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Consideration of reports on the work of the Standing Committee

Report of the sixty-sixth meeting of the Standing Committee (21-23 June 2016)

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I. Introduction

1. The Chairperson of the Executive Committee, His Excellency Ambassador Carsten Staur (Denmark) opened the meeting and chaired the first day. The first Vice-Chairperson of the Executive Committee, Her Excellency Ambassador Rosemary McCarney (Canada) presided over deliberations on the second day. During the meeting, Zimbabwe was admitted as an observer.

II. Adoption of the agenda

2. The Committee adopted the agenda of the meeting (EC/67/SC/CRP.9).

III. International protection

3. The Assistant High Commissioner (Protection) introduced the agenda item, citing the unprecedented number of forcibly displaced people resulting from the multiplication and intensification of conflicts, as well as economic degradation and food insecurity. He noted that asylum space was shrinking and called on States to improve, respect and reinforce the institution of asylum and its mechanisms. The 1951 Refugee Convention was as valid today as it was at its inception and the current challenges were not due to a failing Convention, but rather to a lack of political will. Greater political leadership was needed to counter the hostility that was compromising asylum space. The Assistant High Commissioner (Protection) noted that new approaches were needed and referred to the Secretary-General's call to develop a global compact on responsibility sharing for refugees and the high-level meeting of the plenary of the General Assembly to address movements of refugees and migrants. In addition, he flagged important developments that were taking place in the area of local integration, including naturalization and citizenship, and improvements in access to education and employment. He cautioned that to ensure a comprehensive refugee response, predictable humanitarian funding was also needed.

A. Note on international protection

4. The Director of the Division of International Protection presented the note on international protection (EC/67/SC/CRP.10), highlighting the underlying themes of international cooperation, solidarity and responsibility sharing. She stressed that the record levels of displacement made international collaboration more critical than ever and emphasized the importance of addressing the root causes of displacement and strengthening community engagement. The Director also mentioned a number of positive developments such as the quality assurance initiative and other forms of support to State-led refugee status determination procedures.

5. Delegations welcomed the note's focus on responsibility and burden sharing and acknowledged that the principles of international cooperation were included in the preamble of the 1951 Refugee Convention. Solidarity and responsibility sharing should not occur at the expense of the cornerstone of refugee protection: non-refoulement and access to asylum. Several States expressed concern that the lack of international cooperation and growing number of asylum-seekers and migrants, often resorting to smugglers and illegal networks, put existing reception facilities and asylum systems under pressure. They called on UNHCR to expand its quality assurance and capacity-building initiatives, as well as its work to strengthen refugee status determination procedures. Many delegations

acknowledged that responding to the needs of a growing number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) should become a priority and expressed their support for UNHCR's commitment to advancing national and regional laws and policies to enhance the protection of IDPs. They encouraged the Office and its partners to strengthen inter-agency coordination, improve capacity to protect the forcibly displaced and contribute to tackling root causes of displacement.

6. UNHCR was commended for its efforts to address the particular needs of youth through its work with partners during the consultations with refugee youth and non-governmental organizations (NGO). States commented that young people were often unable to access health and education due to discrimination and were at heightened risk, including of recruitment by armed groups. Expanding the participation of youth in humanitarian processes could contribute to more adequate services and programmes. UNHCR was asked to provide updates to the Standing Committee on how disability is mainstreamed into the work of the organization. There were also numerous calls to strengthen the link between complementary pathways for admission and stay and the traditional durable solutions. Delegations encouraged UNHCR to place a stronger focus on working with development actors and play a catalytic role in increasing support for durable solutions of refugees in development policies and programmes. In addition, voluntary return should be a priority once conditions allow.

7. Many delegations expressed their support for UNHCR's global campaign to end statelessness by 2024 and encouraged States' accession to the 1954 and 1961 Conventions on statelessness. They also encouraged UNHCR to improve its data collection on statelessness and extend further technical support to countries that wanted this.

8. With regard to the Sahrawi refugees living near Tindouf, one delegation thanked donors for their support in the aftermath of the recent flooding of the camps. Another delegation raised the need for registration of the refugee population as a protection tool, pursuant to UNHCR's mandate and recent United Nations Security Council resolutions, and expressed concern about the diversion of humanitarian aid. Reference was made to the discussion on registration and diversion of humanitarian aid held during the 65th meeting of the Standing Committee and its report (EC/67/CRP.8/Rev.1).

9. The Assistant High Commissioner (Protection) expressed his appreciation for the Committee's support and its recommendations. In response to the many statements on responsibility sharing, he reiterated the importance of protection and legal foundations remaining at its core. He also noted the delegations' appreciation of UNHCR's role in regional protection dialogues, such as the one recently held in Nigeria. With respect to IDPs, he noted that UNHCR had recently issued a guidance note to its Representatives in the field with the aim of strengthening protection and assistance for this population. He acknowledged delegations' comments on voluntary return and reaffirmed that returns should take place on the basis of a well-informed decision, and in safety and dignity. On complementary pathways, the Director recognized the need to work more proactively with host countries and countries of origin. In response to a question on whether establishing quotas for receiving or hosting refugees would be in accordance with international law, she emphasized that every individual in need of international protection should have access to asylum and be protected from refoulement.

B. Update on resettlement

10. The Deputy Director for Resettlement in the Division of International Protection presented the update on resettlement (EC/67/SC/CRP.11), highlighting UNHCR's expanded resettlement capacity in 2015 and 2016, as well as its engagement with an increasing number of resettlement States. She noted that the number of resettlement

submissions had increased and that resettlement was an important part of the response to the needs of the most vulnerable. Noting that submissions were expected to rise by 37 per cent in 2016, she outlined the plan to scale up efforts in this regard, including by strengthening capacity in field operations, further developing anti-fraud policy and encouraging complementary pathways for admission and stay. The Deputy Director also stressed the importance of enhancing partnerships with States and NGOs. She announced that a comprehensive review of the resettlement process would be undertaken to reduce any overlap and streamline procedures in close collaboration with States.

11. Delegations welcomed UNHCR's efforts to enhance global resettlement capacity and to increase the number of referrals. They commended the Office for its flexibility and willingness to develop tailored programmes. Resettlement and other forms of admission had made significant contributions to global responsibility sharing and were invaluable protection tools. Delegations recognized the strain host countries were under and stressed the importance of the strategic use of resettlement. Many States noted that they had sought to increase resettlement quotas or establish new programmes to respond to growing needs. They also expressed their support for simplified resettlement procedures, particularly to process large numbers of cases in a short timeframe.

12. With respect to protracted refugee situations, delegations stressed the importance of equitable access to resettlement for all populations. They underscored the need to evaluate the sustainability of the speedy processing of large numbers of cases and encouraged UNHCR to continue its work to ensure the integrity of the programme. Several delegations expressed their support for complementary pathways for admission and offered to share experiences gained through the resettlement process. With respect to partnerships, UNHCR was encouraged to strengthen the resettlement deployment scheme with NGOs with the aim of identifying and referring more vulnerable refugees who may not have access to UNHCR. The promotion of public support for resettlement and the role of civil society in receiving and supporting refugees were also recognized as an important part of the process.

13. The Deputy Director acknowledged that the sustainability of resettlement depended on the extent to which new resettlement States were supported, including through the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement and the Core and Contact Groups. She recognized the crucial role that both States and NGOs played in the process, including for integration after arrival, and the need to broaden partnerships. In this regard, the Deputy Director emphasized that UNHCR would continue to advocate increased resettlement at the global level and commended States for developing innovative approaches to resettlement, as well as additional pathways for admission.

C. Refugee status determination

14. The Deputy Director for Policy and Law in the Division of International Protection provided an overview of UNHCR's new strategic direction with regard to refugee status determination, as contained in document EC/67/SC/CRP.12. Refugee status determination should serve as a gateway to protection and rights for refugees. She highlighted three elements: i) the need to review the circumstances in which refugee status determination was essential to accessing protection; ii) other interventions that could ensure protection; and iii) how the process could be streamlined. When refugee status determination is found to be the most effective protection intervention, UNHCR and States needed to strike a balance between increasing the efficiency of this procedure and maintaining the quality of the decision-making process. She emphasized the importance of States gradually assuming more responsibility for refugee status determination procedures.

15. Several delegations expressed their support for the strategic direction as outlined in the conference room paper. One delegation offered to assist other States with improving the quality and efficiency of decision-making processes by providing technical support and sharing best practices.

D. Update on voluntary repatriation

16. The Director of the Division of International Protection presented the conference room paper on voluntary repatriation (EC/67/SC/CRP.13). She noted that the small number of refugees returning home over the last five years was an indication that this solution was not as available as it should be, but that voluntary repatriation remained critical to leveraging solutions. She also emphasized the need to address root causes in order to break the cycle of displacement and ensure that the conditions were in place for achieving lasting, safe and durable solutions – not only for refugees, but also for IDPs and the stateless.

17. Delegations acknowledged that voluntary repatriation was the preferred solution for displaced people, while recognizing that the lack of adequate conditions created significant challenges to its implementation. UNHCR was encouraged to strengthen its engagement with development actors to ensure continuity from emergency assistance to post-conflict reconstruction and the reintegration of returnees. The important role returnees could play rebuilding their country of origin was underlined. Delegations noted that integrating livelihood opportunities and other development approaches for displaced people was in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's commitment to "leave no one behind". The growing need to find solutions to protracted displacement situations was also underscored.

18. The Committee reiterated the importance of voluntary repatriation being conducted in safety and dignity, with delegations stressing the non-negotiable nature of voluntariness in the decision to return. Appreciation was expressed for the progressive approach to solutions outlined in the conference room paper. UNHCR was asked to evaluate its existing voluntary repatriation programmes to identify any gaps.

19. The Director expressed her appreciation for the emphasis placed on the voluntary nature of repatriation. She noted that while UNHCR wished to avoid instances where people may be encouraged to return before conditions were conducive to do so, it could not stop someone from returning, even to places of conflict. However, in some situations, UNHCR would convey that the conditions were not right for return and that return could eventually lead to further displacement. She reiterated that working with development actors to enable the displaced to return with new skills would not only be beneficial to reconstruction efforts, but also help avoid future displacement. The Director concluded by stressing that there was a need to unlock this solution so that all who wished to return home and contribute to their communities could do so.

E. Oral update on ExCom conclusion(s)

20. The Rapporteur of the Executive Committee (Ethiopia) briefed the Committee on progress made in the negotiations of the draft conclusions on youth and on international cooperation from a protection and solutions perspective. By and large, deliberations had remained within the parameters that had been previously agreed upon. She noted that the draft conclusion on youth is most advanced and highlighted the inclusion of the main outcomes of the global youth consultations. Negotiations on the second draft conclusion had progressed to a lesser degree, due to the wide range and complexity of issues involved.

The draft conclusion included various modalities that would enable the international community to support persons of concern to UNHCR, as well as countries and communities hosting large numbers of refugees, in a meaningful way.

21. Several States expressed their commitment to the conclusions process as a means for the Committee to give practical, operational guidance to UNHCR to improve protection and solutions for persons of concern. Some delegations emphasized that the draft conclusion on youth should take into account the recommendations from the global youth consultations. They also highlighted the need for age- and sex-disaggregated data to better inform UNHCR programmes, acknowledging the special needs and capacities of youth. The importance of youth participating in their protection and the pursuit of solutions was also emphasized.

22. On international cooperation, delegations acknowledged the lack of progress and stressed the need to approach the negotiations with a spirit of consensus and compromise. Several delegations called for strengthened international cooperation to address current challenges and to support refugee-hosting countries as well as the search for solutions, including through complementary pathways. Other delegations underscored that voluntary return was the preferred solution and cautioned against any proposal that would increase the burden on host States.

23. The Rapporteur responded that the draft conclusion on youth took into account the outcomes of the various youth consultations that had taken place in different regions over the past year. She said that alternative language proposed for the draft conclusion on international cooperation that would address the concerns raised by delegations, would be circulated shortly. The Chief of UNHCR's Policy and Legal Advice Section in the Division of International Protection thanked delegations for their thoughtful and constructive engagement thus far, stressing that UNHCR needed practical guidance and tools to continue to provide protection and solutions to refugees and others of concern.

IV. Programme/protection policy

A. Report on the 2014-2015 global strategic priorities

24. The Report on the 2014-2015 global strategic priorities (EC/67/SC/CRP.16) was presented by the Director and Deputy Director of the Division of Programme Support and Management (DPSM). They outlined the progress that had been achieved against a common set of priorities established in key areas of UNHCR's work for the biennium 2014-2015. In the interest of continuity, the 2014-2015 global strategic priorities remained unchanged for 2016-2017, with a few additional or revised impact indicators to measure work on statelessness and solutions. While overall trends showed that progress had been made, the results achieved against the global strategic priorities needed to be understood in the context of increasing levels of forced displacement. Of particular concern was the need to make greater progress in achieving solutions for refugees and other persons of concern, as well as to maintain UNHCR's rapid emergency response capacity.

25. Delegations acknowledged progress achieved against the 2014-2015 global strategic priorities and that this represented an accomplishment given the multiple emergencies and protracted situations. States also commended UNHCR for progress achieved under the support and management global strategic priorities and encouraged the Office to improve reporting on this area. They underscored the importance of reading the conference room paper together with the 2015 Progress report. While welcoming improvements made to the report, they requested that more details be included on performance as well as on efforts to address the challenges associated with each global strategic priority.

26. UNHCR was asked to provide more detail on how targets or engagements would be affected by a reprioritization due to a lack of financial resources and the impact this would have on its overall reporting. Delegations noted that, in certain areas, outcomes were beyond UNHCR's control. The funding gap for responding to refugee situations in various regions of the world was also of concern. It was recommended that greater emphasis be placed on providing basic services, responding to malnutrition and improving conditions in camps. With a view to preventing secondary displacement and facilitating voluntary repatriation, some delegations stressed that interim solutions, including skills training, were critical for refugees in the first country of asylum.

27. The Director acknowledged that more work needed to be done to respond to some of the challenges that were raised. He agreed with the views on interim solutions that aimed to link the well-being of refugees to voluntary return and described UNHCR's efforts to strengthen livelihood programming through targeted assessments. Responding to concerns over standards in refugee camps that differed from one region to another, he noted that while the standards UNHCR used were global in nature, some operations received more donor support than others. With regard to the impact of a lack of resources, the Deputy Director said that prioritization was managed according to the operational context and that some progress could continue to be made, even when the number of persons of concern and needs increased. Regarding trends observed across operations, the critical importance of taking an integrated approach to protection programming was stressed.

B. Youth

28. Introducing the conference paper on youth (EC/67/SC/CRP.17), the Deputy Director for Protection Operational Support in the Division of International Protection highlighted the particular needs and capacities of forcibly displaced and stateless youth. Despite having designed special programmes for children, humanitarian organizations often overlooked the needs of youth and in particular of adolescent girls. The national and global youth consultations identified several challenges, including the lack of documentation and the absence of opportunities for development during these critical years. However, it also became clear that young people demonstrated great resilience when given the opportunity to develop their talents and could become agents of peace and tolerance. At these consultations, youth identified seven core actions for refugee youth, which were presented to governments, NGOs and others at a stakeholder dialogue. These actions would help guide UNHCR to strengthen youth-centred protection programmes. The Deputy Director reiterated UNHCR's commitment to engage displaced and stateless youth as effective partners in protection and assistance programmes.

29. Many delegations expressed their support for the greater focus on youth and highlighted the positive contributions young people could make if given the chance, including rebuilding their country in the future. Delegations underscored the need for youth-centred programming, including education, training and livelihood opportunities to better equip youth for the future. Many delegations asked for more information about the seven core actions for refugee youth and about follow-up to the global consultations. Several delegations wanted to know how youth activities were going to be funded and which partners would be involved.

30. The Deputy Director explained that these seven core actions were: i) working with refugee youth to recognize, develop and better use their capacities; ii) supporting refugee youth to connect across boundaries; iii) supporting youth empowerment through engagement; iv) ensuring youth-specific protection; v) working with youth for better information and networking opportunities; vi) enabling refugee youth's physical and mental

well-being; and vii) generating data to support accountability. She acknowledged the need to rethink how to fund youth programmes, while highlighting that recent examples showed that much could be achieved with little funding if strategically used.

C. Gender equality

31. The Deputy Director for Protection Operational Support, in the Division of International Protection, briefed the Committee on progress made in achieving gender equality (EC/67/SC/CRP.18/Rev.1), including professionalizing services for women, girls, men and boys, taking their individual needs into account in shaping programmes. Introducing the internal review of gender equality conducted in over 70 operations in the course of 2015, the Deputy Director focused on progress and challenges in three particular areas of engagement, namely: participation, economic empowerment and education. The review's findings would also form the basis for updating UNHCR's "Five commitments to refugee women" established in 2001.

32. Delegations welcomed UNHCR's efforts to work with men and boys, not only as important agents for achieving gender equality and combating sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), but also as SGBV survivors. The prioritization of sexual and reproductive health and the inclusion of disability in the consideration of gender equality were particularly appreciated. Delegations commended UNHCR for its participation in developing the Inter-Agency Standing Committee "Guidelines for integrating gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian action", but also stressed that more needed to be done to ensure that this guidance would be applied in all contexts, ensuring accountability through partnership agreements, monitoring and reporting.

33. Delegations expressed concern that 70 per cent of operations that participated in the internal review reported challenges in identifying and responding to gender equality concerns in humanitarian situations. They were interested to know more about these challenges and about how UNHCR was planning to address them. Some delegations called for a review of the evaluation of the "Prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence strategy" to gain a better understanding of UNHCR's efforts. The Committee requested an update on the release of the new commitments to refugee women, as well as on the evaluation of the SGBV, child protection and education strategies. Some delegations mentioned the commitments on gender equality that were made at the World Humanitarian Summit and asked how these would inform UNHCR's work.

34. More information was requested on shelter and safe housing arrangements for people at heightened risk. While an increase in cash-based assistance was welcomed, one delegation called for careful monitoring of the consequences for women and girls and requested an update on gender-sensitive distribution mechanisms.

35. The Deputy Director responded that engaging men and boys was a key activity of the SGBV strategy. UNHCR was expanding its information management capacities on SGBV, including through inter-agency systems. It piloted a self-diagnostic tool to evaluate the extent to which operations had set up an inter-sectorial response on SGBV. She committed to sharing a summary of the findings of the internal review. The Assistant High Commissioner (Protection) emphasized that gender equality remained a priority for the Office's senior management and promised to keep the Committee updated on these processes.

V. Regional activities and global programmes

36. The Deputy High Commissioner introduced the agenda item, underscoring that international protection and assistance were temporary by design, but that solutions had become elusive, as was highlighted by the 6.7 million refugees who remained in protracted displacement at the end of 2015. Responding to new displacement crises while protracted situations remain unresolved resulted in an overburdened humanitarian system. This was why UNHCR had taken a new approach to solutions. By building self-reliance and resilience, persons of concern would be better equipped to confront current and future challenges.

A. New approaches to solutions

37. The Director of the Division of International Protection and the Director of DPSM presented the conference room paper on new approaches to solutions (EC/67/SC/CRP.14). The Director of DPSM noted that for every refugee who found a solution in 2015, five were newly displaced and this resulted in growing protracted displacement. The challenge was to give refugees a sense of normality, allowing them to contribute to their host communities, while preparing them for whatever solution was to come. UNHCR advocated a progressive approach to solutions, targeting the legal, economic, socio-cultural and civil-political dimensions, but emphasized that this was not a “backdoor to local integration”. The Director of the Division of International Protection added that solutions which did not address these multiple dimensions and which were not developed with the meaningful participation of displaced people and communities tended not to be sustainable. UNHCR therefore promoted comprehensive multi-year, multi-partner protection and solutions strategies, implemented from the outset of displacement. These strategies encouraged displaced persons to develop the skills, networks and confidence to help them contribute to their current and future communities.

38. Many delegations welcomed the emphasis on strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus, noting that the existing humanitarian system was overstretched. Delegations favoured engaging development actors from the very outset of a crisis to encourage resilience and decrease aid dependency. Many emphasized the need to address root causes. The need to ensure meaningful participation of displaced people in the pursuit of solutions, as well as the inclusion of displacement issues in national and local development plans, peace-building and recovery strategies were also mentioned. Some stressed the need to combat racism and xenophobia.

39. The Committee also emphasized the need to support countries and communities hosting large numbers of refugees. One delegation requested further explanation on the link between the new approaches and durable solutions, in particular when local integration was not an option. Delegations expressed concern about promoting employment opportunities when many host countries were already struggling with high unemployment rates. They stressed that such strategies needed to be context specific. The need to address funding gaps was also emphasized. There were calls for more political will and for an equitable and fairer system of burden sharing. While appreciation was expressed for increased resettlement quotas and other pathways for admission, delegations also said that more needed to be done and that humanitarian admission schemes should not be considered as an alternative to resettlement.

40. Several delegations highlighted the importance of the Solutions Alliance and commended the initiatives in the Gambia, Jordan and Turkey to enable refugees to work. The positive collaboration between UNHCR and the World Bank was also noted. Delegations expressed appreciation for the report on lessons learned from past solutions

programming, in particular the Seeds for Solutions initiative, and they encouraged UNHCR to integrate strong monitoring and evaluation elements into these strategies. UNHCR was also encouraged to strengthen its data and analysis on local integration as part of its statistical reporting.

41. The Director of DPSM responded that this new approach was based on the fact that host countries have been grappling with a long-term problem. Working in silos was counterproductive and a more integrated approach might yield better results. Both Directors stressed that achieving solutions should not result in more burdens. There was a need for convergence of interests, strengthening local economies for example in both host and displaced communities. The Director of the Division for International Protection recognized that solutions needed to be appropriate to the situation and indicated that UNHCR was committed to working with all affected parties. UNHCR could not continue to promote the traditional solutions, without looking at new approaches that aimed to empower and help persons of concern to unlock their own solutions. She said that the elements in the conference paper were starting points for this discussion.

B. Livelihoods and self-reliance

42. The Director of DPSM presented the conference room paper on livelihoods and self-reliance (EC/67/SC/CRP.15). In line with its global strategy for livelihoods, UNHCR had strived to ensure that persons of concern were able to make a safe and sustainable living that enabled them to meet their basic needs in dignity. During 2016, UNHCR focused on improving the quality of livelihood programming, making it more evidence-based and cost-effective, while expanding partnerships. The Director highlighted a number of developments, particularly relating to reform of national laws and policies that enabled refugees to work. He stressed, however, that there were still significant obstacles to widespread access to livelihood opportunities. He reiterated the importance of mandatory minimum criteria for livelihood programming that would ensure that activities were based on baseline socio-economic data and market assessments, supported and monitored by experts and implemented by partners. Building self-reliance through entrepreneurship remained a key priority.

43. Delegations noted that the international community was not only confronted by a displacement crisis, but also a crisis in finding solutions. There was general agreement that the humanitarian system alone could not address the displacement challenges and that longer-term development efforts underpinned by political dialogue were critical. Support was expressed for UNHCR's global livelihoods strategy as well as for the minimum criteria for programming, and an update on progress and barriers to compliance was requested. The Committee called for new partnerships with the private sector and among United Nations agencies, States and multilateral banks. The Committee requested an update on these partnerships, in particular on the research conducted with the World Bank.

44. While the three traditional solutions remained appropriate, delegations welcomed UNHCR's efforts to broaden the debate. Some delegations described their experiences, stressing that all actors were vital in self-reliance efforts and that refugees and displaced people needed to be able to contribute to their host communities. In order to do so, language skills, tailored employment and entrepreneurial support such as loans and microcredit might be enabling factors. Delegations concurred that host countries and communities should receive adequate support and stressed the need for greater responsibility sharing. Livelihood activities, such as skills training, should be made available for both displaced and host communities. Countries hosting large numbers of refugees were commended for their efforts, particularly on favourable reforms to legislation.

45. The Director noted the convergence of interests. As UNHCR lacked the necessary expertise in development, he appealed to the Committee for support through secondees and the funding of studies to inform the discussion better on the economic impact of displacement. He recognized that some States were facing development challenges and required support. He concluded that major host countries required help to be able to transform challenges into opportunities.

VI. Programme budgets and funding

46. The Deputy High Commissioner introduced the agenda item, observing that requirements were at an all-time high and that UNHCR faced a widening funding gap, despite record levels of contributions. Funding shortfalls had a number of consequences, including on UNHCR's ability to support income-generating activities. Left to fend for themselves, refugees faced protection risks that were exacerbated when assistance was lacking. The Deputy High Commissioner described a number of measures the Office had taken in response, including broadening the Office's donor base, expanding the existing biennium and budgeting process for longer term planning and engaging in follow-up to the World Humanitarian Summit. She called on member States to provide flexible and predictable funding, as well as unearmarked contributions to enable UNHCR to respond to unprecedented needs.

A. Update on budgets and funding

47. The Controller and Director of the Division of Financial and Administrative Management and the Director of the Division of External Relations presented the update on budgets and funding for 2014 and 2015 (EC/67/SC/CRP.19/Rev.1). The Controller reported on the programme budget and funding for 2015 and provided an update on the 2016 budget as of 30 April 2016, noting that four supplementary budgets had been established since the beginning of the year. The Director of the Division of External Relations complemented the presentation with details on trends in voluntary contributions and funding levels.

48. Delegations expressed their appreciation for donors' generous support of UNHCR in 2015. Unearmarked contributions emerged as an important issue, with countries conveying their support for flexible funding to meet the needs of all refugees, including in countries with large refugee populations and those in protracted situations. UNHCR was commended for its continued efforts to mobilize funding, but delegations expressed concern about the widening funding gap and its impact on specific situations or populations. The Office was asked for additional information on the implementation of the "Grand Bargain".

49. The Deputy High Commissioner informed the Committee that UNHCR had already begun implementing many of the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit. On management reforms, she recalled UNHCR's efforts to reduce costs at headquarters and added that more needed to be done to map out the implementation of commitments, including with the support of the Committee. In response to a question on the expenditure reduction in the Middle East and North Africa region, the Controller clarified that this reduction had affected operations for internally displaced persons in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. She explained that following the launch of a supplementary appeal the previous year, comparatively less funding was available for the Iraq operation in 2015, and operations in the Syrian Arab Republic had to be reduced owing to limited humanitarian access.

50. Concluding its discussion, the Committee adopted a decision on budgets and funding for 2015 and 2016 (see annex).

B. UNHCR Global Report 2015

51. The Director of the Division of External Relations presented UNHCR's Global Report on activities in 2015. He noted that the report contained detailed information on voluntary contributions as well as regional summaries. The print publication was already available in English and would be ready in French later in the summer. For the full report on UNHCR's overall achievements and challenges, the Committee was invited to consult the Global Focus website.

52. Delegations commended the Office for progress achieved against its key objectives, helping to build trust and confidence in its work, as well as for its efforts to tailor the report to respond to the Committee's comments. Delegations reiterated their support for the global strategic priorities and expressed appreciation for new themes addressed in the report, including the prevention of gender-based violence, child protection, self-reliance and coexistence with host communities. Of particular interest to member States was information provided on impact and unmet needs. The Office was encouraged to devote further attention to ensuring that data disaggregated by sex and age and on disability were included in the report. Efforts to further broaden the funding base, including through engagement with the private sector, were applauded.

VII. Governance

53. The Chairperson reminded the Committee that the High Commissioner's opening statement at the sixty-seventh plenary session of the Executive Committee would form the basis of the session general debate. She invited delegations to propose topics, noting that suggestions could also be transmitted to the Secretary in writing in the weeks following the meeting. Delegations asked the High Commissioner to share his views on the outcomes of the high-level meeting to address large movements of refugees and migrants, scheduled for 19 September, and the humanitarian and development nexus. They also expressed interest in hearing more about the strategic directions of the Office in the coming years.

VIII. Any other business

54. The Committee agreed that, in 2016, it would continue to follow the practice of circulating the report electronically for review and adoption. The draft report of the sixty-sixth meeting of the Standing Committee would be circulated by 8 July 2016. Two weeks would be allowed for review, during which time member States could submit comments or corrections to language relating to their interventions, until 22 July. Amendments would be incorporated, as appropriate, and the report would be subsequently recirculated and considered adopted.

Annex

Decision on budgets and funding for 2015 and 2016

The Standing Committee,

Recalling the Executive Committee's decision on administrative, financial and programme matters at its sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sessions (A/AC.96/1132, para. 15 and A/AC.96/1143, para. 13, respectively), as well as its discussions under the programme budgets and funding agenda item at the sixty-fifth meeting of the Standing Committee in March 2016,

Reaffirming the importance of responsibility sharing in solidarity with countries hosting refugees, especially those in developing regions,

1. *Takes note* of the final total budget for 2015 of \$7,232.4 million, after the Executive Committee had approved programmes and budgets under UNHCR's 2014-2015 Biennial Programme Budget (revised) of \$6,234.4 million for 2015, plus 10 supplementary budgets amounting to \$1,156.4 million for programmes benefiting refugees and internally displaced persons that were established in the course of 2015,
 2. *Notes* the reduction of the annual programme budget of \$158.4 million in the Middle East and North Africa region,
 3. *Recalls* that the Executive Committee, at its sixty-sixth session, approved programmes and budgets for regional programmes, global programmes and headquarters under UNHCR's 2016-2017 Biennial Programme Budget amounting to \$6,546.3 million for 2016,
 4. *Notes* that the 2016 supplementary budgets currently amount to \$654.7 million for programmes benefiting refugees and internally displaced persons,
 5. *Notes* that the annual programme budget for 2016 was reduced by \$38.4 million in the Africa region,
 6. *Takes note* of the net increase in UNHCR's annual programme budget for 2016 to a current total of \$7,162.6 million,
 7. *Recognizes* that emergencies and unforeseen activities unfolding in 2016 may result in the need for additional or expanded supplementary budgets, and that additional resources, over and above those for existing budgets, would be needed to meet such needs, and
 8. *Urges* member States to continue to respond generously, in a spirit of solidarity and in a timely manner, to the High Commissioner's appeal for resources to meet in full the 2016 annual programme budget.
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