Regional Refugee Response for the Ukraine Situation

Terms of Reference
Local Refugee Coordination Fora Third Co-Chair

Background: The Local Refugee Coordination Forum (LRCF) is a platform established in 2022 to ensure effective coordination among stakeholders involved in the refugee response at the local level in Moldova. In most locations the LRCF is co-chaired by UNHCR and the local authority, and operates under the structure of the Refugee Coordination Forum (RCF), which at the national level is chaired by UNHCR and was established to ensure coordination between government and stakeholders at all stages of the refugee response and widen the support base for refugees and members of host communities in the Republic of Moldova, in line with the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR).

As the refugee response transitions from an emergency phase, the RCF remains committed to facilitating the inclusion of refugees into national systems and communities where they live. Such an effort aims to foster refugees' active participation in socioeconomic development and achieve self-reliance. Additionally, the RCF seeks to support host communities, minimizing resource strain and enhancing resilience for future refugee influxes.

Recognizing the crucial role of local and regional governments, public institutions, and local actors as first responders and enablers of refugee integration, the LRCF has conducted a vital component on expanding the participation of local actors in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the refugee response.

To achieve the above, UNHCR, as co-chair of the LRCF, has signed partnership agreements with local and regional governments in Chisinau, Cahul, Ungheni, Otaci, Balti, Comrat, and Causeni to implement the Cities of Solidarity initiative (CoS). This initiative seeks to enhance forcibly displaced persons' access to rights and services while strengthening the socio-economic capacities of host communities. As part of this initiative, UNHCR is organizing workshops with participant cities to draft Local Action Plans to advance the implementation of CoS in a contextual-relevant manner and serve as a tool to advance localization. These action plans will be drafted through consultative processes involving Local Public Authorities (LPA), Civil Society Organizations (CSO), INGOs, and UN agencies with a presence in the area, private sector, and academia.

In addition to the above, the LRCF has played a pivotal role in identifying needs and possible response strategies during the drafting of the Refugee Response Plan (RRP) for 2025-2026; this was made through the RRP Local Consultations conducted between July and August in Bati, Cahul, Causeni, Comrat, Otaci, Tiraspol and Ungheni. The involvement of local actors was essential during this process, especially considering the character of the 2025-2026 RRP and its aim to consolidate local capacities for LPA and local organizations to increasingly take the lead in coordinating the refugee response.

To further promote and strengthen the localization process across the country, a third co-chair from a local organization will be introduced to the LRCF. This initiative aims to enhance local ownership, empower local actors with greater responsibilities, and equip them with the necessary tools to respond effectively to the current and future contexts.

Objective: The third co-chair, representing a local organization, will work collaboratively with UNHCR and local governments to strengthen the coordination and implementation of refugee response activities at the local level. This role is pivotal in promoting local ownership and enhancing the capacity of local actors.

Responsibilities:

1. **Liaison with LRCF Members:**

    - Share duties with UNHCR and local governments in liaising with members of the LRCF to ensure effective communication and coordination.
    - Facilitate the active participation of all LRCF members in meetings and activities.

2. **Liaison with External Parties:**

    - Liaise with external parties to attend LRCF meetings upon request, ensuring their contributions align with the forum's objectives.

3. **Support for Logistics and Secretariat Duties:**

    - Jointly with other co-chairs, support logistics and secretariat duties for LRCF meetings, including organizing venues, preparing agendas, and documenting minutes.
    - Ensure the smooth operation of meetings and follow-up on action points.

4. **Coordination and Participation:**

    - Ensure the active participation of all members at the local level, fostering an inclusive and collaborative environment.
    - Support members in coordinating with other structures at the local level to ensure coherence and synergy in the refugee response.
    - Support advocacy efforts on behalf of the LRCF to promote the protection and inclusion of refugees and members of host communities.

5. **Capacity Building and Support:**

    - Promote capacity-building initiatives for LRCF members to enhance their ability to respond effectively to refugee needs.
    - Provide support to members in implementing best practices and adhering to humanitarian standards.

Reporting: The co-chair will report to the LRCF on the progress of activities, challenges faced, and recommendations for improvement.

Length of Term: Co-Chairs will serve for a term of 12 months, with the possibility of renewal for an additional 12 months. Where no other local organizations are available, the third Co-Chair term may be extended to ensure the continuity of coordination.

Selection Process: Interested candidates must submit a Letter of Interest expressing their motivation for joining the chair-board, detailing the operational experience they will contribute, and their operational

capacity to manage the responsibilities associated with this role. The current Co-chairs will review the application letters and will select the third co-chair through a consultative and transparent process.

Time commitment: The role of co-chair is expected to require a minimum commitment of 10% of the individual's working time. The organization applying to each co-chair must formally agree to this time commitment.

Transition and Handover: Outgoing Co-Chairs will be responsible for a comprehensive handover to incoming Co-Chairs, including sharing key documents, ongoing initiatives, and lessons learned. A one-month overlap between outgoing and incoming Co-Chairs is recommended to ensure smooth transition.

Skills: Strong coordination and facilitation skills, excellent communication and interpersonal skills, ability to work with diverse stakeholders and build consensus, advocacy and negotiation skills, leadership and problem-solving abilities, sensitivity to cultural diversity, discrimination, and gender issues.

Continuity of UNHCR support: UNHCR will continue providing technical guidance to all LRCF members and to the third co-chair on specific aspects regarding coordination, liaison efforts, and advocacy at the local, regional, or national level.