

Statement by the Core Group of the Support Platform of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) ahead of the United Nations High-level Pledging Event on Supporting the Humanitarian Response for Afghanistan on 31 March 2022

The EU chaired a meeting of the Core Group of the Support Platform for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) on 24 March 2022, where members pledged collectively to ensure that the needs of Afghans are not forgotten. Vital financial, political, and technical resources from each of the Core Group members are being made available to secure the health, welfare and protection needs of Afghans inside the country, as well as for those forced to flee outside and who are residing mainly in the immediate neighbouring countries.

The Core Group of the SSAR Support Platform expresses its support and encouragement for the United Nations High-level Pledging Event on Supporting the Humanitarian Response in Afghanistan being held on 31 March 2022, which aims to help address the dire humanitarian situation of Afghans inside and outside of Afghanistan.

The High-level Pledging Event, co-hosted by OCHA, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Qatar seeks to raise \$4.4 billion to help over 24.4 million Afghans needing urgent humanitarian support to survive.

It is critical that compelling needs in neighbouring hosting countries also continue to be supported. A comprehensive approach to address the critical needs of Afghans must include Afghans inside the country and other Afghans that have been forced or compelled to leave, as well as the host communities they rely on.

A UNHCR-led inter-agency *Regional Refugee Plan (RRP)* which needs \$623 million in support will be instrumental in assisting 5.7 million displaced Afghans and local communities in 5 neighbouring countries. Core Group members call for concerted international attention from all countries and potential contributors towards these interconnected needs for Afghans.

The Core Group welcomes the recent visit of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi to Afghanistan from 15-17 March 2022 and supports his call for the world to deliver sustained support to the people of Afghanistan, and robust assistance to address the country's humanitarian needs and those of Afghan refugees abroad.

The Core Group also wishes to stress the importance of supporting long-term solutions for Afghan refugees. Solutions will depend on the hope that Afghanistan can find a way forward to cement peace, stability, good governance and inclusivity, as well as improve at its commitment to basic rights. The Core Group calls on the Taliban to ensure access to education for girls as a matter of priority and in line with previous commitments. Progress on these would offer an important path forward for the people of Afghanistan as a whole, and ultimately underpin potential solutions for refugees, including possibilities for their voluntary return home in safety and with dignity.

Core Group members furthermore recognize individuals' fundamental human right to return to their country of origin. The Group is ensuring resources are available for UNHCR's efforts to assist Afghan refugees who, being fully informed of the situation in their places of origin or an alternative area of their choice, choose voluntarily to return to Afghanistan.

The Group welcomes the leadership and protection role played by the countries neighbouring Afghanistan which have hosted refugees for decades. It also encourages neighbouring host countries, as part of their current humanitarian response in the region, to allow access to territory and register Afghan new arrivals who seek international protection, as well as issue documentary proof of registration to all individuals concerned. Since January 2021, over 174,400 Afghans have approached UNHCR and its partners indicating an intention to seek asylum. The actual number of Afghans in need of assistance and international protection is likely to be higher. The Core Group considers registration and documentation essential tools for the protection of Afghans in need of international protection, which reduces exposure to detention, deportation and exploitation, and aids the efficient targeting of available humanitarian assistance especially to the most vulnerable individuals among them. It is also necessary and relevant to facilitate solutions, particularly voluntary repatriation and resettlement case processing.

At the Core Group's meeting, UNHCR presented its [Guidance Note on the International Protection Needs of Afghans Fleeing Afghanistan](#) of February 2022, including its advice on the necessity of halting forced returns to Afghanistan and the need for States to afford Afghans with a legal basis of stay with appropriate safeguards, as it can be determined that the human rights and security situation in Afghanistan has durably improved.

The Core Group reaffirms, on the occasion on the UN Pledging Event, its full commitment to staying the course of the crisis that has overtaken Afghanistan and its people. It offers its full support in being engaged, as part of a wider global effort, towards resolving the dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and for Afghans outside the country, as well as pledging solidarity with neighbouring countries in their response to foster concrete and tangible solutions for Afghan refugees.

Notes: As part of its first meeting of 2022, held on 24 March, the Core Group and its Chair (EU) had the honor to officially welcome the Republic of Italy as a new member to the initiative, bringing the current Core Group to 14 partners, including Denmark, Germany, Japan, Republic of Korea, State of Qatar, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank (WB), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) as its secretariat.

Websites:

- [The SSAR Support Platform](#)
- [Afghanistan: Humanitarian Response Plan 2022](#)
- [Afghanistan Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan 2022](#)

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