# **Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme**

**Standing Committee** 69<sup>th</sup> meeting

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# EC/68/SC/CRP.23

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# I. Introduction

1. The Chairperson of the Executive Committee, Her Excellency Ambassador Rosemary McCarney (Canada), opened the meeting.

# II. Adoption of the agenda

2. The Committee adopted the agenda of the meeting (EC/68/SC/CRP.11).

# III. International protection

- 3. The Assistant High Commissioner (Protection) introduced1 the agenda item on international protection, noting that the impetus behind the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants was the need to address more concertedly the situation of people on the move. This included those seeking safety from persecution and conflict, and those searching for better economic and social opportunities, particularly in the face of poverty and deprivation, as well as to escape the adverse impacts of climate change. He stressed the importance of States working together to address mixed movements, managing their borders humanely to ensure both protection and security. These goals were not The New York Declaration provided an opening for constructive incompatible. engagement, calling for UNHCR to apply a comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF) and to develop a global compact on refugees. It also envisioned that stakeholders with expertise on migration would contribute to developing a global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration, on which UNHCR was working closely with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The two compacts, while being developed independently, were complementary.
- The Assistant High Commissioner noted that there were a number of areas in the New York Declaration where the commitments for refugees and migrants came together. While refugees had specific rights and required international protection, both refugees and migrants faced similar risks due to the situation in which they were travelling, including sexual exploitation and abuse by traffickers and smugglers. In such circumstances, it was essential to protect their human rights and put in place mechanisms to meet their individual needs. There was also the overarching need to save lives and strengthen search and rescue. As the international community approached the development of both compacts, it was important to consider how to build upon the common commitments to meet the needs of people on the move, be they refugees or migrants. A shift in mindset was required, away from perceiving such movements as threats and crises to managing and responding to them responsibly and with humanity. The Assistant High Commissioner set out a number of ways in which this shift could be achieved, including: ensuring the humane treatment of people at all points along routes, using the refugee protection experience to address the situation of people on the move and addressing mixed movements from a holistic solutions perspective.

#### A. Note on international protection

5. The Director of the Division of International Protection (DIP) introduced the note on international protection (EC/68/SC/CRP.12), which focused on the theme of human

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mobility, highlighting the need to tackle the underlying root causes and drivers of displacement, as well as to advance collaborative solutions.

- 6. Delegations welcomed the note's focus on human mobility, including the interface between asylum and migration, and strongly supported strengthened solidarity and burden- and responsibility-sharing as the only way to manage large-scale displacement. Yet the burden was not being shared evenly, with developing and least developed countries hosting the vast majority of refugees. There was a call for "genuine solidarity" and for such burden- and responsibility-sharing to be predictable and institutionalized. It was also suggested that responsibilities be allocated on the basis of capacity rather than on geographical proximity. New ways of working and sufficient resources were also needed to tackle the challenge of long-term protracted crises and to meet the needs of refugees and the countries that hosted them.
- 7. There was broad understanding of the need to protect people on the move, no matter their legal status, based on a human rights approach. A holistic means of addressing mixed movements was needed, and UNHCR was encouraged to continue to work with States and partners, including IOM, to extend protection in these situations. At the same time, several delegations highlighted the distinction between refugees and migrants under international law, noting that confusing these two categories of people with different legal statuses could risk undermining the refugee protection system developed over the last seven decades. In order to have a well-functioning asylum system, it was necessary to have a well-functioning system for the return of those not deemed to be in need of international protection. This was critical for the credibility of the asylum system. Countries of origin must also readmit citizens not deemed to be in need of international protection.
- 8. With respect to the global compact on refugees, UNHCR's key role was appreciated. The Committee stressed the importance of a transparent and inclusive process and welcomed the upcoming thematic discussions that would bring together an array of actors, including civil society, to identify successful measures and help inform the development of the programme of action. The "whole of society" approach, and particularly the vital role of non-governmental partners, were highlighted in this regard. For some, the New York Declaration represented a paradigm shift in the way the international community responded, whereas for others it is was a reassertion of the international protection regime on the basis of solidarity, cooperation and a quest for sustainable solutions. Protection and solutions were two sides of the same coin and one could not be achieved sustainably without the other. It was also suggested that solutions be taken into account as equitably as protection and assistance.
- The centrality of protection and the continuing relevance of the 1951 Refugee Convention were main themes emanating from the discussion. At the same time, several delegations pointed out that, despite not being parties to the Convention, their countries were at the forefront of international efforts to contain the current refugee crises. A number of countries emphasized the need to find political settlements in countries of origin and to address the root causes and drivers of displacement, including climate change and natural disasters, although it was pointed out that poverty also played a big role in forcing people out of their homes. Support was expressed for the priority UNHCR placed on protecting groups with specific needs, including children and youth, people with disabilities, and women and girls, as well as for its participatory approach. Preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) was also highlighted by a number of delegations. The protection of children was one of the areas that should be explored in terms of concrete complementarities between the two compacts. Ensuring access to education, not just primary but secondary and tertiary, was underscored as an important protection tool and as being crucial to preventing and mitigating conflicts and to rebuilding communities. One delegation expressed concern about alleged acts of fraud and corruption

in certain refugee camps and urged UNHCR to be transparent and put in place prevention measures

- 10. Several delegations expressed appreciation for inclusive approaches that took into account the needs of the host population and served as a bridge between the displaced and local communities. However, refugee inclusion in service provision without fully and sufficiently addressing the short, medium and long-term impacts on host governments and communities would not ease the impact on host countries. Stronger cooperation between humanitarian and development actors, including the World Bank, was welcomed, and the Office was encouraged to further these efforts. Self-reliance and livelihood opportunities helped reduce the costs of humanitarian assistance, contributed positively to host communities and contributed to sustainable repatriation, once the conditions permitted. Infrastructure projects were also essential for refugees and host communities, particularly when displacement was prolonged.
- 11. With regard to internal displacement, UNHCR was urged to reinforce its action on behalf of internally displaced persons (IDPs), who were often in a more vulnerable situation than refugees. The High Commissioner's decision to make IDPs one of UNHCR's priorities was commended, and the Committee looked forward to discussing the results of UNHCR's internal review on its engagement with IDPs. UNHCR was also encouraged to ensure field protection clusters were prioritizing protection monitoring. With respect to mixed situations involving refugees and IDPs, one delegation called for continued streamlining of coordination with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Ensuring the centrality of protection and responses were key and, as cluster lead, assessing protection needs and formulating these into stand-alone or integrated strategies was key for UNHCR. Several delegations pointed out that IDPs would not be part of the refugee compact, nor the migration compact, and that they risked falling between the gaps. It was important not to lose sight of IDPs, and the practical implementation of the CRRF could provide tools that could benefit these populations.
- 12. With regard to the Sahrawi refugees living near Tindouf, one delegation raised the importance of the registration of the refugee population as a means of protection, pursuant to UNHCR's mandate and recent United Nations Security Council resolutions, and in line with the New York Declaration. Another expressed concern about the reduction in aid for these refugees, noting that the programmes of UNHCR, among other partners, should be better supported and stressing that this population should be able to exercise their right to voluntary return.
- 13. The Assistant High Commissioner (Protection) expressed his appreciation for the Committee's support and the numerous ideas put forth on a range of issues. He emphasized the solid legal framework enshrined in the 1951 Convention, recalling that it had been conceived at a time of large-scale population movements and that the drafters had precisely in mind an instrument that would be relevant for the types of situations the international community was facing today. In response to the many statements on burden- and responsibility-sharing, he emphasized that the principle guiding the international community's approach was reflected in the 1951 Convention, and he expressed optimism with respect to the new dynamism coming out the New York Declaration. Noting the numerous comments on the importance of strengthening asylum systems, the Assistant High Commissioner indicated that this would certainly be among the main elements that would underpin the global refugee compact's programme of action. In response to a question about the results of UNHCR's review of its engagement with IDPs, the Assistant High Commissioner reassured delegations that UNHCR was committed to ensuring UNHCR maintained a predictable and responsible approach to IDPs. He also noted that the twentieth anniversary of the guiding principles on internal displacement in 2018 would provide an opportunity to draw attention to the issue. The Director of DIP added that the many commitments being made required resources for implementation, but that States

could engage in many ways, beyond providing financial resources. She expressed appreciation for the valuable contributions of host countries and encouraged States to participate actively in the upcoming thematic discussions.

#### **B.** Update on statelessness

- 14. Presenting the update contained in EC/68/SC/CRP.13, the Deputy Director covering policy and law in the Division of International Protection described significant progress made towards resolving situations of statelessness, preventing statelessness and improving the identification of stateless persons, as well as in meeting the goals of UNHCR's global campaign to end statelessness.
- 15. The Committee commended UNHCR for the activities undertaken in the context of its global campaign to eradicate statelessness and reiterated support for the organization's statelessness mandate. In order to achieve the goals of the campaign, States emphasized the importance of preventing and reducing statelessness, particularly through ensuring gender equality in nationality laws and birth registration among children, and improving the quantitative data on the number of stateless persons globally. There were also calls for States to increase the resources provided for UNHCR's statelessness budget. Several delegations called for statelessness to be taken into account in the preparation of the global compact on refugees.
- 16. The Deputy Director thanked States for their interventions and for their efforts to prevent and reduce statelessness. She highlighted the need for political will and for all stakeholders to work together to reach the ambitious targets of the campaign. She also welcomed the reference to the global compact on refugees and the inclusion of issues relating to statelessness in that context, including in the development of the programme of action. In response to a question on funding for statelessness activities, she emphasized the impact that generous contributions from donors have had in recent years, including in creating regional UNHCR statelessness positions, and appealed for greater support moving forward.

#### C. Update on resettlement

- 17. In presenting the update on resettlement (EC/68/SC/CRP.14), the Deputy Director for Resettlement in the Division of International Protection focused on achievements and opportunities in 2016, followed by needs and priorities in 2017 and 2018. She noted that 2016 was a year of milestones for UNHCR and its partners, with a total of 162,500 refugees referred for resettlement by the Office, representing a 20-year high. More than 125,600 refugees were able to start rebuilding their lives in 37 different States the highest ever number of resettlement countries.
- 18. Having welcomed these developments, delegations reinforced resettlement's role as a critical protection mechanism and one of three durable solutions for refugees, alongside voluntary repatriation and local integration. Several delegations provided updates on their country's resettlement programmes as well as the support they had provided to new and emerging resettlement States. Concern was expressed about the growing gap between needs and available spaces, with several States advocating increased quotas. While complementary pathways to admission were welcomed, resettlement was considered by some to be the preferred means through which to demonstrate solidarity and responsibility-sharing with host countries. UNHCR's efforts to ensure that resettlement processing was efficient but still robust in terms of integrity were acknowledged.

19. The Deputy Director highlighted that partnerships were crucial to the expansion and strengthening of resettlement. Together, UNHCR, States and other partners, including from civil society and the private sector, could develop innovative approaches to decrease the gap between resettlement needs and places. This type of multi-stakeholder engagement would be central to the fulfilment of the commitments made in New York in September 2016, though the specific role resettlement would play in interventions under the CRRF required further consideration. The Deputy Director reaffirmed UNHCR's support for new and emerging resettlement States, citing the "EU-FRANK" project and annual tripartite consultations on resettlement (ATCR) as valuable fora to share expertise and lessons learned. In terms of creating additional spaces, she noted that sponsorship programmes should be used to build on the interest of resettlement communities in assisting refugees in concrete ways.

#### D. Machine-readable travel documents

- 20. The Deputy Director covering policy and law in the Division of International Protection introduced the update on machine-readable travel documents (EC/68/SC/CRP.15), which underscored the need for travel documents for refugees and stateless persons to be issued in machine readable format.
- 21. Several delegations highlighted the importance of travel documents for refugees and stateless persons, which was vital for both protection and solutions, including access to complementary pathways. It was critical that these travel documents were in machine-readable format, as per the standards of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). UNHCR's collaboration with the ICAO was welcomed, and international cooperation and the sharing of good practices to facilitate the transition to machine-readable travel documents were encouraged. One delegation said that this was an obligation for States parties to the refugee and statelessness conventions and should not be imposed on non-State parties, which would only increase the burden on countries hosting large numbers of refugees.
- 22. The Deputy Director thanked delegations for their comments, stressing the importance of machine-readable travel documents in realizing solutions. She highlighted the benefits of transitioning to machine-readable format, noting that this was also to be seen in the broader context of the ICAO standards, to which States were bound. With respect to non-State parties to the refugee and statelessness conventions, she encouraged the exchange of good practices among States and noted that UNHCR stood ready to offer its assistance where needed.

#### E. Oral update on Executive Committee conclusion(s)

23. The ExCom Rapporteur (Switzerland) briefed the Committee on the negotiation of the draft conclusion on international protection, focusing on machine-readable travel documents, which started with an informal briefing to ensure a good level of understanding among delegations of this technical topic. Four formal sessions were then held, and progress was made on a number of points. Nevertheless, significant work remained to be done, and the Rapporteur reminded delegations that the issue of machine-readable travel documents was a technical one and that the scope of the discussion should remain as such. She recalled that having a travel document could be of critical importance for refugees, including for those who needed to be evacuated to another country that had agreed to provide medical treatment. She called on Member States to engage in the negotiations with flexibility, noting that failing to reach consensus on the conclusion would send the wrong signal in the process leading up to the global compact on refugees.

24. Two delegations took the floor to underline the critical importance of travel documents for refugees and expressed appreciation for the technical expertise that UNHCR had brought to the negotiations, as well as for the national experiences shared by a number of States. They reiterated the appeal by the Rapporteur to seek a concise, technical conclusion through constructive engagement.

# IV. Programme/protection policy

#### A. Community-based protection and accountability to affected populations

- 25. In presenting the paper on community-based protection and accountability to affected populations (EC/68/SC/CRP.19), the Deputy Director covering comprehensive solutions in the Division of International Protection emphasized the importance of partnerships with persons of concern to safeguard their rights and promote their interests. She highlighted the inclusive, rights-based approach adopted by UNHCR and its positive impact, especially in urban settings and taking into account the needs of host communities.
- 26. Delegations welcomed UNHCR's efforts to translate the concept of community-based protection into concrete guidelines and action, including as part of the CRRF. They recognized the centrality of age, gender and diversity-sensitive approaches to inclusive humanitarian responses. A number of good practices and recent initiatives were discussed, with a focus on better protecting and empowering young people; women and girls; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons; and those with disabilities. In particular, delegations welcomed the endorsement of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit's "Charter on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action" and the global refugee youth consultations. In terms of accountability, the Office was encouraged to build on recent achievements and replicate good practices in new contexts.
- 27. In response to questions from the floor, the Deputy Director advised that UNHCR had aligned its internal indicators and measurement methods with those outlined in the "Core humanitarian standard on quality and accountability". Compliance with these standards was also linked to the work of the Inter-agency Standing Committee Task Team on Accountability to Affected Populations and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, which UNHCR co-chaired. With regard to gender, she noted that in the revision of the Office's "Commitments to women and girls (2017-2021)" the needs of returnee, stateless and IDP women and girls would be included. The Deputy Director acknowledged the importance of using disaggregated data in humanitarian programming and confirmed UNHCR had made progress in this area. She also discussed the priority the Office placed on training staff, both at Headquarters and in the field, to improve protection outcomes for individuals and groups at heightened risk.

#### **B.** Update on education

- 28. The Deputy Director covering comprehensive solutions in the Division of International Protection provided an update on education for refugee children and youth (EC/68/SC/CRP.20). She outlined the wide variety of programmes being implemented to benefit both refugee and host communities and UNHCR's support for the inclusion of refugees in national education systems.
- 29. While commending recent progress, the Committee expressed concern about the barriers that continued to impede access to, and the quality of, education for refugee children and youth. In addition to delivering critical protection outcomes, education played an important role in building resilient and inclusive communities. Several delegations

highlighted the value of education in empowering women and girls, advocating gendersensitive programmes to enable them to participate fully in the decisions that affect their lives. Others noted the importance of education in helping returnees rebuild their countries of origin upon return. In line with sustainable development goal four on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, UNHCR's efforts to forge new partnerships, particularly with development actors, were welcomed. A number of delegations also highlighted the centrality of education to the CRRF.

30. The Deputy Director advised that education was the fifth largest thematic area of expenditure for UNHCR. She expanded on the Office's engagement with the "Education Cannot Wait" initiative and the Global Partnership for Education, as well as on innovative educational initiatives carried out with the private sector. Drawing on the opportunities afforded by information technology, UNHCR's partners had already provided some 5,000 refugee students with access to education. In addition to expanding programmes of this nature, the Deputy Director advised that UNHCR was exploring new complementary pathways to admission through educational opportunities with a number of different States. The Deputy Director thanked the Committee for its support, including its efforts to build a strong evidence-base, noting this was a key area of cooperation with partners. A breakdown of refugee education by country and level was something the Office would consider as part of the development of the global compact on refugees.

# C. Update on the global strategic priorities

- 31. The update on the global strategic priorities (GSPs) (EC/68/SC/CRP.18) was presented by the Deputy Director of the Division of Programme Support and Management (DPSM). He outlined the progress achieved against the objectives for the 2016-2017 biennium and introduced the set of priorities for 2018-2019.
- 32. The Committee expressed appreciation for the progress made towards the 2016-2017 operational and support and management GSPs, underscoring in particular the achievements under the support and management GSPs with respect to compliance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), emergency response and results-based management (RBM). The progress report on the 2016 GSPs was especially valuable in helping the Committee understand the elements that may have influenced progress or lack thereof for each GSP. With respect to the 2018-2019 GSPs, including improved joint needs assessments under the support and management GSPs was welcomed. UNHCR was encouraged to better streamline its RBM system to improve accountability, to ensure that the new RBM indicators included all populations of concern, particularly IDPs and urban refugees, and to feed field-level indicators into more global indicators to demonstrate UNHCR's field and institutional successes. The Office was also urged to ensure that support for voluntary return and reintegration that went beyond short-term assistance to long-term strategies, in cooperation with development partners, was included. There was also a question about gender parity in UNHCR leadership and management structures, and UNHCR was urged to also ensure balanced geographical and diversity representation in its workforce.
- 33. In response, the Deputy Director explained that the GSPs were essentially a tool that provided a snapshot view of how UNHCR was advancing, but that it could not cover every aspect of what the organization did. In terms of follow-up to a number of recommendations of the Board of Auditors and the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on improving the link between short-term and long-term strategies to foster durable solutions and on strengthening of coordination, he explained where these were covered within the GSPs but noted that there were parallel follow-up exercises. Taking note of the suggestion to include all populations of concern in the results framework, the Deputy

Director explained that it was status neutral and did not distinguish between different population groups. Responding to a question about the inclusion of fraud prevention in the GSPs, he indicated that this was, indeed, a cross-cutting issue that touched upon a number of areas, including resource mobilization, procurement, financial management, human resources and core operational work, but recognized the need to reflect more clearly on this in UNHCR's reporting. In terms of coordination with development partners, the Director of the Division and the Deputy Director outlined a number of efforts to link humanitarian and development assistance, including in the framework of the CRRF but also internally through multi-year, multi-partner planning.

34. Regarding gender parity, the Deputy High Commissioner noted that as of 31 March, the breakdown of UNHCR's total workforce, including staff members and the affiliate workforce, stood at 56 per cent male and 44 per cent female. At the D2 level, the breakdown was 54 per cent male and 46 per cent female, noting that the numbers were very consistent across grade levels. While acknowledging the challenges, such as recruiting females in D and E hardship duty stations and female national staff members in some countries, she reiterated UNHCR's commitment to achieving gender parity by 2021, in line with the Secretary-General's objective.

# V. Regional activities and global programmes

- 35. The Deputy High Commissioner provided an overview of the outcomes of the headquarters review, which highlighted the need for a strategic realignment of UNHCR's headquarters functions and systems to ensure that they optimally supported field operations and the need to reinforce UNHCR's agility and ability to adapt more quickly to the external environment. While the review was not designed as a tool for cost reductions, it would allow UNHCR to adopt a financially prudent approach in the current funding environment. A number of recommendations followed the review, including a strengthened focus on solutions and increased investments in critical systems such as refugee data management, identity management, and statistics and information management.
- 36. Alongside this review process, UNHCR was undertaking broader reforms, including those related to UNHCR's commitments at the World Humanitarian Summit, with a particular focus on the "grand bargain", in line with the High Commissioner's strategic directions. She expanded on the oversight reforms, including the simplification and streamlining of the policy development function, the transfer of relationship management for the internal audit function provided by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) from the Division of Financial and Administrative Management (DFAM) to the Inspector General's Office (IGO), and the establishment of a new Strategic Oversight Service in the IGO. The Deputy High Commissioner also reported on allegations of misconduct and the proactive efforts being undertaken by UNHCR to address them, emphasizing UNHCR's commitment to the highest standards in this regard. In response to these remarks, a number of delegations expressed support for improved transparency and enhanced fraud prevention processes. They called for the IGO to be strengthened and adequately resourced.

#### A. Cash-based interventions

37. Presenting the paper on cash-based interventions (EC/68/SC/CRP.16), the Director of DPSM focused on the expanded and systematic use of cash in UNHCR's global programmes, including ongoing efforts to meet the "grand bargain" commitments and to employ it in the context of the CRRF. UNHCR aimed to increase the impact of cash on the lives of populations of concern; expand the use of cash in operations; strengthen institutional support for such assistance; and promote collaboration with partners to

maximize efficiency and predictability and ensure effective coordination, including through common delivery approaches.

- 38. The Committee welcomed the expanded use of cash in operations, recognizing that this form of assistance helped improve the efficiency of existing humanitarian resources and supported local economies, while empowering and offering more autonomy to beneficiaries. At the same time, delegations emphasized the importance of demonstrating, through evidence-based research and post-distribution monitoring, that cash assistance was used appropriately and was context specific, as well as showing the value, visibility and impact of such funding. It was also indispensable to ensure thorough analysis of the environment before implementing a cash-based intervention. The need to place greater emphasis on fraud prevention and accountability, as well as to ensure that the costs of delivery of cash transfers could be clearly and transparently identified, was also emphasized. Delegations expressed support for UNHCR's review of the potential risks and gaps related to the increased use of cash and was urged to include mitigation measures in the review. UNHCR's plan to review the various common cash facility models, including a mapping of their strengths and potential to be used in different operational settings, was also well received.
- 39. UNHCR's coordination efforts aimed at ensuring that, where possible, beneficiaries received the cash component of assistance in the form of a single payment, covering all needs (including food and non-food assistance), were welcomed. The Committee also recognized UNHCR's endeavours to increase the capacity of partners, including national and local actors, to deliver cash assistance. Support was expressed for new and innovative systems and tools to deliver cash, including through single transfer models. Delegations also appreciated UNHCR's efforts to demonstrate how cash assistance could help achieve meaningful protection outcomes and to disseminate the evidence. At the same time, it was noted that cash assistance was only a tool and was not appropriate to meet all needs, including protection, education and health, which had to be complemented by specific responses.
- 40. The Director of DPSM echoed many of the positive comments on the use of cash, which he said were about people, dignity and choice. The comprehensive nature of UNHCR's work lent itself well to the use of cash to ensure the wellbeing of the individual. He agreed that it should not be seen as a panacea and an end in itself but rather a tool used to achieve protection and solutions goals within a broader programme. In terms of the calls for context specific analysis to establish that cash was appropriate, he reassured the Committee that UNHCR was developing solid market assessment tools to ensure that markets could respond and that cash would meet the real needs. With respect to the importance of research and evidence, he noted that UNHCR was deeply engaged in increasing its knowledge base and committed to full transparency in this regard. noted that UNHCR was developing internal targeting guidance, joint targeting principles with the World Food Programme (WFP) and more detailed operational guidance, all of which would help inform coordination with other partners. The Chief of UNHCR's Cash-Based Interventions Section spoke about the common cash facility launched by UNHCR, which aimed to create common approaches to cash delivery that would minimize duplication and increase collaboration, resulting in efficiency gains for partners and donors. He concluded by noting that cash assistance provided unique opportunities to go beyond the boundaries of what UNHCR used to do.

# **B.** Strengthening humanitarian-development cooperation in forced displacement situations

- 41. The Senior Adviser to the High Commissioner on Development presented the paper on strengthening humanitarian-development cooperation in forced displacement situations (EC/68/SC/CRP.17), describing the value in addressing refugee situations as both humanitarian and development challenges, and underscoring the important role development organizations could play in achieving durable solutions for refugees.
- 42. The Committee welcomed UNHCR's commitment to addressing humanitarian challenges through enhanced humanitarian-development cooperation, and the Office's leadership role in taking forward this trend. Both life-saving humanitarian support and longer-term, multi-year interventions were required, with the latter providing opportunities for sustainable livelihoods and access to education, including for the refugee host communities. Nevertheless, the need to safeguard the specificity of both components was also highlighted. For humanitarian actors, the humanitarian principles remained of primordial importance and should not be diluted. As synergies between humanitarian and development partners were strengthened, there was also a need to ensure the neutral, impartial, independent and non-politicized space for humanitarian actors to work was respected. While recognizing the importance of humanitarian and development actors working together on the basis of common context analysis and risk assessments, benefiting from the comparative advantages of each, some delegations preferred complementary rather than joint programming approaches.
- 43. Appreciation was expressed for UNHCR's efforts to foster partnerships with development organizations, including the World Bank on the CRRF and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Office was encouraged to expand relationships with other development partners, including development banks and bilateral agencies as well as host governments, at national, municipal and local levels. UNHCR was also urged to engage in innovative partnerships with the private sector.
- 44. The Senior Adviser to the High Commissioner welcomed expressions of support from the Committee and acknowledged that complementarity was central to UNHCR's engagement with development partners. He cited collaboration with multilateral development banks as a key change for UNHCR in terms of the "new ways of working", adopted by the main humanitarian and development agencies at the World Humanitarian Summit. He added that training was necessary to help familiarize humanitarian and development workers with one another's practices, policies and organizational cultures. With respect to emergency preparedness, he advised that further investments would be made, with a particular focus on mitigating the impact of forced displacement on local communities and economies. The Head of the Operational Solutions and Transition Section in DPSM underscored the value of private sector partnerships and identified employment as an important area for collaboration. In addition to discussing the livelihood opportunities that these partnerships could create for refugees, she outlined the innovative solutions they could offer in terms of access to technology and renewable energy.

# VI. Coordination

# Follow-up to the New York Declaration and the comprehensive refugee response framework

45. In presenting conference room paper EC/68/SC/CRP.21, the Director for Comprehensive Responses outlined the achievements of UNHCR and its partners, most

notably States, in applying the CRRF. Of the nine countries that had agreed to roll-out the CRRF, eight had also agreed to pursue comprehensive regional approaches. Recalling the principles of the 1951 Convention and the continued centrality of international protection to UNHCR's mandate, the Director reflected on the significance of the CRRF as a new way of working, with a focus on political commitments and multi-stakeholder approaches.

- 46. The Committee expressed strong support for the CRRF and, in particular, for the States applying it. Delegations outlined their contributions to the roll-out and identified a range of factors they thought were critical to its success. These included factoring in age, gender and diversity; involving refugees and host communities as well as all other relevant stakeholders, including line ministries; ensuring all action taken was underpinned by an understanding of the centrality of protection; anchoring the CRRF in the national development agenda to secure the active involvement of development partners; aligning the CRRF with the United Nations Charter and the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity; and pursuing the main objectives of the framework in a well-balanced and sustainable manner. While different priorities were identified, it was important to ensure that easing the pressure on host countries, expanding third-country solutions and supporting conditions in countries of origin, for return in safety and dignity, were pursued on equal footing with enhancing refugee self-reliance.
- 47. Support was conveyed for the current approach of presenting a global compact on refugees, consisting of the General Assembly-adopted CRRF and a programme of action. UNHCR was commended for developing and initiating the CRRF, in collaboration with a broad range of partners, and was encouraged to continue to pursue "whole-of-society" responses to large movements of refugees, including through engagement with the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). UNHCR's role as a facilitator of this process, allowing national host governments to lead and coordinate, was also welcomed.
- 48. The Director agreed that unearmarked and multi-year funding would be critical to the success of the CRRF as a genuine burden- and responsibility-sharing mechanism. On geographical balance, he advised that UNHCR was exploring opportunities outside of Africa and Central America, noting that the New York Declaration called for the CRRF to be applied to all large-scale refugee movements, including protracted situations. The practical roll-out of the CRRF had not been as fast as the Office had hoped, which reflected the intense, multi-stakeholder engagement required. The Director confirmed that the integration of line ministries was a critical but gradual part of the process, in which development actors, particularly UNDP, played a key role. In response to a question about the monitoring framework and indicators for applying the CRRF, the Director indicated that work was underway.
- 49. The Director welcomed the recommendation that a comprehensive mapping of responsibility-sharing be undertaken to help build a clearer picture of current arrangements. Such a document had been attempted before, though the methodology posed a challenge. Acknowledging that another attempt could take some time, the Director suggested, as a first step, that States could confirm the contributions they had made to date. Separately, he advised that UNHCR was not best placed to lead in addressing the root causes of refugee movements, though the Office could play a supporting role in terms of prevention.

# VII. Programme budgets and funding

#### A. Update on budgets and funding for 2017 and reporting on 2016

50. The Controller and Director of DFAM and the Director of the Division of External Relations (DER) jointly presented the update on programme budgets and funding for 2016

and 2017 (EC/68/SC/CRP.22 and Corr. 1). The Controller reported on the final financial results for 2016 and provided an overview of the requirements as of 28 June 2017. The Director of the DER complemented the presentation with details on trends in voluntary contributions and funding levels and highlighted innovative fundraising and communication initiatives.

- 51. Delegations expressed support for UNHCR's call for unearmarked funding and stressed the need for UNHCR to further emphasize the importance of this type of contribution in its reports to reverse the current trend of increased earmarking which had a negative impact on certain operations. The Committee recognized the challenge the Office faced in prioritizing activities due to funding gaps. UNHCR was commended for the high levels of implementation against funds available and expenditure in the field, as well as efforts to increase funding from private sources. As the majority of funding still came from a relatively small number of donors, UNHCR was encouraged to further increase its efforts to diversify its donor base. It was suggested that UNHCR establish a threshold level under which funding would not be allowed to fall in order to ensure coverage of the basic needs.
- The Controller thanked delegations for their strong support of unearmarked and multi-year funding and noted that UNHCR's adoption of results-based management systems would allow the Office to report with more flexibility on these types of funding in the future. She highlighted the criticality of the organization's ability to undertake prioritization, which went hand in hand with the amount of unearmarked funds it received. The Director of DER noted the request for greater visibility to be given to contributions of unearmarked funding, indicating that UNHCR was working to improve this. She explained that unearmarked funds allowed UNHCR to kick-start responses to emergencies, undertake preparedness measures, including prepositioning stockpiles and maintaining standby arrangements for deployment, and to support underfunded operations. It was also vital to UNHCR's normative role, covering activities such as developing and strengthening legal frameworks, setting international standards, advocacy, and ensuring adequate policy development around refugee issues. In order to address the continuing gap between needs and resources, she stressed UNHCR's commitment to diversifying its income sources and mentioned the CRRF as a means to be able to reduce needs and budgets in the future. In response to a question about the 19 per cent increase in funding in 2016, she explained that this was due to more voluntary contributions and private sector contributions in response to increasing needs and emergencies, as well as the result of a noticeable return on investment from outreach activities.
- 53. The Committee adopted the decision on budgets and funding for 2016 and 2017, as contained in the annex to the present document.

#### B. Global Report 2016

- 54. The Director of DER presented UNHCR's Global Report on activities in 2016, noting that it contained detailed information on voluntary contributions as well as regional summaries. For more detailed information on UNHCR's overall achievements and challenges, the Committee was invited to consult the Global Focus website.
- 55. Delegations commended the Office for its efforts to provide the Committee with a useful report which contributed to building donor confidence and helped make the case for providing flexible funding for UNHCR's operations. Appreciation was expressed for progress achieved against UNHCR's key objectives, including in the areas of registration, data collection, cash-based interventions, the "grand bargain" commitments, statelessness and addressing SGBV, while pointing out that there was still much to do on the latter. UNHCR's commitment to risk management, innovation and flexibility was applauded in light of ongoing challenges highlighted in the report. The Committee was particularly

pleased by the reporting on what the organization had not been able to do due to lack of funding and restrictions in humanitarian access.

56. Responding to a request for clarification on the difference between the number of people of concern in the Global Trends report compared to the 2016 Global Report, the Director explained that these were two different sets of figures and that the discrepancies were due to the different populations that were included in the calculations.

#### VIII. Governance

57. The Committee was reminded that the High Commissioner's opening statement at the forthcoming sixty-eighth plenary session of the Executive Committee would form the basis of the session's general debate. Delegations were invited to propose topics, noting that suggestions could be transmitted to the Secretary in writing in the weeks following the meeting. One delegation took the floor to highlight the utility of previous high-level segments, noting that the absence of one last year was a missed opportunity. The Secretary responded that this year's plenary session would include a special segment on the CRRF.

# IX. Any other business

58. The Committee was reminded of the practice of circulating the report of the meeting electronically for review and adoption. It was agreed that following the circulation of the draft report, amendments to language relating to the interventions of respective delegations would be incorporated, as appropriate, and the report would be subsequently recirculated and considered adopted. All documentation and presentations made over the course of the meeting are available on the dedicated webpage, <a href="https://www.unhcr.org/69standco">www.unhcr.org/69standco</a>.

#### Annex

## Decision on budgets and funding for 2016 and 2017

The Standing Committee,

Recalling the Executive Committee's decisions, at its sixty-sixth and sixty-seventh sessions, on administrative, financial and programme matters (A/AC.96/1154, para. 13 (c) and A/AC.96/1165, para. 15 (3) respectively), as well as its discussions under the programme budgets and funding item at the sixty-eighth meeting of the Standing Committee in March 2017,

Reaffirming the importance of responsibility-sharing in solidarity with countries hosting refugees,

*Recalls* that the Executive Committee, at its sixty-sixth session, approved original programmes and budgets for regional programmes, global programmes and headquarters under UNHCR's 2016-2017 biennial programme budget, amounting to \$6,546.3 million and \$6,408.5 million for 2016 and 2017 respectively,

*Recalls* that the Executive Committee, at its sixty-seventh session, approved the revised programmes and budgets for regional programmes, global programmes and headquarters under UNHCR's 2016-2017 biennial programme budget, amounting to \$7,184.7 million and \$7,309.7 million for 2016 and 2017 respectively,

*Notes* that the supplementary budgets for 2016 amounted to \$1,006.8 million for programmes benefiting UNHCR's global refugee programme and projects for reintegration and internally displaced persons,

*Takes note* of the increase in UNHCR's annual budget for 2016 to a final total of \$7,509.7 million, representing the sum of the original budget of \$6,546.3 million, the total supplementary budgets of \$1,006.8 million and a budget reduction of \$43.4 million,

Takes note of the overall financial and budgetary performance in 2016,

*Notes* that the supplementary budgets for 2017, which amount to \$447.7 million as at 30 April 2017, are for programmes benefiting UNHCR's global refugee programme and projects for reintegration and for internally displaced persons,

Notes a budget reduction of \$178.9 million in 2017,

Takes note of the increase in UNHCR's annual budget for 2017 to the current total of \$7,578.5 million as at 30 April 2017, representing the sum of the revised annual budget of \$7,309.7 million, the supplementary budgets of \$447.7 million and a budget reduction of \$178.9 million,

*Recognizes* that emergencies and unforeseen activities unfolding in 2017 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

*Urges* Member States to continue to respond generously, in the spirit of solidarity and in a timely manner, to the High Commissioner's appeal for resources to meet in full the annual budget for 2017.