

**Introductory Remarks of Steven Corliss
Director of the Division of Programme Support & Management**

**Overview of Global Programmes (EC/66/SC/CRP.7)
62nd Meeting of the Standing Committee
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Thank you, Mr Chairman,

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to appear before this 62nd meeting of the Standing Committee. My role is to introduce the overview of UNHCR's Global Programmes and to provide the Committee with an update on the progress we've achieved and the challenges encountered over the past year.

The Global Programmes support programme quality, technical integrity and innovation across a broad range of UNHCR's operational activities, including public health; HIV and reproductive health; nutrition and food security; water, sanitation and hygiene; shelter and settlement; education; livelihoods; energy and environment; identity management; and information management; as well as our efforts to promote alternatives to camps, improve UNHCR's response in urban areas, and adapt our operational approaches, such as through the expanded and more systematic use of cash-based interventions.

At the outset, let me say that emergency response was our overriding priority in 2014 and continues to be so this year. Through the Global Programmes, UNHCR ensures the rapid deployment of technical specialists as "first responders." These experts also guide the development of technical strategies, coordination and implementation arrangements among all of the critical life-saving areas and important programme support functions that I have just mentioned.

During 2014, UNHCR was faced with massive new refugee flows and internal displacement arising from conflicts in the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Nigeria and elsewhere. Coupled with the continuing, unprecedented demands of the Syria situation and other ongoing emergencies, as with other organisations, our response capacity has been tested to the limits. Last year, DPSM alone fielded 28 percent more missions than in 2013 – which was itself a remarkably challenging year – for a total of 3,730 mission days.

The major refugee emergencies undoubtedly have been the dominant feature of the humanitarian landscape over the past few years. While meeting these immediate challenges, we have also continued to set UNHCR's strategic directions and build and adapt the organisation for the future. During the Committee's March session last year, I introduced four new global strategies for public health, settlement and shelter, livelihoods and safe access to fuel and energy – or SAFE. The global strategies will guide UNHCR's work in these core areas of the Global Programmes through 2018.

While welcoming the global strategies, the Committee also strongly called upon me to demonstrate that they are more than attractive, well-written documents with inspiring photographs. I agreed fully that the strategies will only be meaningful if they change "business as usual" at the field level, and ultimately make a real difference in the lives of refugees.

Today, I am pleased to release the first implementation report on the global strategies. The report highlights some of the key developments, achievements and challenges during 2014, and provides the very initial reporting against the specific strategic objectives and related indicators.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me now brief you on how we have approached implementation of the global strategies over the past year, touching upon six important lines of action.

First, we recognise that the global strategies must be anchored in the operations. With this in mind, we are supporting field operations to develop adapted country-level strategies. For example, under the SAFE strategy, UNHCR operations in Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda have prepared context-specific energy strategies. During 2015, we will develop SAFE strategies for five additional priority countries. Within the framework of the livelihoods strategy, six of the thirteen priority countries now have strategic plans. We've also doubled the number of priority countries that have comprehensive settlement and shelter strategies – from 30 to 60 percent – but more remains to be done. UNHCR operations in Djibouti, Ghana, Pakistan and Togo also now have multi-year public health strategies in place.

Second, we understand that these country strategies must be driven by data and evidence. For example, ten of the thirteen priority country operations under the livelihoods strategy have conducted socio-economic profiling exercises for the refugee population and nine have completed market assessments. Linked to the SAFE strategy, UNHCR has undertaken comprehensive, baseline energy assessments in Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda that have informed planning in these countries, and will also expand our understanding and guide planning elsewhere. Through the public health strategy, UNHCR is translating evidence into action. The systematic review and analysis of neonatal deaths in Tanzania, Jordan and Chad have resulted in new *Operational Guidelines on Improving New-born Health in Refugee Operations*. These guidelines outline simple and practical measures that save lives and are being applied globally.

As a third line of action, we see the need to draw upon external expertise to improve our performance and move the organisation forward. For example, we are tapping into new networks and resources through UNHCR's Livelihoods Advisory Board, which brings together senior experts from the BRAC University in Bangladesh, the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor, the Ford Foundation, the ILO, the International Trade Centre, the Rockefeller Foundation, the SEEP Network, and the University of Illinois. We have also established framework agreements with consulting firms that can provide reliable, expert support with the more technical aspects of livelihoods programming, such as market and value-chain analysis. Development of UNHCR's energy strategy was guided by the SAFE Reference Group, which includes the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, WFP, UNICEF, the Women's Refugee Commission, the ProAct Network and the International Lifeline Fund.

Fourth, we know that new operational approaches are needed to achieve the objectives of the global strategies. We are piloting and documenting these approaches in the field to prove the concepts, demonstrate results and, eventually, take them to scale. For example, working with Stanford University and Ennead Architects, we have continued to refine the "master plan" approach to holistic and sustainable settlement planning and to develop an accompanying toolkit. The "master plan" concept has influenced the development and rethinking of refugee sites in Chad, Ethiopia and Rwanda. We have also piloted the Graduation Approach to move people from extreme poverty to sustainable livelihoods in urban settings in Egypt, Costa Rica and Ecuador, together with our NGO partner, Trickle Up. We plan to test the approach in rural environments during 2015. Reporting from Egypt indicates that the Graduation Approach pilot has successfully placed 789 people in jobs and enabled another 657 individuals to start their own businesses.

The fifth line of action is based upon our realisation that innovation and new technology can play an important role in improving our operational response through the Global Strategies. We are partnering with the Gates Foundation to identify innovative technologies and business models that support the transformation of waste into market or social goods. With the Veolia Foundation, we are developing a hybrid, solar/fuel powered water system in the Dollo Ado camps in Ethiopia. Together with the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, we are testing the safety and acceptability of urine-diversion dry toilets, again in Dollo Ado. The SAFE country-level strategies incorporate renewable energy technologies based on biogas production and the use of solar-power for cooking. We are also testing out more simple and sustainable approaches, such as "A Liter of Light", a community-based approach that manufactures lights from recycled plastic bottles.

Sixth and finally, we view sustainability and cost-effectiveness as essential to the success of each Global Strategy. For example, the public health strategy places an important focus on mainstreaming refugees within the programmes and service delivery mechanisms of national line Ministries. In Ghana, UNHCR is working with the Ministry of Health on a three-year plan to enrol refugees into the national health insurance programme. We are still in discussion with the Islamic Republic of Iran to provide health insurance through a public health insurance plan for approximately 1 million Afghan refugees. Sustainability is also the foundation of the “master plan” approach to anchoring refugee settlements within government development planning and, most obviously, our efforts to give refugees access to livelihoods.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me now turn to UNHCR’s Education Strategy, which is entering the fourth year of implementation. As with the public health strategy, a key objective is mainstreaming refugees within national systems. Put more simply, this means enrolling refugee children in public schools, and this is happening for refugees from the Central African Republic in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Similar initiatives are underway for CAR refugees in the Republic of Congo and Cameroon.

UNHCR’s focus on educational quality and impact continues with the introduction of new tools and guidance for curriculum development, teacher training and accelerated education. Taking into consideration the sad reality for many refugee children today, UNHCR is emphasizing programming for out-of-school children and is also integrating education into UNHCR’s response at the earliest stages of emergencies, in tandem with child protection activities. Even where children have access to formal primary education, the gap for secondary education remains huge, leaving many children without hope of continuing in school.

Mr. Chairman,

With my remaining time, allow me to touch upon a few other important developments.

The Global Programmes will be an important vehicle for implementing the *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, which the High Commissioner issued in July last year. We know that many countries require refugees to live in camps or designated areas. UNHCR may also resort to establishing camps in emergencies to ensure protection, rationalise assistance and save lives. We nevertheless believe that alternatives to camps – allowing refugees to live lawfully and peacefully in rural or urban communities – is not only better for refugees, it can yield better outcomes for host communities and governments. We are now working with the World Bank, governments, partners and researchers to build the evidence base that will make this case in a convincing way.

The *Policy on Alternatives to Camps* calls for important changes in UNHCR’s ways of doing business from contingency planning and emergency response through to durable solutions. At the same time, we are not starting from zero. Roughly sixty percent of the world’s refugees live outside of camps today in urban and rural settings. Many of the strategic directions and operational approaches highlighted during my discussion of the global strategies also support alternatives to camps, as do the tools and good practices developed within the framework of UNHCR’s 2009 urban refugee policy. For the 2016–2017 biennium planning process, we have provided UNHCR field operations with a “diagnostic tool” that guides them in assessing the current state of play, the opportunities and the challenges to pursuing alternatives to camps. More than fifty operations have already completed the assessment, and the results will not only guide operational planning at the country level, they will also provide us with a useful global baseline.

Through the Global Programmes, UNHCR is taking forward the High Commissioner’s call for the expanded and more systematic use of cash-based interventions in our operations. The movement to cash and cash alternatives – particularly the use of multi-purpose, unconditional cash grants – requires fundamental transformation and reconceptualization of way UNHCR and its partners deliver humanitarian assistance. This entails both real opportunities and carries important risks.

Within DPSM, we’ve established a dedicated section to provide overall coordination for institution-wide efforts aimed at ensuring the policies, procedures, guidelines, support, capacities and partnerships are in place to scale-up cash programming in a responsible and effective way. Special funding from Swiss Agency for

Development Cooperation has allowed us to reinforce our technical expertise in this area. Supported by an ECHO grant, UNHCR has gathered a consortium of partners – including WFP, UNICEF, Oxfam, NRC, DRC, IRC and the Cash Learning Partnership, among others – to develop common approaches to key challenges, such as vulnerability assessment, targeting and data privacy in the delivery of cash-based interventions.

Mr. Chairman,

At the end of last year, UNHCR completed implementation of the *Information & Data Management Strategy* launched in 2012 and moved into the consolidation phase. The achievements under the Strategy have been remarkable. At the end of 2011, UNHCR had a single professional staff members with the title Information Management Officer. Today, UNHCR has a global network of expert IM Officers serving in all major emergency situations and operations where we have assumed significant cluster leadership responsibilities. We've continued to build depth in this area through the Training on Information Management in Emergencies – or TIME – Workshops. We are continually developing and improving our tools – such as the recently updated Emergency Information Management Toolkit – and also provide open platforms for accessing and sharing data and information, such as the UNHCR operational web portals.

Finally, I would like to provide the Committee with a brief update on the development of UNHCR's new systems and tools for identity management. In April, we will be piloting the principal functionalities of *proGres* version 4, the next generation of UNHCR's registration and case management system, in Malawi, as a prelude to broader rollout to the field later in the year. Development of this complex global system has taken longer than anticipated. UNHCR's new Biometric Identity Management System – or BIMS – was successfully tested in Thailand in January, with the biometric enrolment of some 10,000 refugees from Myanmar. The "bugs" and modifications identified during testing are being corrected, and the first regular deployment to the field is getting underway in Chad now.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In closing, I would like to echo the message of the High Commissioner regarding the impact of recent dramatic exchange rates shifts on UNHCR's financial outlook. I also want to draw out the implications for the Global Programmes, global strategies and the other new initiatives that I've highlighted today.

Over the past few years, we have made important progress in reinforcing UNHCR's expertise in technical areas such as water, sanitation and hygiene; site planning and cluster coordination, as well as in such new areas as livelihoods, information management, energy and environment and cash-based interventions.

UNHCR Representatives have been instructed to identify where budgets and staffing can be reduced in 2015. This is essential and unavoidable. When presented with limited options, responsible Representatives will necessarily prioritise core functions – protection, programme, administration and supply – over more specialized positions. We risk reversing the gains of the past few years and stalling progress in key areas of strategic importance.

UNHCR needs adequate and balanced funding to preserve the base and core capacities, while also investing in preparing the organization for the future. From a very practical perspective, as outlined in my statement, our work in these areas also holds the promise of programmes that are more efficient, cost-effective, sustainable and, ultimately, demand fewer resources.

Let me conclude here. I look forward to receiving the Committee's views and advice and answering any questions that you may have.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.