

13th June 2023

Rabat Declaration (English version)

High-level segment of the 3rd Global Consultation on the Health of Refugees and Migrants

We, the Ministers, and Government Representatives, meeting in Rabat¹, Kingdom of Morocco, on 13th June 2023 at the High-Level segment of the *3rd Global Consultation on the health of refugees and migrants*, hosted by the Kingdom of Morocco, and co-organized with the World Health Organization (WHO), the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), determined to:

- reaffirm the right of every human being, without distinction of any kind, the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health;
- enhance international cooperation on migration and in all its dimensions, recognizing the positive role and contributions of migrants and refugees for inclusive growth and sustainable development, and;
- Galvanize action for an improved international response to refugees according to all relevant international and regional instruments, in support of governments-led arrangements, as appropriate, for the protection of refugees, stateless persons, asylum-seekers and other forcibly displaced persons, bearing in mind that registration of refugees, in line with international legality, also constitutes an important element in ensuring the integrity of refugee healthcare and social protection systems;²

Have adopted the following Declaration:

1. Recognize the global progress achieved since the adoption of the first Resolution on the Health of Migrants by the 61st World Health Assembly in 2008 (Res. WHA 61.17), the *1st Global Consultation* in 2010 in Madrid and the Colombo Statement³ during the *2nd Global Consultation* in 2017;
2. Note that investing in the health of refugees and migrants contributes to meeting key targets set in the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the objectives of the *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)*⁴ and the *Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)*⁵;
3. Acknowledge the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted at the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, held at the United Nations Headquarters on 19 September 2016;

¹ Algeria, Angola, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chad, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Palestine, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Senegal, Slovakia, Somalia, South Africa, Thailand, Türkiye, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Yemen, Zambia

² Algeria reserves its position on the third indent of the preamble.

³ Colombo Statement. High-level meeting of the Global Consultation on Migrant Health, Colombo, 23 February 2017. Geneva: International Organization for Migration; 2017

(https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/our_work/DMM/MigrationHealth/Colombo%20Statement%2023Feb2017%20FINAL.pdf, accessed 8 June 2023)

⁴ Resolution A/RES/73/195. Global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. In: Seventy-third session, United Nations General Assembly, New York, 11 January 2019. New York: United Nations; 2019 (https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_73_195.pdf, accessed 8 June 2023)

⁵ The global compact on refugees: booklet. Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; 2018 (<https://www.unhcr.org/media/37797>, accessed 8 June 2023).

4. Encourage by the momentum brought by the WHO Global Action Plan (GAP) 2023-2030 on promoting the health of refugees and migrants⁶, with IOM and UNHCR as key partners, and other relevant international organizations, including UNFPA and UNICEF, and that the WHO Health and Migration Programme (PHM) will continue to systematically sustain it;

5. Recognize that the health of refugees, migrants and host communities is an integral part of the overall population health, that accelerating progress to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires concerted local, regional and global efforts to reach the most affected and that UHC is only truly universal if it includes refugees and migrants.

6. Recognize the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health of members of refugee and migrant populations and host communities as well as the specificity of their health needs, and that the complex nature of multisectoral and multidimensional action to protect the health of refugees and migrants requires mobilization and partnership at all levels, along with coordinated, converging and integrated responses.

7. Emphasize the centrality of country-led action, with the leadership of all relevant national authorities, including Ministries of Health and other appropriate agencies in advancing the health of refugees and other persons of concerns as well as migrants within a whole-of-government, whole-of-society, whole of UN approach, whole of route approach through a more predictable and equitable scheme of international support and responsibility-sharing.

Deciding to further strengthen the equitable health inclusion agenda of refugees migrants and their hosting communities, in a spirit of international cooperation, including within the efforts to promote universal health coverage at the country, regional and global, taking into account the lessons learned in the context of COVID-19, bearing in mind burden and burden and responsibility sharing, in line with national legislation and available resources, uniting to scale up efforts and interventions to advance action in promoting the health of refugees, migrants and their hosting communities, and declare the following:

1. We commit to accelerating efforts, at all levels using a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach whole of UN approach to improve the health of refugees, migrants and their hosting communities, by:

- a. Including the health of refugees and migrants in the high-level discussions in the upcoming 2023 UNGA SDG Summit in the forthcoming High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development; as well as in 2023 United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meetings related to health and other regional and global related events as applicable;

⁶ Promoting the health of refugees and migrants: draft global action plan, 2019–2023. Report by the Director-General to the Seventy-second World Health Assembly 2019. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019 (<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/328690>, accessed 8 June 2023).

- b. Working towards supporting public health and social protection considerations are included in national policies related to refugees and migrants in line with national priorities, and that implementation of regional and national health strategies, programmes, plans and services include measures to reach refugees and migrants, addressing their health needs, that respect human rights, need-based, human-centered, transparent, equitable, non-discriminatory, non-stigmatizing, culturally sensitive, gender-sensitive, child-sensitive and disability responsive, with the aim of leaving no one behind;
 - c. Addressing the root causes that negatively influence the health of refugees and migrants, especially key determinants that lie outside the health domain including but not limited to socio-economic, working, cultural, environmental, structural conditions and human rights considerations;
 - d. Promoting advocacy and awareness raising concerning refugees and migrants' health, and promoting host communities, refugees and migrants' health as part of a "One Health" approach;
 2. Pledge our support to reorient and strengthen health systems towards integrated and inclusive health services and programmes for refugees, migrants, hosting communities, and countries of origins with international support, noting the importance of international support, in line with the goals of primary health care, universal health coverage, health equity and accessibility, in advance of the UNHLM on Universal Health Coverage, and further recommend to:
 - a. Foster sustainable UHC financing mechanisms, as possible, which are inclusive of migrants and refugees, regardless of their status and host communities;
 - b. Promote the meaningful participation of refugees and migrants, through appropriate means, in health policy discussions to identify and design appropriate interventions for their health needs;
 - c. Address mental health and psychosocial well-being by promoting the availability and affordability of mental health and psychosocial support, and further strengthening of such measures, including through additional international support;
 - d. Ensure that migrant health workers are deployed in safe working environments with due consideration to the health systems of both country of origin and destination countries in line with WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel and other relevant instruments.
 - e. Expand efforts to recognize refugee and migrant health professional certifications in their host countries in line with national regulations to increase livelihoods opportunities and fill host country labor gaps.
 - f. Raise awareness on refugees and migrant's health and enhance health information and communication to refugees, migrants and host communities

based on evidence where feasible to counter misperceptions, mis- and dis-information about migrants and refugee's health;

- g. Include refugees and migrants in the upcoming 2023 United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meetings on UHC and High-Level events.
- h. Foster cooperation and financial mechanisms to assist the efforts of host countries at the national and local levels, including host communities, to reduce the financial pressures they face to provide and guarantee health services to refugees and migrants.

3. Commit to include refugee and migrant populations and their hosting communities in policies and plans regarding prevention, preparedness, response and recovery to pandemics and other public health emergencies, in accordance with International Health Regulations, where appropriate. We particularly commit to:

- a. Promote Refugee and Migrant-sensitive policies that build capacities and resilience, reduce vulnerability, improve social protection mechanisms, foster equitable access to quality health services and social care and enhance cross-border collaboration in line with national sovereignty, prior to and during the onset of pandemics and other public health emergencies, especially in adverse and crisis situations, consistent with applicable international instruments, including the *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*, the *Global Compact for Refugees* and the *1951 Refugee Convention*.
- b. Strengthen regional and international collaboration and dialogues, as well as country-centered action, recognizing the need for inter-state and inter-sector cooperation and partnership at all levels, and with civil society, especially refugee and migrant organizations, the private sector, academia, youth, organization of persons with disabilities, women-led organizations, communities, and other actors to scale up action on prevention, preparedness and response to pandemics and other public health emergencies;
- c. Consider including refugees and migrants in the upcoming 2023 United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response (PPPR), to be held on September 20, 2023, with the co-facilitation of the Kingdom of Morocco and Israel, as well as the subsequent Political Declaration to be adopted, and other venues as opportune.
- d. Include meaningful provisions on refugees and migrations in a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (CA+), particularly on ensuring that migrants and refugees have equal access to health systems during public health emergencies in accordance with applicable international instruments.

4. Commit to supporting high quality global research, strengthen knowledge production, and build research capacity on the health of refugees and migrants, to support evidence-based policies and actions where appropriate and/or feasible. We encourage efforts to invest in inclusive and disaggregated data collection and monitoring of health determinants and health-related indicators of refugees and migrants, whilst respecting the rights and privacy of refugees and migrants, to:

- a. Support monitoring and ongoing review of progress towards the SDGs and other goals and targets, including access to Universal Health Coverage as well as pandemic prevention, preparedness and response efforts;
 - b. Support the implementation, monitoring and review of progress of the WHO Global Action Plan on promoting the health of refugees and migrants, as well as health related elements in the GCM and GCR reviews and reporting mechanisms;
 - c. Enhance inclusion of refugees and migrants, as relevant, in health surveys, censuses, and other data collection efforts to support health responses and involve refugee and migrant populations in processes to inform research priorities and research dissemination activities.
5. Call on the WHO, IOM, and UNHCR, as well as other relevant UN agencies and partners, including UNFPA and UNICEF, consistent with their mandates, to:
- a. provide technical support to Member States and countries, as appropriate, when and where requested, in improving health systems to better respond to the health needs of refugees and migrants and hosting communities;
 - b. Continue their active collaboration as members of the United Nations Network on Migration, to mainstream public health considerations into migration policies and services at all levels;
 - c. Support the role and engagement of the health sector and other relevant national partners in the planning and development of health policies;
 - d. support the scale up of efforts to identify specific, shared health challenges and needs, including on sexual, reproductive, maternal, mental and psychological health of refugees, migrants and host communities to support Governments and other stakeholders to respond effectively;
 - e. foster relevant stakeholder coordination as well as global, interregional, intercountry and multi-sectoral dialogue, including among UN Agencies, to facilitate a timely exchange of information, implementation of joint interventions, and the replication of promising practices;
 - f. support development of monitoring and evaluation tools to assess for transparent and accountable regional and country-level application of the WHO Global Action Plan;
 - g. Address and respond to matters related to the impact of climate change on health, migration, and displacement.
6. Look forward to the the report and the recommendations that will be produced from the 3rd Global Consultation on the health of refugees and migrants, and consider next

steps to advance progress to improve the health of refugees, migrants and their hosting communities.