
**Executive Committee of the
High Commissioner's Programme**

Distr.: General
14 October 2022
English only

Standing Committee

**Eighty-fifth meeting
19-20 September 2022**

Held at the International Conference Centre Geneva (CICG), Geneva
Summary record*, Monday, 19 September 2022, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Salim Baddoura(Lebanon)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda (EC/73/SC/CRP.19)

1. **The Chairperson** declared open the eighty-fifth meeting of the Standing Committee. The agenda (EC/73/SC/CRP.19) was adopted.

Tribute to the memory of her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

2. **Ms. Nelson** (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) thanked the many delegations that had expressed their condolences in the difficult days leading up to the funeral of her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Her dedication and commitment to both national and international causes had been recognized by leaders around the world, showing that her country had lost more than a monarch. Beginning her reign when much of the world had been recovering from the horrors of the Second World War, in 1959 she had become patron of World Refugee Year, a UNHCR campaign that aimed to support displaced people worldwide. Indeed, her late Majesty had been present at the first meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in London in 1946. Throughout her reign she had championed development causes, and throughout her long life of service to her country, she had visited more than 100 countries and touched the lives of countless people across the globe. She had been the United Kingdom's greatest diplomat.

At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the Committee observed a minute of silence.

3. **Ms. Clements** (Deputy High Commissioner, UNHCR) extended her condolences, on behalf of UNHCR, to the people of the United Kingdom and to the family of her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Her death marked the end of a reign spanning 70 years, an era defined by change, instability and turmoil. She had been a reassuring presence and an anchor during a challenging period in history.

4. Recent history had been particularly challenging to the sense of peace and security that had been taken for granted in Europe. The experience of 12 million Ukrainians who had been uprooted from their homes served as a reminder that peace was fragile and that conflict could happen at any time, anywhere.

5. The perception that climate change would have consequences only in the future, for which there would be time to adapt and prepare, had also been challenged by the floods in Pakistan: more than 33 million people had been affected and more than 5.2 million were in need. Houses had been washed away and hundreds of thousands of people had been displaced. Extreme weather was already happening and causing people to be displaced.

6. It was against that backdrop of enormous needs that the call to serve was loudest. UNHCR was mandated to protect the forcibly displaced and the stateless. At the end of 2021, before the invasion of Ukraine, the number of people served by UNHCR stood at 94.7 million. By mid-2022, the number of people forcibly displaced had increased to over 100 million. Responding to the massive scale of displacement required UNHCR to show leadership and resolve and to constantly rethink and transform the way it worked. But it did not work alone. Together with over 1,100 partners, it was responding to growing needs across the globe. Thanks to the generous international response for Ukraine, UNHCR and its partners had been able to mobilize human and financial resources in record time, deploy emergency personnel, set up innovative cash programmes and support governments effectively. Life-saving relief continued to be provided to displaced populations inside and outside Ukraine, often despite the lack of safe access.

7. UNHCR was working harder and smarter than ever, seeking efficiency gains wherever possible, investing in change and transforming the organization. Oversight functions were being strengthened, financial discipline was tighter and the workplace culture was being reinvigorated, while systems, processes and policies were being modernized and adapted to the more than 550 dynamic environments in which the organization operated. The Business Transformation Programme was ambitious and left virtually no management stone unturned, from the enterprise resource planning operations to how relationships were managed with partners. Those tools had been redesigned and optimized as cloud-based solutions and would come online in the following months.

Simplification was driving the change that would bring better delivery and efficiencies.

8. In 2022, UNHCR operations had used COMPASS, the new approach to results-based management, for a second year. Multi-year plans for 2023 had been developed by 53 operations, 21 headquarters divisions and entities and seven regional bureaux – twice as many as in the preceding year. The preparation of multi-year strategies would simplify the planning process in future years, leading to longer-term time saving and to better planning and linkages between the work of UNHCR and its partners and stakeholders at country level. It would also bring UNHCR planning into closer alignment with national and United Nations planning frameworks.

9. The supply chain and procurement business process was being transformed with better forecasting, vendor management and price negotiation. Leaner delivery mechanisms and more efficient travel management were being espoused. A joint venture was being established with the World Food Programme to offer United Nations agencies light fleet as a service and, at country level, location-dependent services were being shared. Every opportunity was taken to test new processes and ground them in the reality of operations. Centralizing a cash hub in Geneva to manage and oversee all financial transactions in the Ukraine situation had removed the burden of creating cash teams in each country and of identifying, training and deploying qualified personnel, thereby enabling operations to focus on refugee and people-facing activities.

10. Successful transformation was not only measured in simpler processes or efficiency gains, but also in the engagement, diversity and commitment of UNHCR's workforce, bound together by values and commitment to the people it served. There was a belief in nurturing the skills and capacities of the workforce, providing space for teams to be innovative and to take risk-informed decisions. Risk was inherent in the work of UNHCR, which was often carried out in complex and unstable environments: thanks to the risk management 2025 strategy, colleagues had the tools to identify and prevent problems or to mitigate their impact.

11. Accountability and integrity were the cornerstones on which the success of UNHCR's risk transformation rested, providing a framework for ethical decision-making with the knowledge that misconduct could be safely reported and that there were clear rules for accountability and oversight to prevent fraud and harassment. It was critical that colleagues could safely report misconduct without fear of retaliation and in the knowledge that their grievances would be heard and action taken. In addition to the push for greater accountability internally, there was also close collaboration with the United Nations Board of Auditors, whose recommendations and guidance were welcomed. Following its examination of the financial statements prepared for the year, the Board had concluded that they presented fairly, in all material aspects, UNHCR's financial position and its financial performance and cash flows. The organization valued the insights provided by the Board and would continue to work to address its recommendations in a timely manner. Similar store was set by the insights and recommendations provided by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS).

12. With respect to funding, the consolidated budgetary requirements for 2023 amounted to \$10.2 billion, compared to \$10.5 billion for the programme budget for 2022. UNHCR was grateful for the \$4.6 billion in contributions received in 2021 and the high level of current support for its operations. The organization was on track to match in 2022 the level of contributions received in 2021 and appreciated the confidence shown by donors. There was nevertheless a growing gap between the needs identified and the resources received, with 44 per cent of budgeted needs for 2021 having been unmet. The problem had been compounded by a widening funding gap for all operations other than the Ukraine situation. Donor earmarking had shifted, and major operations had been affected in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq and Colombia, producing a direct and dramatic impact on the people UNHCR served: children were unable to go to school, refugees were losing access to shelter and health services. Cash assistance, IDP emergency shelter kits and even legal documentations were all critical services that would have to be stopped or scaled back. Impossible choices would have to be made.

13. UNHCR also remained concerned at the decreasing levels of the United Nations regular budget contribution, which was \$42.2 million for 2023. A decade beforehand, the contribution had represented 37 per cent of management and administrative costs, but in 2023 it was projected to represent only 22 per cent. That might not seem critical when viewed against a \$10.2 billion dollar budget, but every cent counted in the effort to raise funds to meet compelling needs.

14. She recognized the extraordinary commitment of the UNHCR team and partners in making a positive impact in the lives of forcibly displaced, returnee and stateless people. They worked in the face of hardship, often at great personal risk, and their dedication to the people they served was humbling. She thanked Member States for their interest in and steadfast support for the work of UNHCR, which the organization relied on in the present challenging times.

Programme budgets and funding

a. Update on budgets and funding (EC/73/SC/CRP.23)

15. **Ms. Shroff** (Director of the Division of Strategic Planning and Results, UNHCR) said that document EC/73/SC/CRP/23 provided an update on the budget and funding situation. As of 31 July 2022, the budget stood at \$10,704 million, representing an increase of \$170 million from the April budget of \$10,534 million. The increase had been due to a supplementary budget issued by the High Commissioner to meet growing needs, in particular as a result of the Ukraine situation. A significant number of contributions had been received since April and projected contributions had also improved. It was hoped that contributions would reach \$6 billion by the end of the year and that, despite the widening funding gap, UNHCR could offer a similar level of support to that of the previous year, when \$4.9 billion dollars had been spent across the world. In 2022, there were growing vulnerabilities due to inflation and increased food insecurity in some countries. Major operations, including in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Yemen, Jordan, Lebanon, Bangladesh and Colombia faced significant unmet needs.

16. The situation in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries continued to be dire and was compounded by natural disasters such as the earthquake in late June in south-east Afghanistan. UNHCR was working very closely with the Government of Pakistan to use the emergency stocks and supplies already put in place to help the Government to respond to the floods. Multi-sectoral needs assessments were under way and close to one million core relief items had already been released from stockpiles to the authorities. Longer-term support was also being provided in the form of shelter, school infrastructure and water, sanitation and hygiene.

17. Over 2 million had been assisted in Ukraine since February; 745,000 had been reached with essential food and non-food items, including winterization support. Over 550,000 people had been provided with cash assistance, while over 400,000 people outside Ukraine had received cash in addition to protection, identity and documentation assistance. Supplementary funding had been issued for Cameroon in 2022 but the situation was still significantly underfunded. Violence in the north had caused people to flee both within the country and into Chad. The situation there had already been dire, with multiple humanitarian, political and socioeconomic crises to which, in 2022, had been added severe fuel shortages, rising fuel costs, export limitations from neighbouring countries and a heavy reliance on imported grain. In spite of those challenges and its own limited resources, UNHCR had continued to deliver protection and assistance including civil documentation, health, shelter and water and sanitation, although more support was required.

18. In Ethiopia, the humanitarian situation in the north was of significant concern: security remained volatile and basic services were limited. It was estimated that about 6.2 million people were in need, in addition to the refugees already living in the region. Ethiopia was experiencing the most severe drought in 40 years which had contributed to escalating costs of fuel, transportation and commodities. Against that backdrop, UNHCR had stepped up its efforts, using unearmarked resources, reaching 1.7 million people with protection assistance, distributing relief items and continuing work on resettlement.

19. **Ms. Hyde** (Director of the Division of External Relations, UNHCR) said that UNHCR had started 2022 with a budget of \$8.99 billion which currently stood at a record-breaking \$10.7 billion after supplementary budgets had been launched for the situations in Afghanistan, Chad, Cameroon and Ukraine. However, by early September 2022, available funds were estimated to represent only 47 per cent of UNHCR's total needs and there was a sizeable gap between funds available and funds required to meet the most urgent and essential needs of people, especially those in crises that were far away from the spotlight.

20. She thanked all donors for having responded in a timely and generous fashion and for having

given UNHCR a great deal of discretion in how it could use the funds donated. Around 40 per cent of the funds received in 2022 had been flexible and 12.7 per cent had been fully unearmarked – a welcome and vital shift that had helped the organization to tackle emergencies and meet the most acute needs. She wished to thank in particular the Governments of Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany, whose unearmarked contributions in 2022 exceeded those of the previous year. She also wished to acknowledge the role of the private sector, which had contributed 40 per cent of unearmarked funding in 2022. The private sector had contributed \$625 million to UNHCR in 2021 but, as of 15 September 2022, that figure already stood at \$958 million, with the prospect that over \$1 billion would be raised before the end of 2022. It was very welcome news and highlighted the fact that the organization’s traditional donor landscape was shifting and that the private sector was a key stakeholder. In 2022, four private sector donors were set to replace four Governments in the list of the top 20 donors to UNHCR, representing a new trend. It was estimated that 20 per cent of the organization’s total income would be received from the private sector in 2022, an increase from 9 per cent in 2016. Altogether, in response to the different emergency situations that had recently arisen, over one million additional individual donors – philanthropic organizations, corporate bodies, etc. – had contributed to UNHCR since 2021, bringing the total number of donors close to four million. Donors were constituents of Member States and were showing that they believed in UNHCR’s work by stepping up their support, and it was to be hoped that Member States themselves would do likewise.

21. In June 2022, she had presented a report on underfunding which depicted the situation for UNHCR as extremely tough. In 2021, the underfunding rate had been at its highest level since 2015, with the largest funding gap ever in absolute terms. Funding had since come through from some countries, notably the United States of America, and often in the form of flexible funding, which was very welcome. Nevertheless, with the exception of the Afghan and Ukraine situations, UNHCR operations in all regions were more underfunded now than in September 2021. Many operations had already undertaken austerity measures, reducing core relief items and the scope of goods and services, just as inflation, food shortages and, in some climates, the onset of winter were beginning to take their toll. Recognizing the burden placed upon the host countries, she thanked them for their generosity.

22. The situation of displaced persons in Lebanon, Jordan, Yemen, Ethiopia, Uganda and Bangladesh was of particular concern. In Lebanon, Jordan and Yemen, UNHCR was now unable to provide the same amount of cash assistance as in the same period in 2021—\$180 million less, affecting some 1.7 million forcibly displaced people in the region. In Lebanon, the world’s biggest refugee-hosting country per capita, nine out of 10 refugees lived in extreme poverty and 96 per cent were food insecure with limited access to basic services, including water, education and health. Jordan, which hosted some 760,000 refugees, was the country with the second largest number of refugees per capita. Refugees living outside of camps were facing three times the number of eviction threats as in 2018. Yet reduced funding would mean that one in five refugees needing cash assistance in Jordan would not receive it. In Yemen, the war which had begun in 2015 had devastated the country and created a vast humanitarian crisis. Two thirds of the population were dependent on humanitarian assistance and 7.3 million were expected to be at emergency hunger levels by the end of 2022. UNHCR’s operation in Yemen was almost twice as underfunded as in 2021 and if funds were not received immediately, 70 per cent of the 90,000 vulnerable displaced Yemeni households would not receive cash support.

23. UNHCR was short of \$125 million for the purchase of core relief items and shelter for the drought-stricken region comprising Ethiopia and Uganda in which 20 million people had been plunged into food insecurity. Ethiopia was suffering one of the world’s most acute displacement emergencies following the conflict that had erupted in Tigray and the worst drought in 40 years which was affecting 24.1 million people. Affected populations included internally displaced people, refugees and their host communities, which were already experiencing a reduction in food assistance due to funding shortfalls and a global economic crisis that had seen drastic increases in commodity prices. There was a need to step up support for new arrivals, including shelter and cash assistance to cover nutrition deficits.

24. As Africa’s largest refugee-hosting country, Uganda was a global leader in peaceful coexistence and the settlement of refugees within host communities. Without additional funds for

Uganda, UNHCR would be unable to provide salaries for teachers and medical workers in the fourth quarter of 2022, which would result in overcrowded classrooms and an increased risk of children, especially girls, dropping out of school, with potential implications for child marriage and gender-based violence.

25. Finally, turning to Bangladesh, she said that 2022 marked five years since over 700,000 Rohingya refugees had fled Myanmar for Bangladesh. Cox's Bazar, one of Bangladesh's poorest districts and home to the world's largest refugee camp, was overcrowded, many refugees remaining fully reliant on humanitarian assistance for survival. Severe underfunding could undermine recent advances in the provision of education and water supplies. The global increase in fuel prices could force refugees to rely once again on collecting firewood, potentially leading to deforestation and exposing women and girls to higher risks of gender-based violence.

26. Against a backdrop of growing vulnerability, unprecedented forced displacement and even greater underfunding, UNHCR was in ever greater need of Member States' support. The humanitarian response to Ukrainian refugees and displaced persons had set a new standard, not only for funding but also for public and political solidarity; displaced communities in forgotten situations deserved the same. Exceptional circumstances called for exceptional support.

27. **Ms. Mbirimba** (African Group statement) took note of the increase in the annual budget for 2022, including the supplementary budgets established in support of the Afghanistan, Cameroon and Ukraine situations. However, as African countries continued to receive millions of refugees and other displaced persons, they should be supported in helping and protecting forcibly displaced persons using sustainable solutions in accordance with the Global Compact on Refugees. In that regard, she reiterated the importance to the African Group of the principle of predictable, equitable, effective and efficient burden- and responsibility-sharing in solidarity with host countries. The Group welcomed the voluntary contributions already recorded for the budget year 2022 and encouraged donors that had not yet done so to honour their voluntary contribution commitments by the end of the year. The Group also encouraged donors and Member States alike to continue to respond generously, and in a spirit of solidarity, to the High Commissioner's call for resources to meet the needs of persons of concern to UNHCR in 2022.

28. **Ms. Atteya** (Arab Group statement) said that, while appreciative of UNHCR's efforts to secure funding, the Arab group was deeply concerned by the gap between funds required and funds available. That shortfall translated into prolonged suffering for refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons around the world and intensified struggles for their host societies and communities. The Group noted in particular the decrease in available funding for supporting voluntary return and resettlement in the Middle East and North Africa region, which suggested that the budget should be reconsidered. The region continued to experience protracted humanitarian crises, while hosting around 16 million people who relied on UNHCR's services. Their protection in accordance with established legal provisions was essential. The Group called on UNHCR to provide sustainable and just solutions for displaced persons and support for host communities to alleviate their burdens. The Group also called on Member States to honour the voluntary commitments made during the Global Refugee Forum in 2019, which donor Arab States would also duly honour. The Group further called on Member States and other current and potential donors to provide UNHCR with resources, including unearmarked contributions, to allow for all the essential needs of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons to be met, as well as for the necessary support for host communities to be provided.

29. The Arab Group expressed its support for the victims of the humanitarian crises in Pakistan and Somalia. Those crises showed the need for renewed international efforts to address the root causes of displacement and for increased humanitarian support. The Group recalled the importance of addressing the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine in a manner that did not adversely affect the activities or development funding of UNHCR.

30. **Mr. Driessen** (Netherlands) took note with concern of the funding challenges currently faced by humanitarian organizations and suggested that one of the root causes was the fact that most donors – including private sector donors – provided heavily earmarked funding. Recent crises tended to be overfunded and responding agencies, including UNHCR, tended to adjust programmes according to the availability of funding rather than the global hierarchy of needs. That vicious cycle

must be broken through a combination of good stewardship of funding and less earmarking, thereby allowing funds to be allocated where they were most needed. The Netherlands called on all present and potential donors to provide UNHCR with at least 30 per cent unearmarked funding in line with the Grand Bargain. He requested more information on UNHCR's current strategy for improving stewardship of funding and increasing unearmarked funding from donors, both State and private sector, especially from those providing mainly earmarked funding.

31. For its part, the Netherlands had raised its contributions to a record 512 million euros for 2022 and would continue, as in previous years, to provide multi-year unearmarked contributions. It would also continue to make a portion of its development budget available to UNHCR to enable UNHCR to participate in the humanitarian-development nexus, through which complementarities between the mandates and expertise of different actors were sought. In line with its core protection mandate, UNHCR should try to find a way to add value in the nexus; it could play a key role in linking diverse actors – including those in finance – in a manner that ensured consideration of the most vulnerable populations affected by forced displacement. Similarly, UNHCR could play an important role in localized humanitarian responses, securing partnerships with both local and international actors who could ensure that protection standards were met and humanitarian principles respected. The Netherlands encouraged UNHCR to support local actors in adopting a leading role in coordination and decision-making mechanisms to ensure the inclusion of local voices in response design.

32. **Ms. Ramboll** (Norway) emphasized the importance of a strong and effective UNHCR staying and delivering amid unprecedented challenges for the humanitarian system. Norway commended UNHCR for planning and implementing a budget against a backdrop of constantly changing needs and challenging levels of cash flow. Norway recognized the high implementation rate for 2022, acknowledged the tough prioritization exercised by UNHCR and valued the emphasis placed on underfinanced programmes and country situations in communication with donors. It also recognized efforts made to mobilize record levels of private funding for the Ukraine crisis.

33. Referring to the focus on ways to work smarter and the steps taken toward further enhancing efficiency and effectiveness, which Norway supported, she requested information on the effects of the new budget format using the COMPASS software, and on the recommendation of the Board of Auditors regarding follow-up on the impact and costs of the decentralization and regionalization processes. Norway would also welcome information on whether the resources allocated to control, integrity and functions in the budget for 2023 were sufficient to provide for UNHCR's complex operations and risk environment. Stronger monitoring and control systems and capacity-building in the field were needed to mitigate residual risk and ensure impact. While welcoming the increase in UNHCR funding, including through private sector partnerships, Norway emphasized the need to continue to diversify funding sources and to increase the quality of funding. For its part, Norway would continue to contribute flexible, unearmarked and multi-year funding to UNHCR.

34. **Mr. Kadmiri** (Morocco) said that the total number of persons of concern to UNHCR was projected to increase to a record 117.2 million in 2023; 29 million would be refugees. Most alarming was the fact that 85 per cent of refugees were in countries of the south, often near zones of conflict. Africa alone accounted for more than 30 per cent of the total number of refugees worldwide. His delegation accordingly welcomed the record implementation rate of 95 per cent which demonstrated UNHCR's capacity to rapidly deploy funds as soon as they became available, although the growing funding gap was regrettable. Morocco welcomed UNHCR's intention to strengthen early cooperation with international financial institutions and development actors as part of its multi-year planning. It encouraged UNHCR to increase its efforts to broaden its donor base in line with the principle of burden- and responsibility-sharing and to continue to explore innovative means of mobilizing resources to gain additional financing.

35. Despite budgetary difficulties, Morocco had continued to make voluntary contributions in response to major humanitarian crises in order to alleviate the suffering of forcibly displaced persons worldwide. Since 1993, it had been opening field hospitals and providing medical services across the African region. On 13 April 2020, His Majesty the King had launched an initiative to improve health systems and strengthen solidarity among African Heads of State.

36. **Mr. Olfato** (Philippines) noted with concern that some countries and regions continued to be

underfunded, a challenge that was being magnified by increasing forced displacement around the world, including in Ukraine, that compelled UNHCR to prioritize the allocation of limited resources. While hoping for an end to armed conflict and the ability to address other challenges, such as climate change, the Philippines called on Member States and other donors to heed the call by UNHCR for further support, including through unearmarked contributions that afforded maximum flexibility. While noting the increase in voluntary contributions in 2022 compared with 2021, the Philippines also acknowledged with concern the decrease in the budget for many areas, including the Asia and the Pacific region and Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Bangladesh, where there were either new challenges or protracted displacement. The Philippines supported efforts by UNHCR to broaden its donor base to include non-governmental organizations and private entities as well as the so-called missing middle: Member States and private organizations that could still scale up their contributions to burden- and responsibility- sharing. Finally, the Philippines invited UNHCR to provide more information on how it was leveraging non-traditional funding sources.

37. **Mr. Alaqeel** (Jordan) said that his country valued its partnership with UNHCR, through which it endeavoured to provide services to the almost 1.3 million Syrian people living in Jordan, ten per cent of them in refugee camps. He acknowledged the role played by UNHCR in supporting those refugees and keeping their cause high among international priorities. Regarding the funding gap, he said that reduced contributions or reduced earmarking were not the solution; rather, a solution must be found to ensure that the funding itself was sustainable and allowed UNHCR and host countries to cope with ever-developing crises. Jordan expressed thanks to donor States for their generous support. However, the ever-deteriorating support for refugees in the Middle East and North Africa region was a source of concern, as it resulted in an increased burden on host countries. Jordan called on donor States to continue and, where possible, increase their funding to United Nations programmes and response plans in line with the principle of burden- and responsibility-sharing. Funding the creation of an environment that promoted stability and fostered voluntary return was key, as was making provision for refugees until such as time as voluntary return was possible. For its part, Jordan had adopted a holistic approach to serving the needs of both refugees and host communities that was based on resilience, taking into consideration myriad social and economic impacts. During his recent visit, the High Commissioner had commended Jordan for its uncommonly extensive efforts to integrate refugees.

38. **Mr. Karhu** (Finland) said that the steady increase in the programme budget over the past decade reflected an alarming trend towards increased humanitarian needs. Present challenges were particularly acute: Europe was witnessing the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War. Protection needs in other parts of the world – which must not be, and had not been, forgotten – were also at record high levels. In that context, the continuous funding gap was a matter of concern. Finland thanked UNHCR for its efforts to seek cost efficiencies, including through synergies within the United Nations system, and to set priorities among its activities. It commended UNHCR for implementing a more robust results-based and multi-year planning system to contribute to the increased effectiveness of its operations.

39. At the same time, Finland encouraged UNHCR to continue to expand its donor base and called on more States to support UNHCR financially. The significant increase in private sector funding in 2022, largely as a reaction to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, was encouraging. To ensure the long-term sustainability of such funding, investment in private sector partnerships and awareness raising was key. Further deepening partnerships with the development system, including international financial institutions, was also important. Finally, flexible funding was of crucial importance to enable UNHCR to run its operations. Accordingly, Finland had provided a significant percentage of its funding either as unearmarked core funding or softly earmarked funding.

40. **Mr. Lacroix** (France) said that a strengthened, focused and more flexible budget was fundamental to enabling UNHCR to fulfil its mandate and contribute effectively to the application of the recommendations of the Global Compact on Refugees. France welcomed the demonstrated ability of UNHCR to react, adapt and respond to persons affected by emerging crises, such as the high numbers of displaced persons following Russian aggression in Ukraine. For its part, France had significantly increased its financial contributions to UNHCR in 2021 and continued to make substantial contributions to UNHCR programmes, particularly those addressing the most acute crises, such as those in Ukraine, the Sahel, Afghanistan and the Syrian Arab Republic. France

welcomed the partnerships between UNHCR and the private sector and development actors, such as the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the French Development Agency, as part of an approach in line with the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.

41. **Ms. Kibere** (Uganda) said that her country was concerned about the decrease in funding for the refugees it hosted and urged potential donors as well as existing donors not to forget the long-term hosting countries in the wake of emerging crises.

42. Uganda welcomed the small increase in funding allocated to the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region for impact area 3, empowering communities and achieving gender equality. However, there had been no increase for the remaining three impact areas, and she appealed for realignment. Amid pressure from its population and its own economic crisis, Uganda needed increased funding and international support. If funding for Uganda continued to dwindle, it would be forced to reconsider its open-door policy.

43. While she welcomed the recognition by the Deputy High Commissioner in her opening remarks of the importance of addressing climate change, the situation on the ground in Uganda was complicated. Refugees hosted there continued to rely largely on firewood and charcoal as sources of energy. She called for the fuel needs of refugees not to be forgotten when considering the issue of climate change. Moreover, as mentioned by the Director of the Division of External Relations, one of the effects of a reduction in funding for Uganda would be failure to pay teachers' salaries, meaning fewer teachers, a higher drop-out rate among girls and an increase in child marriage and early pregnancies.

44. Uganda was proud of the role it continued to play to support refugees as a host country; history would be kind and recognize that Uganda had stood with humanity even when the country was unsure it could feed its own citizens. Uganda refused to be counted as a bystander. It appealed to the international community to implement the principles of the Global Compact on Refugees, particularly that of burden- and responsibility-sharing, and to jointly contribute to supporting refugees in their hour of need.

45. **Ms. Stasch** (Germany) said her country remained concerned by the magnitude of humanitarian protection needs across all regions, as highlighted by the representative of Uganda, and also by the estimates of increasing numbers of persons of concern to UNHCR. Germany recalled that the Russian war of aggression had caused the displacement and suffering of millions of Ukrainians and had greatly contributed to increased humanitarian needs worldwide. While thanking donors for their contributions, she said that increased efficiencies were needed and could be achieved not only through flexible funding for UNHCR but also through efficient coordination between UNHCR and other United Nations agencies, development actors and non-governmental organizations along the humanitarian–development–peace nexus. Systematic coordination and division of labour between different actors could save costs in humanitarian operations. Germany welcomed the achievements of UNHCR in attracting private sector contributions and remained interested in efforts to render such contributions a sustainable part of support to the world's most vulnerable populations. It invited UNHCR to suggest meaningful ways in which to foster systematic cooperation and coordination between governments and development agencies to utilize the comparative advantages of the various actors.

46. **Mr. Argash** (Ethiopia) said that his country hosted over one million refugees and asylum seekers, most of whom relied fully on humanitarian food assistance. Continual budget cuts and the subsequent reductions in food and cash assistance were seriously affecting the lives of refugees, placing them at risk of chronic hunger and sexual exploitation and fuelling conflict between refugees and host communities, who were forced to compete over scarce local resources. Those resource constraints were undermining Ethiopia's progress towards refugee self-reliance and the coexistence of refugees and host communities.

47. Burden- and responsibility-sharing was inequitable and there were significant gaps in international cooperation. Most refugees were hosted by just over a dozen countries, which experienced challenges in meeting the needs of their own citizens, and only a few donor countries shouldered the responsibility of providing financial and technical support. It was therefore essential to broaden the support base and solicit more stakeholders to promote more equitable, predictable

and sustainable burden-sharing.

48. The budget increment for 2023 was not in line with demand on the ground or the global context. Owing to budget cuts, food insecurity had risen among refugees and was further aggravated by limited food availability globally, rising costs of food and energy, economic shocks, conflict and insecurity. Adequate and unearmarked resources were required to enable UNHCR to carry out its mandate effectively. Ethiopia expressed concern about the chronic underfunding of UNHCR and encouraged it to redouble its efforts to broaden its donor base, increase contributions from the private sector and deploy innovative ways of resource mobilization. Lastly, Ethiopia appealed to donors to provide adequate, needs-based and flexible funding.

49. **Mr. Widmer** (Switzerland) said that since underfunding had become a chronic problem, the programme budget for 2022 and projections for 2023 risked being inaccurate. It was right that the budget should increase to address growing needs and crises, and the reasons for the increases had been well documented. However, they attested to the importance of realistic budgetary planning in order to address the growing gap between needs and available resources. The mobilization of additional funds, particularly from the private sector, was vital in that regard, despite the difficult global economic situation directly and indirectly resulting from the crisis in Ukraine. The intensity of that and other crises called for an increase in unearmarked funding to ensure that UNHCR could reallocate resources with greater flexibility, and he called on donors to provide multi-year unearmarked funds wherever possible.

50. **Ms. Atteya** (Egypt) said that as a refugee hosting country, Egypt emphasized the importance of predictable and equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing and the need to identify durable solutions for refugees. Her Government continued to shoulder social and economic responsibility for a large number of refugees and asylum-seekers and therefore commended UNHCR's efforts to secure funding sources for ongoing situations. However, she expressed alarm regarding the persistent funding gap, which would have a negative impact on the effectiveness and sustainability of UNHCR operations and would compromise the dignity and protection of refugees and host communities. She called on the donor community to increase unearmarked contributions to host countries and to raise quotas in resettlement programmes.

51. While the supplementary budgets in support of the situations in Afghanistan, Cameroon and Ukraine had been necessary, she urged the international community to continue to support protracted crises and to increase unearmarked support to countries most in need. She welcomed the recognition of resettlement as a key area of protection and response for communities most at risk, but emphasized the need to take into account refugees and asylum-seekers from protracted situations who currently had little hope of return. With regard to the prioritization of protection for people displaced by climate change and natural disasters, she encouraged UNHCR and Member States to engage fully with global climate change processes and to ensure synergies between them. The proposed budget for 2023 contained an increase in the resources allocated for activities in her country, and she urged UNHCR to prioritize funds for registration and status determination units, the transition to a national asylum system and resettlement programmes.

52. **Mr. Garratt** (United Kingdom) acknowledged the increasing challenges presented by the growing funding gap, including when making decisions on where to prioritize the allocation of funds. The growth in humanitarian need had outpaced that of funding, exacerbated by the increase in the severity and nature of crises, armed conflicts, climate-related disasters and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The disregard of international rules and norms had deepened humanitarian needs and prevented populations from accessing critical assistance. The United Kingdom would remain a top donor, including providing unearmarked funding, and was committed to finding new ways to meet global humanitarian challenges.

53. **Mr. Gul** (Pakistan) took note of the savings made from the reorganization of systems and expressed the hope that the use of new information technology tools would further enhance UNHCR's efficiency and effectiveness. He welcomed the positive trend towards flexibility of donor contributions by ensuring that funds were unearmarked or softly earmarked. However, he noted the overall decrease in the proposed budget for 2023 for operations in Pakistan and urged UNHCR to review that allocation in light of the recent flooding in his country, which had affected both refugees and host communities; it had necessitated an urgent response and would require a sustained period

of recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Given the 1 per cent decrease in budgetary allocations for repatriation activities and the 5 per cent increase for resettlement and complementary pathways, he asked how the proposed programme budget for 2023 would meet the recommendations contained in the 2021 Global Compact on Refugees indicator report. The challenges facing developing countries that were hosting large refugee populations had been compounded by conflicts, rising energy and food prices, climate-induced disasters and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. He urged donors and UNHCR to ensure that sufficient resources were allocated to such countries to meet their needs, particularly as some refugee situations had been underfunded since 2021.

54. **Mr. Ishida** (Japan) expressed deep concern that the funding gap seemed to be growing every year, as was the number of people in need. However, partnerships with the private sector had been successfully expanded in many countries, including his own. He expressed appreciation for UNHCR's efforts to promote such partnerships, which he hoped would lead to long-term assistance for refugees. He acknowledged UNHCR's initiative to enhance organizational and operational cost efficiencies through innovations such as the Business Transformation Programme and the United Nations common fleet of vehicles.

55. **Mr. Ferzli** (Lebanon) shared the concerns expressed by UNHCR and other Member States regarding the underfunding of acute refugee crises in the Middle East and highlighted the fact that refugees and host communities were suffering as a result. While he thanked donors for their continuous support, he said that the refugee crisis in his country remained underfunded. The protracted nature of that crisis had aggravated the financial and economic situation in Lebanon, and no meaningful durable solution had been identified. He called for more, predictable and equitable burden sharing, and urged the international community to seek a durable solution, which should prioritize the safe and dignified return of refugees.

56. **Mr. Banzet** (Canada) recognized that the increasing number of displaced persons globally placed a strain on the international community's capacity to respond and expressed concern at the growing gap between the needs of displaced persons and the resources available to meet them. Commending efforts to identify efficiencies, develop partnerships and establish a results-based budgeting system, he asked how the remaining gaps would realistically be addressed, without damaging gains in other areas such as gender equality. Investing in women and girls was the most effective way to respond to forced displacement. Calling for transparency concerning the process of prioritizing UNHCR's strategic directions, he asked how donors could support UNHCR in that process.

57. In view of the importance of flexible funding to ensure that UNHCR was able to respond to evolving emergency situations, he said that Canada was proud to be a top donor to UNHCR, including through multi-year unearmarked and softly earmarked funding. He encouraged UNHCR to continue to develop multi-year partnership agreements. Finally, he acknowledged the need to continue to support underfunded and forgotten protracted humanitarian crises; his Government would continue to allocate humanitarian funding through a principled approach, proportional to the needs and severity of crises.

58. **Mr. Smith** (United States of America) called upon all donors to ensure that UNHCR had sufficient funds to sustain its operations and urged UNHCR to continue to seek efficiencies and ensure a high budget utilization rate. His Government would continue to support UNHCR's work and commended its emphasis on durable solutions in the proposed budget for 2023. All Member States should redouble their commitment to durable solutions, which should include resettlement.

59. Concerning the proposed budget for 2023, he welcomed the focus on adapting to the challenges of climate change-related displacement and the corresponding budgetary allocations for strengthening emergency preparedness and resilience and developing sustainable housing and settlements for UNHCR's populations of concern in the East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region and eastern and southern Africa. The attention paid in the 2023 programme budget to protection and gender-based violence was welcome; the allocation of additional resources to combat gender-based violence and provide services for survivors remained crucial. He welcomed UNHCR's commitment to providing increased resources to bolster mental health support for its staff, which enhanced staff wellbeing and thus the larger humanitarian response. Finally, he commended

UNHCR's statelessness advocacy but expressed concern regarding the continued underfunding for statelessness activities, particularly in country operations. UNHCR and its Member States should prioritize resources in that regard and for other protection priorities.

60. **Ms. Moruke** (South Africa) said that one durable solution to refugee situations would be to address the root causes of displacement. Concerning the proposed programme budget for 2023, she said that sufficient amounts should be allocated to ensure that targets relating to UNHCR's key initiatives for the period 2022–2026 were met. The conflict situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the Cabo Delgado region of Mozambique were of grave concern and had been exacerbated by extreme weather conditions. Those situations warranted a strengthened emergency response from UNCHR and corresponding budgetary allocations. South Africa adhered to its commitments resulting from the first Global Refugee Forum in 2019, despite facing the global challenges of inflation, food and energy prices and the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Finally, noting that the proposed programme budget for 2023 contained an increase in budgetary allocations for community engagement and women's empowerment in the Americas and Europe, she asked whether her region had been allocated an amount under that outcome area 7. She requested the Secretariat to provide a breakdown of allocations per outcome area in the Africa region.

61. **Ms. Noureddine** (Algeria) encouraged donors to support UNHCR in order to meet the objectives of the programme budget and emphasized the importance of unearmarked financial contributions in the management of protracted situations and humanitarian emergencies alike. Her Government continued to honour its protection obligations under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. She invited UNHCR to adapt its financing to the real number of Sahrawi refugees which, according to various publications, exceeded 90,000, but in reality was much higher. She welcomed the call to strengthen food assistance in Algeria and address the persistent funding gaps in her and other countries. Lastly, she urged UNHCR to strengthen its efforts to provide humanitarian assistance and ensure the opportunity for the voluntary return of refugees, in accordance with international law.

62. **Mr. Lemerle** (European Union as observer), speaking as a donor, expressed concern regarding the magnitude of humanitarian and protection needs across all regions, which had been further aggravated by the global consequences of the war in Ukraine, and noted UNHCR's warning that it could be forced to reduce its protection and assistance delivery. The largest projected increase of refugees by 2023 was expected to be in Europe. The European Union would continue to work to address the complex situation in the east of Europe and all areas affected by the global consequences of the Ukraine crisis. UNHCR should provide regular updates on the impact of those consequences on operations and the prioritization of resources, including the criteria used in case of funding shortfall. He asked whether the prioritization of life-saving activities that had been applied in the COVID-19 context would be rolled out more broadly.

63. He requested more information on the outcome of discussions between United Nations agencies to harmonize cost categories. UNHCR's budget must be based on needs and take account of its implementation capacity and areas of inter-agency collaboration. A collective effort would mean that more needs could be met and responses could be better focused. He asked whether discussions had been held with other United Nations agencies about how to address the growing funding gap; such collaboration, including with regard to expanding the donor base, should be encouraged. He welcomed the expansion of the private sector partnership service and UNHCR's implementation of its Grand Bargain commitment on localization.

64. Referring to the proposed programme budget for 2023, he asked how UNHCR intended to maintain policy priorities given the decreases in some allocations. He requested more information regarding the parameters of the transition to a reduced level of cash-based interventions in Afghanistan and Ukraine. Noting the proposed budgetary increases for self-reliance, economic inclusion, livelihoods and securing solutions, he said the European Union encouraged UNHCR to further mobilize development actors and international financial institutions, including in relation to the Global Refugee Forum in 2023. Finally, he welcomed the attention given to preventing and responding to gender-based violence within the proposed programme budget for 2023 and called for a strong survivor-centred approach and an increase in cash assistance targeting victims.

65. **Ms. Shroff** (Director of the Division of Strategic Planning and Results, UNHCR) said that

she agreed with the concerns expressed regarding the gap between needs and available funds for 2023 and that UNHCR was ready to partner with Member States and donors to address those concerns. Referring to the involvement of local actors and agencies in coordination efforts, she said that such involvement was in place in some countries and that the localization agenda would be expanded to strengthen capacity and empower local partners, particularly partner organizations led by refugees.

66. Reflecting on the comment made by Canada, she said that the number of multi-year agreements with implementing partners had been increased and UNHCR would continue its efforts to simplify the partnership process and to enhance its predictability, continuity and stability. However, efforts had been constrained by the lack of multi-year donor contributions, which meant it was not always possible to guarantee the requisite resources.

67. Referring to the progress made through the introduction of COMPASS, she highlighted the increased transparency regarding planned investments by outcome and impact areas. In 2023, UNHCR would be able to provide information on expenditures based on funds available by outcome and impact areas, which would further enhance decision-making and priority setting. The Global Report 2023 would be produced in line with the global results framework, its impact and outcome areas and core indicators. COMPASS had also contributed to longer-term thinking and planning at the national level. Approximately 70 Member States had multi-year plans which were simpler and could be more easily adapted and adjusted on the basis of successes or gaps identified at the end of each year. That would support engagement with national governments, as UNHCR's work could be better incorporated into national development planning.

68. With regard to climate change, UNHCR continued to monitor efforts to ensure that its humanitarian and development interventions were more sustainable and environmentally appropriate. Activities in that regard included clean cooking; expanding the use of renewable energy; making shelters more sustainable, durable and environmentally friendly; natural resources management; solarization of water; tree planting; a more intentional use of fossil fuels; and reduction of the Organization's carbon footprint, including in Geneva. She agreed that UNHCR's activities to reduce its environmental impact could be further expanded.

69. **Ms. Hyde** (Director of the Division of External Relations, UNHCR) said that outreach was being undertaken to donors from the private sector and individual donors and that investment in digital fundraising would lead to more unearmarked funding. UNHCR was also focusing investment in three areas of work, gender-based violence, climate change and education, and she expressed the hope that Governments and private sector donors would make unearmarked contributions for forcibly displaced populations in that connection. With regard to diversifying the donor base, she said that the use of innovative financing had garnered positive results. Two examples were the cofounding of the Global Islamic Fund for Refugees with the Islamic Development Bank, which aimed to raise \$400 million over ten years; and Project Flow, which was a revolving fund mechanism funded by the Governments of Germany and Denmark to finance the solarization of bore holes.

70. In response to the question from the European Union about how UNHCR could leverage its relationship with other United Nations agencies, she said that discussions with UNICEF had been completed the previous week regarding the inclusion of refugees in some UNICEF activities. Additionally, discussions with the World Food Programme were ongoing with regard to enhancing collaboration and strengthening joint fundraising, particularly in the private sector.

71. **Mr. Manly** (Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service, UNHCR), referring to the question of flexible and unearmarked funding, said that the game changer in 2022 had been the private sector, which currently accounted for 40 per cent of unearmarked funding. The latest annual report on flexible funding, which had come out in June 2021, had highlighted the importance of unearmarked funding for sustaining global operations in protracted or overlooked situations. Efforts were also being made to attract flexible and unearmarked funding for three different thematic development packages currently under preparation: education; gender equality and sexual and gender-based violence; and climate. As part of a broader effort to work with operations around the world, the 12 underfunded operations highlighted in the relevant report were to send representatives to key donor capitals to explain to governments and parliaments the importance of receiving unearmarked funding so as to give predictability to operations. To cite one example, in the current

week the representative from Ethiopia was in the Netherlands and Finland for that purpose. The first step in taking action was raising the awareness of all Member States of the importance of flexible and unearmarked funding.

72. **The Chairperson** took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft decision on budgets and funding for 2022, as set out in annex VII of document EC/73/SC/CRP.23.
It was so decided.

b. Programme budget of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2023 (A/AC.96/1224), and the Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) (A/AC.96/1230)

73. **Ms. Shroff** (Director of the Division of Strategic Planning and Results, UNHCR), resuming her review of the highlights of the programme budget for 2023 (A/AC.96/1224), briefly recapitulated the planning process. At the country level, the planning process started as early as January, with support from bureaux and headquarters divisions, by undertaking assessments and consultations in order to develop a detailed situation analysis. The aim was to examine what the most pressing needs were likely to be in the following year and possibilities for durable solutions, inclusion, local integration, creation of employment, resettlement and protection. As the situation analysis took shape with data and inputs from a variety of stakeholders, the key stakeholders (donors, governments, development actors, civil society and United Nations sister agencies) came together with UNHCR to define the latter's desired results on the ground and the associated budget. That was the cornerstone of the planning process. While the countries defined country plans and budgets, they of course took UNHCR's mandate into account, including humanitarian and protection needs, and in particular what UNHCR could and should do as a United Nations agency in relation to what others could also do and had offered to do. That was in line with the Global Compact on Refugees, in which UNHCR encouraged a whole-of-society approach to responding to the needs of forcibly displaced and stateless persons. Country operations also took into account the High Commissioner's strategic directions, with particular reference to how they had given adequate attention, within a contextualized manner, to the eight key focus areas. UNHCR also sought to align its multi-year plans with the Sustainable Development Goals and national planning instruments and plans.

74. The annual planning process, which began in January, culminated in late April/early May, with regional bureaux reviewing the country plans and offering feedback, input and further guidance, after which the plans were approved at the bureau level and consolidated and submitted to senior UNHCR leadership and the High Commissioner for approval and subsequent submission to ACABQ and to Member States. Following the approval of the budget, a global appeal and pledging conference was launched, and detailed planning was carried out for activities in the following year.

75. The report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) (A/AC.96/1224/Add.1) had touched on human resource issues. The work carried out on gender balance at posts had been noted with appreciation, comments made on the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Fund, staff mobility and non-staff health insurance and support expressed for UNHCR's transformation initiatives. Questions had been raised on UNHCR's work in relation to the United Nations system and, more broadly, to United Nations reform. The Advisory Committee had encouraged UNHCR's enhanced efforts under the Business Transformation Programme and urged it to continue to promote fundraising and to diversify its funding base. It had also noted a slight increase in headquarters activities.

76. With regard to the 2023 budget, the rising numbers of forcibly displaced and stateless persons, expected to reach 117 million in 2023, continued to be a matter of grave concern. UNHCR was responding to complex, high-risk emergencies in 27 countries. There had been 42 internal emergency declarations, 25 of which had been declared for the first time in 2022. The last quarter continued to see either extended emergency declarations or new emergency declarations. The situation was expected to be similar in 2023. Reference had been made to the widening funding gap and to UNHCR's ongoing efforts. UNHCR continued to rely on the support of Member States to ensure that the gap remained as small as possible.

77. As many speakers had noted, UNHCR's budget had increased over time, but the organization

had been very disciplined in ensuring that its budgeting remained realistic. Since 2019, UNHCR had maintained a budget at about \$8.7 billion, with increases only for new emergencies: the supplementary budgets in 2021 for the COVID-19 pandemic and situations in Ethiopia, Afghanistan and, in 2022, for Ukraine. UNHCR continued to face a multitude of unforeseen humanitarian crises in addition to protracted situations, and efforts to keep its budget as contained as possible must be balanced against those new needs and vulnerabilities. The figures on the budget and expenditure over three years illustrated careful resource management practices. As for the gap between the current budget (\$10.7 billion) and current expenditure, much still needed to be done in the last five months of 2022, and every possible financial support was required so that UNHCR could provide the same level of assistance as in 2021 and meet the additional needs arising out of the supplementary budgets. The budget for 2023, \$10.2 billion, was a careful estimation of needs, taking into account investments made in the Ukraine and Afghanistan situations in 2022, in particular infrastructure support, which could be leveraged in 2023 and reduced.

78. The 2023 programme budget had increased provisions for preventing and reducing statelessness to \$136.2 million from \$113 million, a 21 per cent rise. But that was not the only support for reducing statelessness. UNHCR assistance with identity documentation, registration and the provision of vital registration instruments such as birth certificates also significantly reduced the risk of statelessness. Those efforts were not fully reflected in the figure of \$136.2 million.

79. There had been a two per cent increase in the workforce, mostly centred on country and regional programmes, primarily in response to evolving operational needs. To keep staff increases as modest as possible, UNHCR tended to reduce posts where there had been vacancies for long periods or where needs could better be met by partners or through contractor or other arrangements. Staffing reviews were conducted regularly to ensure that the profile and capacity of the workforce met needs while continuing to be efficient. There was a very modest increase in posts for global programmes, primarily in order to diversify the donor base.

80. The budgetary allocations for the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes, which had been stable for several years, had increased significantly by April 2022, and UNHCR needed to continue to monitor the situation, given the effects of the drought, to see whether they should be further revised. It was working closely with the World Food Programme (WFP) to ensure that it did not provide food if WFP could do so. That way UNHCR could focus its efforts and resources on protection, core relief items and other forms of assistance. There had been increases in budgetary allocations for virtually all other regions, including the Middle East and North Africa, the Americas and West and Central Africa, and a significant increase in southern Africa, partly as a result of growing needs or vulnerabilities brought about by food insecurity and inflation.

81. The budgetary allocations for Europe were to decrease by 29 per cent, to \$528 million, and for Asia and the Pacific by 13 per cent, to \$136.9 million. The reason was that in 2022, the situation in Europe and in Afghanistan had resulted in emergency declarations, some of which were coming to an end. In the initial phase, UNHCR had focused on emergency response, providing immediate cash assistance, core relief items, supplies and other goods, while also enhancing the organization's infrastructure and helping governments improve theirs. In 2023, it was hoped that UNHCR could move to a post-emergency response which would continue to include cash-based assistance, shelter and the distribution of core relief items, but in a more targeted manner. The intention was also to invest in reintegration and support in the priority areas of return and integration, for example in Afghanistan, and to focus on inclusion and incorporation into national schemes, for instance in Poland and other countries in Europe. Through those efforts, UNHCR would be able to streamline its support, reduce its budgetary provisions and focus them more effectively.

82. Close to 90 per cent of the current and proposed budgets continued to be allocated for country and regional programmes, headquarters and global programmes. The original 2022 budget had allocated about \$521 million for global programmes and \$241 million for headquarters. The proposed budget for 2023 contained a very modest increase for both. The small increase in the headquarters budget, about \$8 million, reflected one-time investments to upgrade protection services, strengthen resettlement activities and enable UNHCR to join the United Nations digital treasury hub and to invest in some of the business transformation and supply management platforms in order to strengthen emergency preparedness and overall efficiency.

83. Referring to the changes in impact areas and outcome areas, she said it should be borne in mind that UNHCR had introduced the global results framework for 2022 only in 2021. In the first year, efforts had been made to strengthen the way in which country results were aligned with global results. Hence the need to consider the question in light of an overall transformation that had taken a couple of years to come about.

84. Investment in impact area 2 (realizing rights in safe environments) had declined, mostly because of the transition in the Afghanistan and Ukraine situations, where UNHCR had moved from emergency response to more investments in longer-term solutions, including in the priority areas of return and reintegration. Similarly, there had been a very slight reduction in impact area 3 (empowering communities and achieving gender equality), but it was important to note that globally, UNHCR had increased its budget for outcome area 7 (community engagement and women's empowerment). Existing variations would be smoothed out in the coming year.

85. In reply to a remark by Egypt on an increase in the resources allocated for activities in that country, she said that the aim was primarily to support registration and documentation, but also to strengthen child protection, address gender-based violence, provide cash-based interventions and promote durable solutions and legal pathways, including resettlement and complementary pathways. The budget for the Middle East and North Africa had increased slightly. UNHCR continued to make sure that support for returns and reintegration was given careful consideration. It might issue additional budgetary changes, depending on how the situation evolved for the return of Syrians. The overall budget for Asia and the Pacific had increased, with the exception of Afghanistan's neighbouring countries. UNHCR would continue to monitor the situation in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran and also in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to see whether budgetary allocations needed to be reviewed. In the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes there had been an overall increase of eight per cent for all countries in the region. That was another situation where the increase might not be sufficient and where a supplementary budget might be needed.

86. On the question of whether a breakdown could be provided on outcome areas for different regions, she noted that there was a strict limit on the number of tables and the amount of information that could be included in the budget document. However, the relevant information was available at UNHCR country offices, and its bureaux could also provide it for their regions. Ways could be found to make that information more accessible to interested Member States.

87. Referring to a question on how UNHCR could ensure that specific project priorities were adequately reflected in its plans, she said that was part of the work in the planning period, which she had described earlier. However, when UNHCR allocated resources based on funds available, it also gave guidance to ensure that specific objectives, such as reducing statelessness and gender-based violence and promoting child protection and climate action, were prioritized with available resources. Admittedly, sometimes that resulted in difficult choices at the country level.

88. **Ms. Ahmad** (African Group statement) said that the Group expressed gratitude for the support provided to the least developed countries hosting refugees and called on Member States to participate in efforts to promote durable solutions and more predictable and equitable burden-sharing. Given the immensity of the needs which UNHCR must meet and the long-standing substantial support that the refugee host countries provided, the African Group urged donors to respond generously and in a spirit of solidarity to the High Commissioner's call for mobilization in order to ensure full implementation of the programme budget for 2023. The African Group thanked the Office of the High Commissioner for its commitment to further strengthening its effective collaboration with development actors and the international financial institutions and to incorporating partnership approaches in the multi-year strategies.

89. **Ms. Rasmussen** (Denmark) said that the unusually large budget for 2022 reflected the growing crisis of forced displacement brought about by conflict, instability and climate change and fuelled by Russia's war in Ukraine and its global consequences. Denmark commended UNHCR and all its staff for its continued commitment to delivering assistance, protection and solutions to the most vulnerable, despite very challenging circumstances. It was pleased to note the 95 per cent implementation rate for 2021, testimony to UNHCR's ability to respond effectively. Nevertheless, her delegation was very concerned about the growing funding gap, which was forcing the organization to take tough decisions on prioritization. Denmark was the sixth largest governmental

donor to UNHCR, providing multi-year unearmarked funding, which gave UNHCR the flexibility to respond quickly to new emergencies. Her delegation encouraged UNHCR to strengthen its efforts to broaden the donor base, and called on all traditional and non-traditional donors to provide quality funding. UNHCR was to be commended for its strategic efforts to enhance private sector funding, in particular the sharp increase in relation to the Ukraine crisis. Her delegation underlined the importance of continuing such efforts to broaden partnerships with the private sector, including philanthropic foundations.

90. Denmark was pleased to note the strong emphasis in the 2023 budget on preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence and the strategic focus on enhancing access to services for women and girls. It stressed the importance of applying an age, gender and diversities approach across all UNHCR's interventions. It welcomed the continued strategic focus on enhanced climate action. Integrating green solutions and climate resilience was a top priority for Denmark, and her delegation would welcome more information on how efforts could be scaled up and how they could best be supported.

91. **Ms. Papka** (Nigeria) said that the global figure of persons of concern having exceeded 100 million, it was important to ensure that budgetary allocations for the protection of displaced persons addressed issues of climate change and sustained engagement in mobilizing governments to strengthen their commitments to the Global Compact for Refugees. Nigeria welcomed the inclusive approach to the 2023 budget and acknowledged the full impact in the focus areas highlighted. It commended the laudable financial discipline used to ensure efficient delivery of UNHCR's mandate. Acknowledging the importance of including all persons of concern in UNHCR's programmes and frameworks, she pointed out that integrating non-consensual language and nuances, such as gender and diversity elements, into UNHCR policies, programmes and advocacy across all its operations was not agreeable to all Member States. Nigeria commended the generous contributions of all UNHCR partners, and it called for sustained and new partnerships, particularly in unearmarked funding.

92. **Ms. Kang** (Republic of Korea) said that 2022 had been an unusual and difficult year for the humanitarian environment. While it was essential to remain responsive to all emergencies, the Republic of Korea also looked forward to making progress in addressing protracted crises and finding sustainable solutions in 2023. Her delegation was pleased to see that, compared to the 2022 budget, the 2023 programme budget proposed a significant increase in impact area 1 (attaining favourable protection environments), which was growing in importance as a priority area in which UNHCR played a leading role in the humanitarian domain. Her delegation also noted the increase in outcome area 16 (local integration and other local solutions) that would work as the basis of a durable solution. However, the programme budget foresaw a decrease in allocations to a number of countries in Asia projected to have growing needs for protection, such as Bangladesh. Although her delegation understood UNHCR's careful prioritization of limited resources, it expected that those cutbacks would not lead to a decrease in delivery to meet the needs of persons of concern in countries where crises were at risk of being further protracted. She wished to hear how UNHCR planned to ensure the quality of delivery to such countries in 2023.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.