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Update on UNHCR's global programmes and partnerships

This paper updates the Office's efforts to improve the quality of its programmes in the following sectors: shelter and settlements; education; self-reliance and livelihoods; public health; reproductive health and HIV; nutrition and food security; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); environmental management; information management; and initiatives to facilitate durable solutions for refugees and other people of concern.

Shelter and settlements

UNHCR's Global Shelter and Settlement Strategy for 2014-2018 is undergoing an internal and external validation process prior to implementation. The strategy guides the organization in improving shelter and settlement responses to humanitarian crises over the coming five years.

In collaboration with Stanford University and other partners, UNHCR is developing a more holistic approach to settlement design, known as the "master plan concept." The development process included a joint mission to Rwanda in May 2013. The master plan concept and lessons learned from the Al Zaatri refugee camp in Jordan contributed to the design of the new Azraq refugee camp, which includes a comprehensive decentralisation of basic services.

UNHCR is expanding its options for shelter solutions. In Mali, Myanmar and South Sudan, shelter programmes have promoted the use of locally-procured materials and traditional and culturally-relevant building techniques. UNHCR is drawing upon the expertise of other organizations, academic institutions and the private sector. The Refugee Housing Unit – a new lightweight shelter solution developed in partnership with the IKEA Foundation – is being tested in the Dollo Ado camps in Ethiopia to assess its technical performance and social acceptance. In Burkina Faso, UNHCR is testing three different types of tents, including shed nets designed to provide insulation from the heat.

UNHCR continues to develop its partnership network, working with other agencies to conduct training to increase the quantity of skilled shelter experts available to support field operations. UNHCR has developed the content for an e-learning module to enhance knowledge of shelter and settlement-related issues among staff. Once piloted, the training will also be available to partner organisations.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and UNHCR have strengthened their collaboration as co-leads of the Global Shelter Cluster to improve efficiency and accountability within the framework of its five-year strategy and in-line with the Transformative Agenda. The enhanced Cluster Support Team includes three focal points within UNHCR, who have undertaken missions to Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and Myanmar. UNHCR now coordinates eight of the eighteen country shelter clusters that are active in both conflict and natural disaster-related displacement situations.

Education

Since the launch of UNHCR's Education Strategy in 2012, substantial progress has been made in refugees' access to quality education. In 2013, twenty countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa are working on 5-year education strategies, with technical support provided by UNHCR's Education Unit. Emphasis is placed on mainstreaming refugees into national education systems, thus channelling resources to strengthen existing services for both refugee and host communities. Recent progress has been achieved in several countries, notably Chad, Rwanda, Uganda and Yemen.

Technical support for education in emergencies has been an important focus this year, through deployments and strengthening country level partnerships, particularly with UNICEF in Burkina Faso, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Niger and Rwanda.

New technology is being utilized to improve the quality of education for refugees, including tablets in schools in Malaysia and Djibouti and Skype in the classroom in Kakuma, Kenya. Improving teacher retention and motivation has been a focus in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Pakistan. Following the collection of education baselines, UNHCR is strengthening guidance for staff on improved data collection and monitoring. A framework to monitor progress in protection through education, child protection and sexual and gender-based violence at country level using existing reporting processes is under development.

Globally, more than 2,000 refugees are benefiting from the annual Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) tertiary scholarship programme. A memorandum of understanding has been signed with Jesuit Commons Higher Education at the Margins to facilitate access for refugee students to distance education and the online academic community.

Livelihoods and self-reliance

UNHCR is developing a new livelihoods strategy covering 2014 to 2018. The strategy aims to promote and professionalize livelihoods programming as a fundamental component of the organization's protection and solutions work and to strengthen the organization's capacity to help refugees achieve self-reliance. It complements the operational guidance that UNHCR has developed over the past few years and seeks to address critical gaps related to resource allocation, staffing, partnership management, and programme design.

Headquarters will work closely with selected operations to test models and develop new partnerships that bring in the knowledge and capacity of the development community, academia and the private sector. Specifically, collaboration, partnership and global framework agreements will bring expertise in areas such as the collection of baseline data, economic surveys and modelling, value chain analysis and business development services.

WFP and UNHCR are implementing the recommendations of the joint evaluation of food assistance and self-reliance in refugee situations. Three country operations have been selected to pilot new approaches aimed at reducing dependency on food assistance and achieving sustainable self-reliance.

In June 2013, UNHCR launched the first pilot of "the graduation model" in Cairo with recently arrived refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic and African refugees living in a protracted situation. The model, developed in partnership with Trickle Up and the BRAC Development Institute, aims to move people out of poverty through microfinance and capacity-building.

Public health

UNHCR strives to improve the quality of public health interventions through the rapid deployment of public health experts in the initial emergency response as well as sustained support through coordination with partners and the establishment of field-

level positions as needed. Together with its partners, UNHCR has developed public health strategies to respond to the challenging and constantly evolving Syrian refugee crisis. These strategies seek to ensure coherence across the region and an agile response to specific conditions in each affected country.

Efforts to strengthen evidence-based planning through improved health data are ongoing. UNHCR's standardised Health Information System, now rebranded as *Twine* (twine.unhcr.org) remains the backbone of health service planning and delivery. *Twine* allows UNHCR and its partners to analyze health data in real-time and includes practical tools, such as the Balanced Score Card, which assesses the capacity and quality of health services.

UNHCR continues to promote refugee access to national health insurance schemes, particularly in out-of-camp settings.

Reproductive health and HIV

UNHCR and WFP co-lead efforts to address HIV in humanitarian emergencies through the global Inter-Agency Task Team (IATT) on HIV and AIDS. The IATT has organised country task teams in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to coordinate the HIV response, as well as a regional inter-agency working group on sexual and gender-based violence and HIV in the East and Horn of Africa that is chaired by UNHCR. Increased focus has been placed on the Co-sponsors of the UNAIDS Division of Labour thematic areas, including the IATT, to help achieve the targets of the *2011 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS: Intensifying our Efforts to Eliminate HIV/AIDS* by 2015.

UNHCR and the Women's Refugee Commission are implementing recommendations from a family planning review conducted in five countries. The project has been extended with the objective of improving adolescent reproductive healthcare services. Refugee women continue to enjoy access to reproductive health services with access to essential obstetric care. Skilled health workers are available at health facilities to conduct emergency obstetric interventions for complicated deliveries. Operations in Africa continue to strive to reach the standard of more than 90 per cent institutional deliveries. Operations in the Middle East and North Africa are working to provide more comprehensive maternal care. Drawing upon the review of newborn survival rates in Chad and the United Republic of Tanzania, efforts continue to improve access to quality maternal and infant care.

Nutrition and food security

In addition to the continuous challenges in the Horn of Africa and South Sudan, UNHCR is responding to high acute malnutrition rates among those fleeing the situation in Mali. During the reporting period, UNHCR deployed technical experts to enhance its operational response and improve coordination with partners. UNHCR continues to focus on anaemia as an underlying cause of malnutrition and ill-health and is expanding its micronutrient-powder programmes to include more protracted settings, including out-of-camp situations as well as emergencies.

UNHCR is pursuing the expansion of cash-based interventions globally, particularly in the context of the Syrian situation. An increasing number of dedicated staff members are working to develop global policies; provide the field with operational guidance; reinforce capacity and expertise; and ensure early coordination with WFP and other key humanitarian and development partners. The strategic partnership with WFP continues to be crucial to these efforts, and UNHCR has received significant technical support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

UNHCR is promoting the expanded use of mobile phone technology for standardized expanded nutrition surveys. In June 2013, UNHCR together with CartONG, trained survey coordinators in East Africa on mobile data collection. Standardised guidelines on the use of this new technology are under development.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

UNHCR continued to build emergency response capacity for WASH and worked with a range of partners, including RedR Australia, the Danish Refugee Council, SDC and the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, in operations across Africa, the Middle East and North Africa. UNHCR also worked to improve evidence-based planning through progressive implementation of the WASH Monitoring System, which has been implemented in eight countries in the beginning of 2013, and is expected to be operational in fourteen countries - sixty-four camps - by the end of 2013.

UNHCR's has continued its partnership with the University of Neuchâtel to monitor groundwater quality and conceptualize the recharge mechanisms for sustainable water resource management in Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps in Kenya. Capacity-building and groundwater monitoring, surveys and the development of standard operating procedures for pump testing in refugee camps in Djibouti and South Sudan have enhanced UNHCR's technical skills for future projects.

Standardized knowledge, attitudes and practice (KAP) surveys on hygiene promotion developed by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention will be piloted in Kakuma camp. The Southern Methodist University (USA) water quality assessment is ongoing in three countries – Bangladesh, Djibouti and Uganda – and will address critical issues related to the chemical contamination of aquifers. Another partnership with the University of Buffalo in the United States is helping address behaviour changes in hand washing practices in South Sudan.

Environment

Environmental management focused on addressing conflicts between refugees and host communities over scarce natural resources. UNHCR is working to reduce the security risks associated with collecting firewood in and around refugee camps in Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Sudan through the introduction of fuel-efficient stoves and alternative energies, complemented by the planting of woodlots. Private sector support for solar lanterns and solar street lights have contributed to improved camp security, enabling refugees to undertake social, educational and income-generating activities during the evening hours. SDC carried out an environmental assessment mission to South Sudan in June 2013, and the results will inform its Community Environmental Action Plan.

Work continues on UNHCR's Strategy for Access to Energy, which will provide a roadmap for the organization for 2014 to 2018. UNHCR commissioned the ProAct Network to undertake energy assessments in Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Sudan, which provide the foundation for the strategy. Development of the strategy is also based on broad consultation with partners, past experiences and current practices in the field, perspectives on energy needs today and in the future, and emerging opportunities, such as carbon financing and renewable energy.

Information management

UNHCR recognizes information management as a key element of coordination as well as its responsibility to provide quality data and information management services to partners. UNHCR continues to strengthen the resources dedicated to the development and delivery of information management tools at both organizational and inter-agency levels.

In June 2013, UNHCR issued a provisional Emergency Information Management Toolkit (<http://data.unhcr.org/imtoolkit/>), providing guidance and practical tools for use during the first phase of a refugee emergency. Working with the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) and other partners, the Office has also prepared comprehensive guidance on assessment in refugee operations.

UNHCR's operational web portals have become a standard resource in emergency situations. UNHCR is in the process of improving the web portals to expand them to

other key operations. UNHCR works closely with OCHA's information management team to ensure best practices are shared and field-based information management systems are harmonized. This includes working together on longer-term strategies for improved humanitarian data exchange standards.

UNHCR has recently implemented state-of-the-art mapping tools that will allow more systematic spatial analysis and visual representation of displacement at all levels. Building on earlier projects, UNHCR worked closely with statistical experts from countries in the Middle East on a ground-breaking initiative: the Mediterranean Households International Migration Survey (MED-HIMS) project for the collection of improved and comparable data on migration, including issues related to forced migration.

UNHCR systematically deploys expert information management staff in all major emergencies, as well as in operations where the organization has assumed cluster leadership responsibilities, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Myanmar. Information management officers work with cluster partners and utilize the new information management tools that have been introduced for assessment, monitoring and reporting. In the Syria situation, a network of information management officers supports UNHCR's coordination of the refugee response across the region.

UNHCR has recognized the need to improve population data management. New guidance and tools for gathering of reliable information on the locations and characteristics of populations of concern are being developed, including for internally displaced and stateless populations. These include the next generation of UNHCR's registration software, *proGres* v4, and the population statistical reference database and reporting tool.

While individual registration remains essential to providing protection in refugee situations, UNHCR is pursuing new methodologies to gather information on communities and bridge existing information gaps, including for individuals who do not seek registration and to whom access is a challenge. A biometrics tool for global use is also moving forward in development, with the initial pilot exercise in the field expected to take place before the end of the year.

Partnerships for durable solutions

Together with UNDP and the World Bank, UNHCR has been advancing the Transitional Solutions Initiative (TSI) in eastern Sudan and Colombia. UNHCR and UNDP, with the Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery and the Global Protection Cluster, have been supporting the United Nations Country Teams in Afghanistan, Côte d'Ivoire and Kyrgyzstan in piloting the Secretary-General's Policy Committee decision on durable solutions, which promotes a strategic and comprehensive approach to solutions for internally displaced persons and returning refugees in the aftermath of conflict.

During 2013, UNHCR and UNDP have worked with governments, the World Bank and other United Nations organizations, academia and the private sector in a dialogue aimed at taking forward these new solutions initiatives, including examining the ongoing challenges in coordination and alignment among partners, including international financial institutions, bilateral aid donors and host governments.

In parallel, UNHCR is rationalizing internal coordination and support for durable solutions through the establishment of a Solutions Steering Group (SSG), fostering the institutional change and policy developments necessary for effective design and implementation of solutions strategies. The SSG brings together the divisions and regional bureaux counterparts working in the area of durable solutions and subsumes internal task forces and working groups that focused separately on protracted refugee situations, linkages with development actors, TSI and the Secretary-General's Policy Committee decision.