

Introductory Remarks of Steven Corliss
Director of the Division of Programme Support & Management

Overview of Global Programmes and Partnerships
59th Meeting of the Standing Committee
5 March 2014

Thank you, Mr Chairman,

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to appear before the Standing Committee to introduce the Overview of UNHCR's Global Programmes and Partnerships. Through the Global Programmes, UNHCR seeks to improve the quality of life for refugees and other people of concern.

The Global Programmes cover a wide spectrum of activities, including public health; HIV and reproductive health; nutrition and food security; water, sanitation and hygiene; shelter and settlements; education; livelihoods; environmental management; and registration and information management, as well as our efforts to achieve durable solutions and link UNHCR's humanitarian programmes to longer-term development efforts. Effective strategic and operational partnerships, of course, are the key to our success in each of these programme areas.

Given the scope of the Global Programmes, I will only be able to highlight the most significant new developments and provide updates on some of the key initiatives that featured in my presentation to the Committee last year.

Let me begin with emergency response, which has continued to be our overriding priority over the past year. During 2013, DPSPM deployed technical specialists to the field for 2,588 days during 2013, or a 43 percent increase over 2012. We have continued working to increase our depth of deployable capacity in technical areas, as well as for interagency coordination and information management, which allowed us to respond to the successive system-wide Level 3 emergencies in the Philippines, Central African Republic and South Sudan.

While emergencies are the dominant feature of the humanitarian landscape, we have also continued investing in efforts to improve the overall quality and technical integrity of UNHCR's programmes. In this connection, I am very pleased to be launching today new global strategies for public, health, settlement and shelter, livelihoods and safe access to fuel and energy. These five-year strategies will set the direction of UNHCR's work in these core areas of the Global Programmes through 2018. The strategies complement each other and also the UNHCR strategies for education, child protection and sexual and gender-based violence that are already in place.

Each of the global strategies has a strong protection and solutions orientation. All are shaped by a common set of guiding principles aimed at ensuring equity, access and community empowerment through the age, gender and diversity approach. They emphasize the need to ensure that UNHCR's programme interventions are appropriate and sustainable. The new strategies are also guided by common approaches that focus on communication and advocacy; partnership, coordination and capacity-building; and evidenced-based decision-making coupled with impact measurement.

UNHCR's *Global Strategy for Public Health* builds upon the Strategic Plans for public health implemented from 2008 to 2012. The lives of refugees continue to be impacted by communicable and non-communicable diseases, malnutrition and the lack of access to child, HIV and reproductive health care services and to clean water and sanitation. The new Strategy provides a comprehensive response to these challenges and is relevant to all settings where UNHCR operates – inside and outside of camps and in low, middle and high income countries.

Under the Strategy, UNHCR will promote sustainable approaches to service delivery through integration in national health care systems and innovative approaches to financing, such as enrolling refugees in health insurance programmes. The Strategy also seeks to create synergies among the health-related sectors – for example, between water and sanitation and the treatment of communicable diseases – and with other areas covered by the other global strategies, such as between nutrition and livelihoods. Implementation will be driven by data and evidence, making full use of *Twine*, UNHCR's Health Information System (twine.unhcr.org), and the tools introduced to the Committee last year, including Prospective Surveillance, the Standardised Expanded Nutrition Survey (SENS) and the WASH Monitoring System.

The *Global Settlement and Shelter Strategy* is based upon the vision that all refugees should be able to satisfy their settlement and shelter needs in a safe, dignified and sustainable way wherever they live, whether in urban or rural settings. We know that poorly planned settlements and badly conceived shelter solutions have consequences for protection and negative impacts across all other sectors. Integrating sustainable and technically-sound settlement and shelter strategies into the earliest stages of emergency response – and even contingency planning – is essential.

An important feature of the Strategy is the Master Plan approach, which UNHCR has developed with Stanford University and Ennead Architects. This holistic and integrated concept for settlement planning seeks to anchor the refugee presence within the broader context of national and local development, services and infrastructure, society and the economy. The Master Plan Toolkit provides technical guidance, checklists, decision-making aids and best practice information. We look forward to piloting the Master Plan approach in Rwanda this year, together with our partners, and assessing its impact on the lives of refugees and host communities.

The *Global Livelihoods Strategy* responds to the reality that many refugees, internally displaced people, returnees and resettled refugees do not have access to meaningful work in a safe environment that could reduce their dependency and help them to rebuild their lives in dignity. The *Global Livelihoods Strategy* will improve the quality of UNHCR's programming and build our capacity for planning and implementing effective market-based interventions, working in collaboration with governments and partners, including development actors and, importantly, the private sector.

The Strategy incorporates proven, innovative models for livelihoods programming, such as the Graduation Approach, which we are piloting in Cairo and San José, Costa Rica, together with our NGO partner, Trickle Up, and with technical support from the ILO. The term "graduation" refers to moving people out of extreme poverty to self-reliance through a combination of support to meet basic needs, promote savings, providing skills training and assisting people to find employment or start small businesses or other income earning activities. We will learn from the Cairo and San José pilots and, hopefully, replicate and take them to scale in the coming years.

The *Global Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE) Strategy* begins with the recognition that safe and reliable access to energy for cooking, lighting, and power is a basic need for everyone. For many refugees, cooking a meal or having light at night is a daily struggle. Without light, refugees cannot move around safely in the evening, even to nearby latrines. Children cannot study after the sun goes down. The lack of sustainable sources of energy also causes refugees – usually women and girls – to spend hours searching for firewood. This exposes them to protection risks, including sexual and gender-based violence, and prevents them from working or going to school. The unmanaged use of already scarce fuel resources also damages the environment and brings refugees into conflict with host communities.

With an initial focus on camp settings, the *SAFE Strategy* will ensure that UNHCR programming for domestic energy responds to these protection concerns and across sectors – from health and nutrition to livelihoods, education and the environment. Energy interventions will be based upon technically-sound assessments and feasibility studies and the use of innovative and sustainable technologies. The Strategy also opens up new opportunities for partnerships and the use of creative funding mechanisms, such as carbon financing.

Copies of the four global strategies and short summaries are available at the back of the conference room. They are also available on the UNHCR website (www.unhcr.org).

The *UNHCR Education Strategy* launched in 2012 was an inspiration for the four new global strategies that we are launching today. The Education Strategy moved UNHCR away from a focus on school attendance rates to a greater emphasis on the quality and impact of education programmes measured through achievement.

In twenty priority countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East and North Africa regions, UNHCR is implementing education strategies that are adapted to the local context, in close partnership with national ministries of education and other actors. The emphasis is on mainstreaming education programmes for refugees within national education systems, with broad-based support for both host community and refugee children. The Division of International Protection will provide the Committee with a fuller briefing on Education and Child Protection at its June session.

The High Commissioner is committed to the greater use of cash-based interventions in UNHCR's global operations. Cash programming gives people the dignity of choice and has other protection benefits. Delivering assistance through cash can also reduce costs and improve efficiency.

Over the past year, UNHCR has developed the “foundation stones” for the responsible expansion of cash-based interventions. These include new operational guidance, standard operating procedures and training that we will begin rolling out across the organisation this month. We have also increased technical support to the field through the deployment of cash programming experts and have broadened our partnership network and collaboration on key challenges, such as data privacy, the use of new technology and the consolidation of delivery platforms.

The increased use of cash and cash alternatives can have a transformational impact on humanitarian operations. UNHCR will need to develop – and work with partners that have – competencies in new areas, such as market analysis. We will also look to partners to support our operations in new ways, with less of a focus on the direct delivery of services and more on vulnerability assessment and targeting, closer engagement and outreach to people receiving assistance, particularly outside of camps, and monitoring and evaluating our impact.

UNHCR's updated refugee registration software, *proGres* v4, and our new biometric solution will provide important support for cash-based programming. In December, we successfully completed a pilot of the new biometrics tool in Malawi, during which nearly 17,000 refugees were enrolled using fingerprint, iris and facial recognition technology. We are now proceeding to development of the full system that, like *proGres* v4, must respond to the needs of UNHCR's far flung global operations and harsh operating environments.

Let me next provide a brief update on UNHCR's Information & Data Management Strategy, which is now entering its third year. We now have a growing global network of Information Management specialists deployed in major refugee situations, as well as in IDP operations where UNHCR has taken on important cluster coordination responsibilities for protection, shelter or camp coordination and camp management.

The Training on Information Management in Emergencies (TIME) workshops that take place regularly supply a pool of colleagues who are trained and ready for deployment. The Emergency Information Management Toolkit (data.unhcr.org/IMtoolkit) that we released last year provides teams on the ground with a standardized set of tools so that they do not have to "reinvent the wheel" in the midst of a crisis.

We have also improved and expanded the coverage of UNHCR's operational web portals. An upgrade project is now underway that will make the web portals more flexible and adaptable to the needs of field operations. The introduction of new "state of the art" Geospatial Information Systems (GIS) and mapping technology has greatly improved the quality of UNHCR's maps and our ability to produce them quickly and consistently.

At the back of the conference room, you will find *DPSM Key Initiatives Updates* on the operational web portals and our efforts in the area cash-based programming. We will be issuing similar updates on a regular basis in the future to keep you informed about interesting projects and initiatives that the Division has underway that aim to transform the way UNHCR works.

Before concluding, I would like to inform the Committee about an important development – the establishment of the Solutions Steering Group at UNHCR Headquarters. The Solutions Steering Group brings together the DPSM, the Division of International Protection, the Division of External Relations and other stakeholders to provide coherent and focused support for the development and implementation of solutions strategies in the field. The Group will accompany the field in implementing these multi-year strategies with sustained technical advice and support. Its work will complement and reinforce our collaboration with governments and development partners on durable solutions.

Let me conclude here. I look forward to receiving the Committee's views and advice and answering any questions that you may have.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.