

Item 5.
Programme budgets and funding

Introductory remarks at the Standing Committee meeting
of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme
Kelly T. Clements, Deputy High Commissioner
Room XIX, Palais des Nations
21-23 June 2016

Madame Chair,

Excellencies,

The recently released Global Report reviews our 2015 operations worldwide and the results of our collective efforts to protect and assist people of concern. As the report highlights, the ongoing Syrian conflict was the largest single driver of displacement in the year while new crises erupted in Burundi and Yemen, leading hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes in search of safety in neighbouring countries. All the while, old crises remained unresolved: including in the Central African Republic, South Sudan Afghanistan and Ukraine.

UNHCR responded by declaring 11 emergency situations affecting operations in 30 countries in 2015. The organisation deployed 460 emergency missions, involving both UNHCR and partner staff, in support of existing operations. In 2015, UNHCR received an unprecedented US\$ 3.4 billion in financial contributions, for which we are deeply grateful. Our requirements, however, stood at an all-time high of US\$ 7.2 billion to protect and assist 65 million persons of concern. Thus, in spite of the extraordinary support received, we faced a significant gap, with very real consequences for the people we serve.

In spite of these challenges, we were able to make some progress on a number of key issues. 98% of monitored sites met standards for child mortality rates among children under 5 years old and close to 60% of monitored sites reported increased or maintained enrollment rates of school-aged children. Fourteen countries enacted legislative changes enhancing the protection of asylum-seekers and refugees and close to 50,000 stateless people or people of undetermined nationality acquired a nationality or had their nationality confirmed.

But our task remains immense; over 12.4 million people were forced to leave their homes in 2015 alone. This amounts to 24 individuals worldwide displaced every minute during the year. By the end of the year, 65.3 million refugees were displaced worldwide, a 5.8 million increase from the previous year. About half of these refugees were children.

Hundreds of thousands of individuals embarked on a dangerous journey, crossing the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe in an effort to find safety. Overall, more than 1 million people arrived by sea in 2015. Tragically, nearly 4,000 died while undertaking this journey.

Madame Chair,

Since the Executive Committee approved an annual budget for 2016 of US\$ 6.5 billion in October 2015, additional needs have prompted an increased budget which now stands at US\$ 7.1 billion. Recent developments in various operations, including Europe, the Kenya/Somalia situation, Afghanistan, Central America, and Iraq, are such that UNHCR anticipates additional needs emerging over the course of the coming weeks and months.

To date, this year, we have received US\$ 2.2 billion, a historically high level of contributions recorded at this time of year. I would therefore like to thank you, UNHCR's donors, for this unprecedented level of support. In spite of this support, we continue to face substantial gaps, with often dramatic consequences: for example, in the Republic of Congo, for example, a mere 30% of the Core Relief Items needs for Central African Republic refugees can be met. The fact that our funding shortfall also prevents us from supporting income-generating activities further compounds the problem and refugees are left to fend for themselves in finding essential household items. This, in turn, exacerbates a number of risks faced by refugees, including sexual abuse and exploitation, early marriage and child labour.

Madame Chair,

UNHCR has responded to the historic shortfalls faced in recent years through a number of measures. This includes broadening our donor base, including through enhanced efforts to raise funds from the private sector. In 2015, UNHCR raised US\$ 284 million from the private sector, a 38% growth from the previous year. So far in 2016, results from private sector funding are positive, with US\$ 180 million raised to date and over US\$ 300 expected by year-end.

Efforts are being made to expand on our existing biennium planning and budgeting process to move towards a longer term planning and partnerships, including the six multi-year and multi-partner protection and solutions strategies you heard about earlier. Through these pilots, we are gaining experience with establishing a longer-term strategic vision, setting key targets and leveraging new partnerships. Going forward, we will expand the initiative to fifteen more country operations and will work to fulfill UNHCR's World Humanitarian Summit commitment to making this multi-year approach work, assuming your strong support.

We are already fully engaged in work to follow up on the recent World Humanitarian Summit and 'Grand Bargain' commitments. As you know, UNHCR made a set of concrete individual commitments in this context, including, inter alia, a commitment to transfer at least 25% of our operational expenditures to local responders, extending biometrics for refugee registration to 75 country operations, and doubling the amount of funding programmed for cash-based interventions. We are also engaged in discussions with sister agencies to harmonize the process of partner assessments, and both simplify and harmonize reporting requirements. Ultimately, this will ensure further improvements in the use of existing resources, both within UNHCR and among other humanitarian agencies.

Ultimately, we call on you to ensure that funding is provided in a timely and predictable manner to meet the extraordinary needs we currently face. On this I echo the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection's call on the first day of this session: predictable financing is critical to ensuring that all aspects of a comprehensive refugee response are fully realised. Similarly, I encourage you, UNHCR's donors, to ensure that funding provided is done so in a flexible, unearmarked manner, to allow UNHCR to meet the needs of all persons of concern: those fleeing new, visible crises, as well as those suffering through protracted or 'invisible' situations.

Thank you.