

Remarks for the 70<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee meeting  
Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme  
Kelly T. Clements, Deputy High Commissioner  
Room XVIII, Palais des Nations  
21-22 September 2017

Mister Chairperson,  
Excellencies,

In the interest of time, I will limit these remarks to the broader management of the organization and will let my colleagues introduce the specifics of each agenda item.

I need not provide much context on the organisation and the environment in which we are operating. Suffice it to say that we continue to care for a record high 67.7 million displaced people, with the majority of refugees hosted in low and middle income countries. Our teams operate in multifaceted and often complex situations and operational contexts, as illustrated by the fact that, in the last twelve months, UNHCR has had to respond to, among other:

- staff members kidnapped and held hostage for 23 days in Western Sudan;
- damage caused to office premises in Kabul, Afghanistan, by the explosion of an improvised explosive device;
- a break-in to our premises in the northern Central African Republic during which personnel were held at gunpoint, and;
- staff members wounded in an attack on their vehicle in Mali.

Our teams on the ground remain dedicated in spite of risks and difficult conditions faced. We seek to provide these brave women and men with the greatest care and support possible and are reviewing options internally, which you will hear later from the Director of human resources management. UNHCR has also taken the lead, within the UN system, in working to improve the way in which United Nations entities discharge their duty of care towards personnel globally.

We continue to work hand in hand with close to one thousand partners to respond to needs relating to ongoing emergencies, and new emergency situations such as the developments in Myanmar since late August and large-scale arrivals in Bangladesh. Together we seek to respond nimbly to emergencies, remain engaged in protracted and less visible crises, and pursue in earnest solutions for the displaced.

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In many ways, the needs of displaced populations and support required by host countries and communities are similar to what they were in previous decades. But while basic needs have remained by-and-large identical, the context in which these needs must be met and the massive scale has fundamentally changed and requires that UNHCR itself adapt its approach to effectively seek protection and aid those we serve.

It is clear that UNHCR cannot deliver refugee protection and solutions alone. This, together with increased interest in forced displacement, is where change becomes imperative.

I have provided during previous Standing Committee meetings information about the genesis and main elements of the change process which was initiated by the headquarters review in late 2016. I have noted to this body before the transformation we seek to bring to UNHCR to allow the

organisation to respond to the needs of people of concern in a faster and more flexible manner, together with host governments and partners, including development actors.

In addition to the findings of the headquarters review, which state a number of concrete recommendations for change, our reform efforts are guided by the New York Declaration and the commitment to implement a comprehensive refugee response. It also complements the system-wide reforms initiated by Secretary General Guterres - both of which will have a major impact on UNHCR's role responding to forced displacement and its relation with development and humanitarian actors in that process.

Change management is led by the Director of Change Management, Daisy Dell, who will be able to draw on her previous field assignments in Africa, Asia and Europe, as well as Director of our Division of External Relations and of the Asia Bureau. In this process, Ms. Dell will be supported by a small team and will extensively involve colleagues from various headquarters and field locations. This process will benefit from close coordination with, and the leadership of, the High Commissioner and other members of the Senior Executive Team (SET).

I mentioned key workstreams of the change process in my opening remarks to the 69<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee meeting so will not reiterate these now. The change team has since identified priority areas of change, mapped out ongoing initiatives, and established a workplan. Task teams are being set up to carry this work forward.

The engagement of UNHCR personnel in this change process is critical to its success and the change team will ensure a broad representation of our workforce in this. The High Commissioner himself has conducted one town hall meeting with headquarters personnel before summer, and is planning another such meeting in the course of the coming week.

The change that we need and aim to achieve is ambitious and far reaching and I hope you will support us through this complex process. Importantly, this change is the continuation of, and reinforces, other reforms which have been initiated in recent months. Both my colleagues and I have flagged and discussed these changes in our contacts with you, including in recent Standing Committee meetings, informal consultative meetings and bilateral contacts but I want to take this opportunity to give you an update on these.

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As you well know, we have brought about considerable change in the way we manage our human resources. The most obvious is our new Recruitment and Assignments policy in the first half of 2017. The design of a new assignment framework was a significant undertaking and stemmed from the conclusion, a year ago now, of an independent review of the promotions policy. This review led to a decision to move from a rank-in-person promotions system to a rank-in-job system for career advancement in the organization for all grades in the international professional category from P-1 to D-1. The implications of this change for human resource management were wide reaching and we set-up a task force to elaborate a rank-in-job approach to appointments and assignments with substantial input from our workforce and in collaboration with the Joint Advisory Committee.

The new Recruitment and Assignments Policy and accompanying Administrative Instructions were released on 15 August 2017, with immediate effect. Changes introduced by this new policy aim to enhance our capacity to attract and retain a workforce meeting the organisation's current and future needs and committed to serving in a variety of locations, in particular hardship, high-risk and non-family duty stations. Key changes introduced include: the systematic consideration of gender and diversity goals at all stages of the selection process; a strengthened role and accountability for managers in the recruitment and assignment process; support and mitigation measures in relation

to unassigned staff members, and; expanded access to the Professional category for national colleagues as well as conditions under which members of our flexible workforce may apply to vacancies.

We have also continued efforts to reinforce strategic workforce planning to ensure we have the right people in the right places to meet the growing needs of the organization. The building blocks of this reinforced strategic workforce planning include using data to align skills to those needs, and nurturing our talent pools and pipelines, with particular attention to issues of diversity and gender balance.

We have strengthened collaboration among human resources, the Bureaux and Divisions, and initiated a systematic effort to look at the demand and supply for staff at UNHCR. We are identifying staffing gaps and defining a human resources strategy for some of our most critical functions. We have also engaged in leadership and succession planning, notably through a certification programme designed as a prerequisite for applying to senior leadership and management positions, as well as initial outreach to potential senior external candidates based on an informal referral system, with a view to building a senior external leadership pipeline.

We have redoubled efforts to ensure that UNHCR's workforce is as inclusive and diverse as possible. Work is ongoing to address the findings of the 2016 analysis of flexible workforce arrangements in UNHCR, and we have launched an "Affiliate Module" in our corporate Enterprise Resource Planning to further centralise our workforce management. As of 1 September, data relating to over half of our 4,000 flexible personnel had been recorded in the system and data entry will be completed before the year's end. Finally, we are in the process of developing key principles and minimum standards required for the efficient management of the flexible workforce, including a review of conditions of service for flexible personnel and an articulation of minimum standards on security, health, and welfare.

As we have worked to follow-up on the findings of our review of affiliate workforce, we continue to work to implement the recommendations of our review of gender equity, diversity and inclusion in our staffing. This review gave rise to the creation of a Senior Management Group to follow-up on the issue with the support of a Senior Advisor on Inclusion, Diversity and Gender Equity and significant progress has been made in the areas identified in the report and accompanying recommendations.

A recent survey of UNHCR's workforce on the subject of inclusion has allowed us to refocus our attention on developing the skills of leaders and managers to lead diverse teams more effectively; to foster a more inclusive workplace culture and to address issues relating to harassment, discrimination and misconduct. Rigorous analysis of workforce diversity data is being used in part to develop an accountability framework for leaders and managers to report on progress against gender and geographic targets.

The High Commissioner and his Senior Executive Team have released a video on inclusion, diversity and gender equity and the Senior Management Committee is leading the way by being the first group to participate in the roll-out of workshops on Inclusion, Diversity and Unconscious Bias. Ultimately, members of our workforce are increasingly involved in ensuring greater diversity across the organisation, including through the appointment of a member of our personnel to liaise with UN-GLOBE (a UN staff group representing LGBTI staff members) and the creation of an "Inclusion, Diversity and Gender Equity Challenge team," a multicultural and multigenerational group set up to

provide input and constructive challenge to the development and implementation of inclusion, diversity and gender related policies.

These efforts are driving a positive trend in gender diversity across the organisation and the representation of female staff members at senior levels. As a results of these, we saw the number of female staff at the P5 level increase by 3 per cent from late 2016 to mid-2017 and those at other levels follow, by and large, the same positive trend. However, the adjustment constituted by the introduction of the rank-in-job promotions policy, and the resulting promotion of personnel previously serving at a higher grade, has had a detrimental effect on the numbers related to female representation among P and D categories of staff, with a 7 per cent drop in female staff at the D1 level. While this is affecting numbers related to the gender balance of our workforce in the short term, we are confident that our efforts will continue to progress and that we successfully continue to move, in the medium term, towards an increasingly gender-balanced workforce.

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We have also continued work to reform oversight bodies following the review of oversight functions conducted in early 2016. I first shared information on those reforms to this body last September.

Since then, we have executed the transfer of relationship management with 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). We have taken the opportunity provided by this change to simplify and streamline existing procedures and processes, based in part on best-practices from other UN agencies and advice from the Independent Audit and Oversight Committee, whom we thank for its wise counsel.

Work is ongoing to strengthen auditors' technical knowledge and capacity, including in the realm of protection, to allow them to absorb effectively some of the functions previously carried out through standard inspections. These efforts include granting auditors access to online training activities and programmes as well as developing plans for them to shadow protection reviews and technical missions to the field.

The Inspector General's Office has also created, at no additional cost, a new Strategic Oversight Service and is currently in the process of recruiting staff for this Service. This Service's activities will serve to advise the Inspector General and the organization's senior management on eventual gaps, and making recommendations to address these. This will, in turn, feed into strategic reviews by the Senior Management Committee and absorb functions previously undertaken by the Internal Compliance and Accountability Committee (ICAC) which was dissolved in mid-2017.

Finally, as regards our suite of oversight bodies, we have worked to further define and map UNHCR's model of the three lines of defence. With OIOS' support, the initial phase of this mapping is focussing on the organisation's second line of defence which includes, among others, the roles and responsibilities of various headquarters entities including Divisions and Bureaux, as well as Regional entities. This will connect closely with the work undertaken by the change management team.

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Mister Chairperson,  
Excellencies,

We are undertaking change in these various aspects of the organisation, to allow UNCHR to become more nimble and responsive, better able to adapt to new challenges and opportunities as well as constraints, and to innovate in both our thinking and way of working.

While doing this, we continue to focus on meeting the immense and immediate needs of displaced populations around the world. These needs are reflected in our budget which, having been revised by the Executive Committee to 7,3 billion US dollars in October 2016, now stands at 7,9 billion dollars with seven supplementary budgets amounting to close to 779 million dollars and designed to meet needs for the Burundi, DRC, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Syria situations, as well as for Europe and North Africa. We are in the process of approving an additional supplemental budget for the Myanmar / Bangladesh situation as we speak.

I am compelled again to report a significant funding gap which currently stands at close to half of our total budget. This gap jeopardises our ability to meet displaced populations' critical needs and continues to force us to make difficult choices in prioritising humanitarian assistance. First and foremost, this affects the people we serve. Ultimately, this affects the countries and communities hosting these refugees and displaced populations, which share their sometimes meagre resources to meet urgent needs.

You have now received and reviewed our budget for the coming biennium which I am happy to say was positively received by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). This budget reflects comprehensive needs as assessed based on planning assumptions and the most likely scenarios regarding refugees and forced displacement worldwide.

In this process, we have had to contend with some levels of uncertainty, including as relates to the possible budgetary implications of increased engagement with development and humanitarian partners in the context of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. Yet another example of this uncertainty is the possible impact of the previously mentioned change process which, while not designed to cut costs, will result in some efficiency gains.

A year has now passed since the launch of the Grand Bargain at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, at which we committed to concrete deliverables to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our service delivery and strengthen results for the people we serve. We have already achieved our commitment to double the amount of funds programmed for cash-based interventions in aid delivery and remain confident we are on track to meet our targets on each of the workstreams in which we remain actively engaged.

Another variable which has already been reflected in this budget, to the extent possible, is anticipated cost savings where prior investments in operations allow us to reduce our operational footprint or reduce the cost of running operations. This is the case in Niger where significant investments have been made under the Nigeria and Mali situations in previous years, and in West Africa more generally, where the inclusion of refugees into development programmes is expected to allow for a lighter budgetary footprint for UNHCR in the region.

Finally, much has been said this year of the lower post adjustment level in Geneva, an issue which has also affected colleagues in field locations in recent years. This reduction in net remuneration of some 4.7 per cent will have a substantial and immediate effect on colleagues and their ability to care for their families. This measure has been implemented since August 2017 for newly assigned staff only, in line with the phased approach adopted by the International Civil Service Commission. The main impact on our budget will take place starting March 2018, when the lower post adjustment will progressively apply to all Geneva-based international staff. In the meantime, it is expected that

variations of cost of living and exchange rate fluctuations from now until March 2018 may result in a reduction of net remuneration of less than the current 4.7 per cent.

With needs remaining high, and our funding gap an unfortunately constant feature, we continue to seek diversity in our funding sources. You are familiar with the investment which the organisation has made in fundraising from the private sector in previous years. We remain committed to this approach and are increasing our investment in private sector fundraising in 2018 to grow the close to USD 400 million revenue raised this year ultimately to reach our target of USD 1 billion in revenue from private sector sources.

The record-high levels of funding your governments and the private sector have provided us this year reflects the considerable confidence you have in UNHCR. We are most grateful for this and committed to ensuring that UNHCR is best suited to meet the needs of refugees and displaced populations, both today and in the future. This is reflected in our commitment to change. A commitment to ensure that the organisation remains agile and nimble, able to protect refugees and find solutions, respond to new and emerging needs, and do so in a manner which is both inclusive and empowering.

Thank you.