accessed July 1, 2016.

21 Dunn, 2015.

northern Iraq, where we make the necessary improvements to unfinished buildings to provide adequate shelter to the thousands of Yazidis who fled ISIS. This has helped Yazidi families integrate into local towns and communities, and build a more permanent future. CRS is also creating shelter opportunities in Greece, making use of abandoned apartments and public buildings to house refugees. These and other alternative solutions should be funded, as they facilitate livelihoods and other modes of self-reliance.

Any long-term approach will address individuals' needs holistically, including their spiritual, emotional and psychological needs.²² Many displaced people have lost family members, and their homes and communities have been destroyed. Therefore, **donors should increase funding for, and integrate peacebuilding and psychosocial programming into, emergency and development programs.** People need help coping with trauma so they can enjoy greater success at work and in school. Projects should link and support existing social service systems as a foundation for recovery and development.

- 2. Engage development actors.** In light of necessary changes to the humanitarian system to meet the changing context of displacement, the development system must also be reconfigured to appropriately support those who are displaced and the host countries struggling to meet their needs. “[F]orced displacement is a humanitarian crisis [that] also has significant developmental impacts affecting human and social capital, economic growth, poverty reduction efforts, and environmental sustainability,” according to the World Bank.²³ This is particularly the case for developing countries that are hosting refugees.

As early as the 1980s, UNHCR undertook initiatives to meet development needs of refugees through promoting the concept of “Refugee Aid and Development” in various settings. This included the Brookings Process in 1999, attempting to address the relief-to-development transition for forced displacement; and again in 2003, through the *Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern*. Lacking dedicated funding, these initiatives failed.

Learning from past and present initiatives, **integrating refugee response into development goals and programs must not only be appropriately funded, it must adequately prioritize links between humanitarian and development actors.** Donors and development actors must recognize this and make changing their operating procedures a priority.

The WHS elicited commitments by donors and humanitarian actors to better coordinate efforts to share analysis of needs and risks between the humanitarian and development sectors. They also made commitments to align work with the Sustainable Development Goals, including increasing “prevention, mitigation and preparedness for early action to anticipate and secure resources for recovery,” as well as strengthening social protection programs. Aligning existing systems with national governments, regional bodies, donors, and civil society, the commitments rightly point toward including other actors, such as multilateral development banks and the private sector, to seek new and innovative approaches.

CRS has committed to including risk analysis and integrating risk reduction, mitigation and/or response plans into all new development and humanitarian

²² This is a core part of CRS' Integral Human Development model. For more information, please see: [Users Guide to Integral Human Development](#)

²³ Harild, Niels and Asger Christensen. “[The development challenge of finding durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced people.](#)” July 30, 2010. World Development Report 2011: Background Note.

programming by 2020. We have also committed to developing and implementing, with partners, flexible long-term programs that, based on area-specific needs, can transition quickly from disaster preparedness and humanitarian response to recovery and development. Further, we will use private funding to fill any gaps that are not covered by donor funding. However, we cannot do this alone. Learning from past and ongoing initiatives, we need the U.S. government to **help us integrate refugee response into development goals and programs through funding support, prioritizing the linking of humanitarian and development projects, supporting the integration of risk analysis and DRR into development programming, and supporting organizational capacity.**

3. Bring market-based assistance to scale. The Grand Bargain brought forth a series of commitments to bring to scale market-based assistance that goes hand in hand with longer-term responses for the displaced. Multi-sector cash programming can help people meet basic needs and uphold the dignity of individuals so they can to make decisions about how best to meet their individual needs. Cash also supports local markets and helps reduce the risk of negative coping mechanisms.

While cash assistance is becoming more widespread, bringing it to scale will require **the U.S. government to plan for and fund the necessary supports for putting market-based systems in place.** This includes supporting NGOs to build cash readiness of local partners, sharing learning, carrying out premarket crisis assessments in high-risk environments within ongoing development programming, and pre-identifying multiple platforms for both cash and voucher programming that would also facilitate data sharing and stronger coordination.

CRS is committed to investing in and strengthening our own cash readiness and that of our local partners, allowing for the use of cash, when appropriate, in all of our humanitarian and development programming by 2020.²⁴

4. Engage local actors as the norm. The commitment by the U.S. government to apportion 25 percent of funding to local actors by 2020 made in the Grand Bargain is laudable. However, this will only be successful if local actors have the capacity to develop and implement programs and reporting mechanisms while abiding by humanitarian principles. Training and accompaniment needs to be part of any plan moving forward to meet such a target, not an afterthought. This means adequate funding for capacity building of local partners at the outset.

CRS uses the approach of accompaniment, building the capacity of local actors from being sub-recipients of grants we receive to becoming direct grantees of donor funding. We do this through our Institute for Capacity Strengthening, a global platform for learning and resources. Caritas Jordan, one of our local partners, is now providing health and education services to Syrian and Iraqi refugees, and vulnerable Jordanian populations, with limited technical support from CRS.



Children at the downtown Amman, Jordan, child friendly space run by Caritas Jordan. The child friendly spaces are part of the Education and Protection for Syrian Refugees in Jordan program by Caritas Jordan, with the support from Catholic Relief Services.

Photo Oscar Durand for CRS

²⁴ [Catholic Relief Services' Commitments: World Humanitarian Summit](#)

CRS has committed to investing at least \$8 million by 2020 to strengthen the financial and human resources, and planning, monitoring, evaluation and management capacity of our local partners so they can directly access international funding. We also commit to supporting partners to manage the range of risks associated with these funds, and will be transparent about the associated costs for funds received.

- 5. Boldly engage political solutions to end conflicts and other root causes of displacement.** Currently, the majority of large-scale migrations are due to political conflict. Those fleeing the Syrian civil war account for almost 25 percent of the world's total refugee population. While "Core Responsibility 1" of the WHS is to prevent conflict and find political solutions to resolve them, the lack of high-level political attendance at the summit indicates that the political process has failed to prioritize humanitarian needs.

CRS continues to call on the U.S. government to engage politically to end conflicts, using diplomatic tools to their utmost. CRS, in turn, is committed to working at the local level to help build peace among broken communities.

TO THE UNITED STATES AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY:

- 1. Recognize and respond to the needs of all vulnerable people, regardless of their legal status.** The international laws and norms governing migrants, displaced people and refugees were created after World War II. Yet as globalization has made crossing borders more accessible,²⁵ climate change has exacerbated natural disasters and changed agricultural norms, and conflicts remain protracted, the drivers of displacement are neither simple nor singular. CRS recognizes the deep vulnerabilities of those whose life experiences span various legal definitions, and emphasizes the moral responsibility to meet the needs of *all individuals*, whether they are categorized as refugees, internally displaced persons, climate migrants, or otherwise. We further recognize a need for new international processes to create legal protections for the large numbers of internally displaced persons, climate refugees and the large groups of people who flee untold dangers but do not fit under existing legal rubrics.
- 2. Refocus the global humanitarian system to the local.** With less funding available to respond to growing humanitarian needs, particularly the long-term needs of the displaced, Improving efficiency is critical. Currently, the United Nations' role as donor and implementer creates confusion and reduces efficiencies. It also creates a conflict of interest that the humanitarian system can no longer accommodate. Through the Grand Bargain, the United Nations committed to "break out of silos and collaborate much more."²⁶ With the specialization, increasing nimbleness, and growing capacities of local civil society organizations, local governments, and the private sector, the United Nations has an important role as a convener and coordinator that can tap into local networks and expertise. The United Nations can also be a leader in addressing challenges by working with others to establish an integrated response strategy and, as appropriate, acting as a logistics manager.

25 International Organization on Migration. "Migration in a globalized world," MC/INF/268, (10 November 2003).

26 United Nations, Department of Public Information, [Secretary-General Calls World Humanitarian Summit Unique Chance to Show Solidarity with 125 Million People in Immediate Crisis](#), SG/SM/17648-IHA/1390 4 April 2016.

Humanitarian and development agencies must break out of silos and collaborate much more. We must work for collective outcomes based on comparative advantage across the entire cycle of a crisis—from multiyear planning to assessing needs and monitoring results, to ensuring that national systems are reinforced, not replaced.

—Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary General

The international community must work to find alternatives to the current systems, to make them work better for those we serve. One option for reimagining humanitarian coordination and response is an “integrated response,” or “neighborhood,” approach.²⁷ This approach, implemented in Haiti and Nepal, makes those in need the primary actors in both preparing for and responding to a humanitarian emergency. With one lead NGO assigned to an area or neighborhood, identifying needs, registering participants and coordinating response activities in collaboration with local state leadership would be streamlined.

U.S. and international donors must explore multiple funding mechanisms that ensure rapid and flexible funding to implementing agencies on the ground, including resources for preparedness. While the WHS brought forward increased commitments to country-based pool funds (CBPF), this should not be the only solution. Other funding solutions include NGO-led country based pool funds, and the START Fund, which is made up of both local and international NGOs and places decision making as close as possible to the affected area and population. Any increase in CBPF should come with significant changes that address weaknesses associated with this mechanism that inhibit access, efficiency and appropriateness within protracted crisis situations.

Lastly, **assistance should be programmed through partners, local institutions and/or faith-based institutions, in whatever ways necessary, to reach the intended beneficiary population most effectively and efficiently.** In many cases, this is through local faith communities. Only by capturing the work of these faith communities and other non-traditional actors will we be able to begin to meet our current global needs. Mobilizing and strengthening the capacity and infrastructure of local organizations and the private sector will not only broaden the burden sharing beyond already stretched public services, but contributes to an overall increase in resilience for countries and their citizens to respond to the immediate and longer-term needs of refugee populations.

CRS has committed to prioritizing partner leadership and engaging in area-based, coordinated and multi-sectoral assessments and response planning that builds on local systems and coping mechanisms. We will also go only where needed and respond with local partners as a default.



Refugees from Syria and Afghanistan make their way towards the Croatian border, at Berkasovo, Serbia. Every day thousands of refugees cross this border on their journey north to the European Union. CRS and its partners, Philantrophy, and the Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation, are supplying food and non-food items to the refugees.

Photo Andrew McConnell CRS

²⁷ “Integrated Response Approach: Discussion paper” accessed online at <https://communitydevblog.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/integratedresponseapproach.pdf>

CONCLUSION

Vulnerable people in situations of protracted displacement are no longer the exception, but the norm. This year, we continue to see the unprecedented needs of more refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced than during any other time in history. Yet the way we work has not kept pace. The dual refugee summits before us present an opportunity for us to change course and embrace the gifts that refugees can bring to our borders.

faith. action. results.



Catholic Relief Services, 228 W. Lexington Street, Baltimore, MD 21201, USA
For more information, contact jill.gerschutz@crs.org or lucy.steinitz@crs.org.

US16218

© 2016 Catholic Relief Services Any reproduction, translation, derivation, distribution or other use of this work is prohibited without the express permission of Catholic Relief Services ("CRS"). Please obtain permission from pqpublications@crs.org