



## Joint ILO-UNHCR Letter to All Staff

### Joint ILO-UNHCR Action Plan



11 September 2017

Dear Colleagues,

On 1 July 2016, amid rising global forced displacement, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reaffirmed their commitment to work together to promote employment opportunities for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons through a [Memorandum of Understanding](#). This has opened a new and deeper phase of collaboration between the ILO and UNHCR, particularly in the context of follow-up to the [New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants](#), adopted at the UN General Assembly in September 2016, and the adoption of ILO Recommendation No. 205 at the International Labour Conference in June this year.

The MOU supports a joint focus on improving protection and achieving long-term solutions for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. It brings our combined mandates, experience and expertise together to promote access of these vulnerable populations to decent work opportunities, while protecting their rights and supporting the countries and communities hosting them. The MOU identifies eight common priorities, including the promotion of solutions and protection of the rights of refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR, and advocates inclusive and equal treatment in access to decent work and livelihoods, as well as to social protection. It also seeks to ensure support to local communities; countering the economic exploitation of those displaced; and eradicating child labour.

Central to the impact of our renewed collaboration is its concrete operationalization through practical measures on the ground in refugee situations. To this end, we are pleased to inform you of the recent successful conclusion of a Joint Action Plan (attached) that will provide additional support and inspiration to colleagues in both our agencies to strengthen our working relationship. The Action Plan has three overarching goals that frame our institutional collaboration:

1. Improved governance of access to the labour market for refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR.
2. Strengthened ILO fundamental principles and rights at work, improved working conditions and social protection for refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR.
3. Increased opportunities for jobs, income, and livelihoods for refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR, as well as for host communities.

We would ask you to familiarise yourselves with the content and goals of the Action Plan as we move forward with its implementation.

This reinvigorated joint endeavour could not be more timely and relevant. It will draw upon the recently reinforced and refocused ILO intervention framework to respond to refugee and forced displacement situations through an enhanced enabling environment for decent work and social justice for all, embracing the need to engage all government, non-government, national, and international partners. These objectives have underpinned the outcomes of two significant recent ILO tripartite activities:

- the adoption of the [Guiding Principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market](#) at the 328<sup>th</sup> Session of the ILO Governing Body in November 2016;
- the adoption of [ILO Recommendation No. 205 concerning Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience](#) by the International Labour Conference at its 106<sup>th</sup> Session in June 2017.

Combined, these instruments frame the key elements of a comprehensive rights-based ILO refugee response strategy that promotes the ILO's decent work principles.

The Action Plan will also contribute significantly to support the implementation of the [Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework \(CRRF\)](#) and the development of the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR), being led by UNHCR. It has already been proposed that ILO and UNHCR join forces to assist the Ethiopian government – one of the CRRF pilot countries – in operationalizing the Jobs Compact and its pledges to facilitate the socio-economic integration of refugees. We will continue to explore further collaborative opportunities in other CRRF pilot areas, offering new opportunities to ensure the Joint Action Plan is grounded in reality and offers sustainable and durable solutions to refugees and host communities.

The potential contribution of our joint activities to the development of the GCR in 2018 is immeasurable, and we count on the full support of all our colleagues in field offices and HQ units to ensure successful outcomes of the Joint Action Plan. The stakes are incredibly high for refugees, other forcibly displaced persons, and host communities. Yet, we have the opportunity before us to contribute to meaningful and lasting change for those who need it most.

There will be further communications and follow-up relating to the Joint Action Plan as activities progress.

In the meantime, we look forward to working with you all in this critical phase of operationalization and assure you of our full support in the process of making decent work a reality for all.

Yours sincerely,



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