

Minister Cleverly intervention at Global Compact on Refugees High Level Officials Meeting

High Commissioner, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Two years on from the Global Refugee Forum, the picture remains sobering.

Since then, we have faced challenges that none of us had seen before.

The nightmare combination of conflict, COVID-19 and the climate crisis means the number of people forced from their homes is set to pass 100 million next year.

In a world in crisis, it is vital that we come together to help those in greatest need.

So I pay tribute to the generosity of host nations and communities who welcome those driven from their homes.

I recognise how difficult this can be, particularly in the face of lengthy crises, heightened by the pandemic.

I also commend the UNHCR staff who have worked tirelessly to stay and deliver, supporting refugees during this very challenging period.

I am proud that the UK has a strong track record of helping those who need our protection.

Our commitment to supporting refugees remains strong.

Our focus is on a holistic approach, restoring dignity and offering refugees a viable future.

We continue to play our part in delivering on the Global Compact.

This includes significant support to the world's largest refugee crises.

We have provided £732 million since 2011 to support Syrian refugees and host communities.

In Jordan, our £216 million programme has helped to create small business opportunities and jobs for Syrians and Jordanians.

In Bangladesh, our £320 million response to the Rohingya crisis has provided lifesaving food assistance, health support and sanitation for refugees since 2017.

And in Uganda, we have a six-year, £210 million, programme supporting refugees and host communities.

To ensure refugee children have opportunities for a brighter future, we are helping 300,000 of them to continue their educations in ten countries.

Since 2015, we have resettled more than 25,000 men, women and children seeking refuge from persecution across the world.

We have issued more than 39,000 visas under the Refugee Family Reunion Rules – around half to children.

Meanwhile, the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme will give up to 20,000 at-risk people a new life in the UK.

We stand firm in our commitment to the world's most vulnerable people.

And I am encouraged by the wider commitment, at senior levels, demonstrated at our meeting today.

As COP presidents, the UK particularly welcomes the focus on climate change.

We are encouraged, too, that refugees are increasingly participating in the decisions that concern them.

This, of course, is vital.

We will continue to work with you – the UNHCR and our fellow member states – and with those at the very heart of our work.

Together, we will continue to drive progress and momentum towards achieving the goals of the Global Compact.

Thank you.