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Overview of UNHCR's global programmes and partnerships

A. Purpose

This paper provides an overview of UNHCR's efforts to promote technical integrity, introduce good practices and innovative approaches, and strengthen capacity and impact in the following technical sectors: shelter; education; public health; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); nutrition and food security; reproductive health and HIV; information management; livelihoods; and the environment. It also highlights the importance of engaging with development actors in promoting durable solutions.

B. Strengthening technical quality, capacity and impact

UNHCR is strengthening the technical quality of its programmes and building up its own and its partners' capacity, including in the context of emergency response. New or updated standards and policies, most often developed together with partners, are being introduced and training and support for technical staff and qualified professionals on the rosters of standby partners provided.

UNHCR's efforts to improve technical content and enhance impact depend on information gathered from the Field. Work is ongoing to further develop information-gathering mechanisms such as: *Focus* and the *Global Focus* business intelligence tool; the Health Information System (*webHIS*); WASH, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and education monitoring systems; the *proGres* registration software; and innovative approaches to surveys and data collection through the use of smart phones. UNHCR hosts the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS), and is helping to build capacity for data collection and evidenced-based policy development and programming in situations involving internally displaced persons (IDPs).

C. Updates on the technical sectors

Shelter and physical planning

A new Shelter and Settlements Section in the Division of Programme Support and Management (DPSM) is working to develop innovative, cost-efficient, light-weight and practical shelter solutions, bringing together academic and private-sector expertise.

In 2011, UNHCR improved the quality of camp development, shelter, and infrastructure activities, and supported the establishment of the Emergency Shelter Cluster through a total of 35 support missions to 14 countries affected by emergencies. This year, as part of its Shelter Strategy 2012-2015, UNHCR will provide targeted support to 18 countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Iraq, Sudan, South Sudan, and the Syrian Arab Republic.

UNHCR acts as co-lead of the global Emergency Shelter Cluster and as the cluster lead in nine countries. To further enhance predictability and strengthen capacity for the deployment of shelter and physical planning experts, UNHCR is working to expand partnerships and training programmes, drawing lessons learned from current field operations.

Education

UNHCR has developed a five-year Education Strategy 2012-2016 which aims to expand refugees' access to education with a focus on building relevant skills and knowledge which will enable refugees to live healthy, productive lives and strengthen their self-reliance.

During the initial phase of implementation in 2012, UNHCR will strengthen its support to 13 priority countries including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya and Pakistan. The Strategy also focuses on assessing levels of educational achievement, establishing baselines and measuring impact. Programmatic areas include: early childhood education; primary, secondary and tertiary education; and non-formal learning opportunities. UNHCR will promote protective educational environments and strategies for improving the retention of girls in school, in particular at the secondary level. A new tertiary education strategy is also being developed. The use of information communications technology will include: online books in schools to help develop literacy; certified distance-learning programmes; language training; classroom-to-classroom transmissions through Skype; teacher training and support networks.

Information management

11. UNHCR is launching an Information Management Strategy for 2012-2014 with the aim of dramatically strengthening its capacity to share information, coordinate information systems between different actors, and provide predictable information management services in the context of humanitarian response.

12. This will mean developing or expanding the use of innovative data-collection methodologies and data visualization technologies; training and capacity building; information dissemination; internal and inter-agency needs assessment systems; and policy development. A central pillar of the Strategy is to establish a network of information management specialists worldwide in regional offices as well as in the key country operations where UNHCR has cluster leadership responsibilities. The specialist network will also deepen UNHCR's capacity to deploy information management expertise and tools rapidly in new emergencies.

Public health

In 2012, UNHCR will continue to strengthen efforts to meet the immediate health needs of refugees and other affected populations, with a particular focus on emergencies. UNHCR's health response in emergencies emphasizes the control of communicable diseases, implementation of the Minimum Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health, and the provision of adequate mental health and psychosocial care. The Health Information System (*webHIS*) will be further expanded to include a global tracking system for disease outbreaks.

During 2012, UNHCR will advocate for access by persons of concern to public health services and national disease prevention and control programmes, building on the public health guidance for urban areas issued in 2011. Following an important development in the Islamic Republic of Iran that has enabled 300,000 Afghan refugees to gain access to insurance health coverage, UNHCR will provide guidance for other field operations to pursue similar initiatives. The *webHIS* will be expanded to cover urban areas in 2012.

Reproductive health and HIV

UNHCR has strengthened its maternal health programmes based on data collected in the *webHIS*, an in-depth analysis of maternal death audits in 10 countries, and multi-country

family planning studies in five countries. In 2012, UNHCR will focus on strengthening antenatal delivery and postnatal care, including access to emergency obstetric and neonatal services.

Ensuring access to preventative and curative HIV services for refugees and other displaced populations remains a focus in 2012. In addition to seeking to strengthen health and protection services of persons most at risk, UNHCR will advocate against laws and practices with serious protection implications for people living with HIV, such as mandatory HIV testing. UNHCR will continue to play an active role as a UNAIDS co-sponsor and member of the Working Group on Inter-agency Reproductive Health in Crises. It will also advocate for the integration of persons of concern into HIV funding mechanisms such as the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Global Fund and World Bank programmes.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

Since 2010, additional targeted resources have been dedicated to improving WASH standards in 11 UNHCR country operations with the most critical needs. To reinforce these efforts, 23 WASH expert positions have been created in key operations. UNHCR's capacity continues to be reinforced through the secondment of technical experts by partners, such as RedR Australia, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency and the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation. The Office is also working more closely with key technical partners such as the University of Neuchâtel, the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology, and the Centers for Disease Control.

Nutrition and food security

In 2012, UNHCR will invest further in the prevention of malnutrition, especially through the strengthening of infant and young child feeding programmes. Nutritional and anaemia surveys conducted in nine countries in 2011 will guide programme interventions. UNHCR is exploring opportunities for the use of direct cash transfers for food to meet nutritional needs and has established a plan of action with the World Food Programme (WFP). UNHCR and WFP will also develop a new food security training module and issue additional guidance on the Joint Assessment Missions (JAMs). The Office will also be developing an online nutrition and food security database.

Environment

Through the "Light Years Ahead" fundraising initiative launched in 2011, funding has been allocated for solar lighting and fuel-efficient stoves in seven African countries, benefitting some 185,000 refugees. Efforts will be pursued in 2012 to provide lighting and low-cost cooking methods which also bring benefits for security and income-generation in refugee camps. An assessment of existing and planned climate-change adaptation measures in the WASH and shelter sectors, focusing initially on East Africa, will continue in 2012.

Livelihoods and self-reliance

UNHCR's strategy for self-reliance includes working with the private and public sectors, as well as with development partners, in support of national and local development plans. In Tunisia, UNHCR has improved job opportunities in refugee-hosting areas through new partnerships with local public institutions and organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). In Cameroon, Senegal and Uganda, UNHCR has been working with local training providers to help build entrepreneurial skills among youth and women.

New operational guidelines on livelihood programming, microfinance, and refugee protection and solutions in urban areas were developed in 2011, together with a new livelihoods training programme. In 2012, UNHCR will expand its implementation of the multi-year livelihood strategies developed in five operations in 2011 to additional countries.

The Community Technology Access (CTA) programme currently provides refugees and local residents of host communities with computer skills for educational, employment, business and personal purposes in 42 centres in 22 countries. In 2012, another 15 countries, including Azerbaijan and Yemen, will establish CTA centres.

D. Engaging development actors in durable solutions

UNHCR is fostering joint programming with development actors, including UNDP and the World Bank, through the Transitional Solutions Initiative (TSI in eastern Sudan and Colombia. The Office is also working bilaterally to bridge humanitarian assistance and development programmes with other actors such as the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which has supported operations in Sudan, South Sudan and Kenya.

In 2012, UNHCR will enhance community-based peace-building and coexistence initiatives, recognizing not only the burden on host communities but also the positive effects of involving local communities in the process of integration and reintegration. The Secretary-General's Policy Committee adopted a decision on durable solutions which provides a new approach for UN agencies and the World Bank to work together on common strategies to achieve solutions for IDPs and returning refugees. The new approach will be piloted in three countries during 2012 and 2013.
