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Update on UNHCR's global programmes and partnerships

Background

UNHCR's global programmes, which are managed from Headquarters, support operations at the country level and are carried out in close collaboration with partners. This paper provides an update on developments in the global programme areas of public health; human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and reproductive health; nutrition and food security; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); settlement and shelter; education; livelihoods and self-reliance; energy and environment; information management; registration and biometrics; and cash-based interventions. UNHCR's objective is to improve the lives of refugees and other persons of concern by strengthening the technical quality, capacity and impact of its global programmes in these areas. In order to succeed, the Office relies greatly on strong and diverse partnerships, as detailed throughout this paper.

Earlier this year, UNHCR launched new five-year global strategies for public health, settlement and shelter, livelihoods, and safe access to fuel and energy, which have set the direction for global programmes in these areas through 2018. Enhancing the Office's capacity to respond to emergencies with timely and effective interventions in technical areas has been a key priority during 2014. Technical networks, which consist of experts from both UNHCR and standby partners, have helped the Office respond effectively to the complex crises which it is currently facing.

Updates on technical sectors

Public health

UNHCR's *Global Strategy for Public Health*[1] encompasses the four related sectors of public health; HIV and reproductive health; food security and nutrition; and WASH. It aims to ensure that all persons of concern have access to health care, prevention and treatment programmes, and other forms of life-saving assistance and essential services. It promotes access to national health care systems and new financing approaches, such as the enrolment persons of concern in health insurance schemes.

Working closely with host governments, UNHCR has pursued the integration of refugees into national health care systems in West Africa and the Middle East, as well as in Malaysia, Pakistan and the Russian Federation. Evidence drives policy development, decision-making and the overall implementation of the *Global Strategy*, making full use of *Twine*[2] – the backbone of information management in the areas of public health, nutrition and WASH.

UNHCR has strengthened monitoring of and response to outbreaks of epidemic diseases among refugees, including those fleeing the Central African Republic, South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic. UNHCR's *Operational Guidance on Mental Health and*

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[1] See http://www.unhcr.org/530f12d26.pdf.
[2] See http://twine.unhcr.org/.

Psychosocial Support Programming for Refugee Operations,[3] which was released in 2013, has helped address critical needs in this area in Bangladesh, Cameroon, Kenya and Malaysia. Other current initiatives include the development of clinical guidance and training on non-communicable diseases and new e-learning materials for field workers on the use of mobile technology.

HIV and reproductive health

Together with the World Food Programme (WFP), UNHCR continues to serve as a co-convener for "addressing HIV in humanitarian emergencies" under the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) division of labour. Current efforts include expanding regional capacity-building initiatives; promoting HIV mainstreaming in the global clusters for internal displacement; supporting contingency planning and emergency response; and developing a revised policy on HIV testing for refugees and other persons of concern.

UNHCR's advocacy for the inclusion of refugees in national immunization programmes will focus on ten countries in Africa and Asia, and the Office is coordinating its work with Gavi (the Vaccine Alliance) to also target these countries. These efforts will build on good practices, such as the vaccination of 2,600 refugee girls in Rwanda and Uganda against diseases related to human papillomavirus (HPV). UNHCR will also provide training to clinicians in five countries in order to scale up the screening and treatment of precancerous lesions of the cervix.

Nutrition and food security

Significant reductions in food rations for refugees in Africa have posed a major threat to their nutritional status and food security. Due to funding constraints this year, WFP has been compelled to reduce rations by up to 60 percent for some refugee populations. In response, UNHCR and WFP launched a joint advocacy campaign to draw attention to the need for resources, as well as to highlight the importance of granting refugees access to land for cultivation and increasing livelihood opportunities. Complementing these efforts, UNHCR and WFP are developing better strategies for targeting food assistance based on socio-economic indicators, and exploring approaches to build self-reliance and reduce food aid dependency through pilot projects in Chad and Uganda.

Improved programming for infant and young child feeding (IYCF) is critical to preventing malnutrition and promoting adequate growth and development among refugee children. Save the Children, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNHCR are developing an IYCF framework for refugee interventions in Bangladesh, Jordan and Kenya. Standard operating procedures for the use of breast-milk substitutes as well as an addendum to the operational guidance on the use of special nutrition products are also being issued to guide staff and partners.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

UNHCR is finalizing a new WASH manual to promote the timely and effective provision of clean water and related sanitation and hygiene services to persons of concern. New standard operating procedures will also guide staff and partners on pump testing, drilling and the operation and maintenance of boreholes. Drawing from the expertise of research institutes, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and universities, UNHCR is introducing innovative approaches to WASH in Bangladesh, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Jordan, South Sudan and Uganda. These initiatives include the use of renewable energy technologies, tools for costing the provision of clean water, monitoring systems for groundwater and water quality, studies on chlorine decay in water treatment, and hygiene promotion in nomadic refugee contexts. As an example, UNHCR and the Veolia

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[3] See http://www.unhcr.org/525f94479.html.

Foundation are developing a hybrid solar and fuel-powered water system in the Dollo Ado camps in Ethiopia to increase access to clean water, which is particularly scarce in this area.

Shelter and settlement

UNHCR's new *Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter*[4] is being introduced in key operations through the development of country-level strategies. Building technical capacity in the field is essential to successful implementation of the *Global Strategy*. So far this year, UNHCR has deployed experts to 18 countries to improve contingency planning, coordination, technical capacity and the quality of interventions, including through standby partner agreements. UNHCR is also enhancing the technical capacity of staff and partners with the roll-out of the first e-learning programme on settlement and shelter and a regional training for WASH and shelter experts in West Africa.

The *Global Strategy* also promotes innovative approaches to settlement and shelter. It uses a "master plan" approach, which seeks to ensure that refugee settlements are anchored within the broader economy, society, infrastructure and national systems for the delivery of basic services. UNHCR is working with Stanford University and Ennead Architects LLP to develop a master plan toolkit and pilot this concept in the field.

Through the *Global Strategy*, UNHCR is pursuing practical shelter solutions using locally-procured shelter materials and innovation through research and development. Ongoing collaboration with the Refugee Housing Unit (a subsidiary of the Swedish non-profit foundation SVID (Stiftelsen Svensk Industridesign)), with support from the IKEA Foundation, has led to the development of a new shelter prototype. Together with partner agencies, UNHCR is also piloting a new self-standing, metal-frame tent in three field operations.

In the context of internal displacement, the global shelter cluster – co-led by UNHCR and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) – is implementing its 2013-2017 strategy with substantial support from the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO), the Swiss Development Agency (SDC) and other cluster partners. UNHCR currently leads 10 of the 24 country-level shelter clusters worldwide. Strengthened surge capacity has allowed the global shelter cluster to rapidly deploy cluster coordinators and technical experts to 10 operations this year.

Education

Implementation of UNHCR's *Education Strategy 2012-2016*[5] has now expanded to 25 priority countries. It has achieved substantial progress in primary school enrolment, with a 10 per cent increase globally for the 2013-2014 school year. Enrolment in secondary school, however, is not progressing and has actually decreased in Uganda and the Dadaab camps in Kenya due to financial constraints. The *Strategy* has, nonetheless, catalysed efforts to strengthen technical capacity, with 31 education officers now working in UNHCR operations around the globe, up from only 7 in 2011.

The *Education Strategy* emphasizes quality, including through enhanced teacher training and the development of materials with the support of an inter-agency working group dedicated to this issue. UNHCR has also introduced e-readers in schools in Malaysia and the United Republic of Tanzania, community-managed information and communications technology (ICT) in schools in Kenya, and ICT youth programmes in Burundi. UNHCR and partners have provided over 500 refugees with access to recognized distance-learning programmes in Jordan, Kenya and Malawi.

Providing access to education in emergencies remains a priority and a key challenge. UNHCR and UNICEF are working closely together in this area and have jointly organized

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[4] See http://www.unhcr.org/530f13aa9.pdf.
[5] See http://www.unhcr.org/5149ba349.html.

workshops, technical support missions and expert deployments to respond to the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Syria emergencies, and to strengthen education in the Mali operation.

Livelihoods and self-reliance

UNHCR is working on implementing its new *Global Strategy for Livelihoods 2014-2018*[6], which will be rolled out in ten priority countries. National or local livelihood strategies are being developed, and field operations are establishing baseline data and undertaking market assessments to inform programming and ensure effective monitoring. The *Global Strategy* emphasizes the importance of forging new partnerships, including with the private sector, and advocating for the legal right to work.

A Livelihoods Advisory Board has also been established. Composed of senior experts from development organizations, research institutes and the private sector, it will advise on implementation of the *Global Strategy* and help link UNHCR to external technical expertise and new funding channels. Under the *Global Strategy*, UNHCR has launched a private online platform called "UNHCR Exchange" which gives refugees access to learning and supports employment and entrepreneurship. This innovative tool is also accessible to livelihood specialists and provides them with direct communication with refugees.

The "graduation approach,[7]" which was introduced earlier this year in Egypt and Costa Rica, is now being expanded to Ecuador. The Office is working with local universities and the private sector to identify job opportunities and carry out impact evaluations in these countries.

Energy and environment

UNHCR's new *Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE)*[8] is being introduced in Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda in 2014. Country-level and context-specific energy strategies are being developed in these countries to address fuel and energy needs that are shaped and driven by baseline assessments. The *Global Strategy* recognizes the linkages between improving access to fuel and energy and programming in other areas, such areas as education, health and livelihoods, as well the impact on protection. UNHCR will also continue to explore new and innovative approaches, such as carbon financing in Rwanda and the use of biogas in Bangladesh, and the use of low-tech lighting solutions, portable and rechargeable power sources and energy efficient stoves. To support implementation of the *Global Strategy*, UNHCR will continue to work closely with the IKEA Foundation and the SAFE Reference Group.[9] The Office is also exploring new partnerships with academic institutions and private sector companies that have experience in developing technological solutions in this area.

Information management

UNHCR's *Information and Data Management Strategy*[10], launched in 2012, has successfully anchored information management as an institutional competency within the

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[6] See http://www.unhcr.org/530f107b6.pdf.

[7] Pioneered by BRAC and piloted by the World Bank's Consultative Group to Assist the Poor and the Ford Foundation, the graduation approach seeks to "graduate" people in rural or urban areas out of poverty through a sequenced combination of livelihoods provisioning, capacity-building and microfinance. UNHCR is working on implementation with the NGO Trickle Up.

[8] See http://www.unhcr.org/530f11ee6.html.

[9] The SAFE Reference Group is a consortium involving the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, the Food and Agricultural Organization, the International Lifeline Fund, Mercy Corps, ProAct, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and the Women's Refugee Commission, among others.

[10] See data.unhcr.org/imtoolkit.

organization. The Strategy has allowed UNHCR to deploy expert staff rapidly, improve mapping and data visualization and launch operational web portals (available from data.unhcr.org) as a key communications and coordination tool for all major emergencies. This year, 150 staff members have been trained on information management in emergencies; most of them are already working in emergency operations. UNHCR has also trained 70 staff members in Africa and Asia through the Operational Data Management Learning Programme (ODMLP), and plans are underway to train 30 standby partner staff members. UNHCR plays an important role within inter-agency efforts to strengthen collaboration and common standards for information management. This year, the Office was fully engaged in initiatives by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to strengthen information management for needs assessment, protection, and population data and monitoring, within the framework of the Transformative Agenda.

Registration and biometrics

Plans for improving UNHCR's infrastructure for the management of population data advanced during 2014. UNHCR's updated refugee registration software, *proGres* v4, was field tested in Malawi during August to evaluate its performance under different connectivity scenarios. Feedback from users was positive. The software will be ready for rollout to the field by the end of 2014, and additional functionality and new features will be added during 2015.

A new global biometrics system is being developed and designed to work with challenging infrastructure and connectivity environments. It will provide greater accuracy and faster speeds of data verification, as well as allow for data-sharing across operations. The new biometrics tool is expected to be ready for progressive deployment to field operations in early 2015.

Cash-based interventions

UNHCR is building the foundation for the expanded use of cash-based interventions. This includes the establishment of a dedicated section at Headquarters, the deployment of experts to field operations and the development and rollout of new operational guidance and training.

UNHCR is working to develop improved methodologies and tools for coordinated needs assessments, programme design, and monitoring and evaluation. ECHO has provided an enhanced response capacity grant to UNHCR and other partners to implement cash-based interventions.

The Syria situation has provided an opportunity to explore new and innovative operational approaches in this area, including with respect to vulnerability assessments, socio-economic targeting and the use of common platforms for the delivery of cash programmes by multiple partners. UNHCR is introducing cash-based interventions in Ethiopia, Ghana, Sudan, Uganda and Zambia, and undertaking feasibility assessments in Djibouti and the United Republic of Tanzania. Most of these activities are being implemented under the UNHCR-WFP Cash and Voucher Joint Plan of Action for 2014.