

DESS Director's statement in the Standing Committee

Emergency Preparedness and Response, Supply and Security of UNHCR workforce and operations

(13 March 2025)

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Emergencies wait for no one. As forced displacement surges, UNHCR must act swiftly and effectively to protect lives. I appreciate the strong international solidarity in responding to these crises, but financial uncertainty threatens our ability to deliver. The stakes are high—lives depend on our collective action. We must ensure that when the next crisis strikes, we are ready.

Emergency Preparedness and Response

The humanitarian situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo is alarming, with 1.2 million people displaced since October 2024. Over 82,000 have fled to neighboring countries, including more than 65,000 to Burundi. In response, UNHCR declared an **L2 emergency for Burundi on 28 February**, and I plan to visit soon to strengthen our response.

We are also addressing significant emergencies in Sudan, South Sudan, and Chad, where over **9 million people** are internally displaced, and **3.7 million** have sought refuge in neighboring countries. Beyond these responses, we are closely monitoring **32 high-risk countries** for potential displacement.

Emergency preparedness remains a core priority for UNHCR. We are committed to ensuring that forcibly displaced people find safety and have their basic needs met. Recognizing the need for innovation, we are strengthening early warning mechanisms and preparedness activities as the foundation for sustainable responses.

In this regard, I sincerely thank the **Government of Luxembourg** for supporting our early warning system and the **Government of Japan** for enhancing the preparedness and response capacity of local responders through the **eCentre for Africa**.

Supply Chain Management

Mr. Chair,

UNHCR's **new supply strategy**, launched last year, aims to improve resilience and efficiency. The final implementation roadmap will enable us to **deliver assistance and procure services more effectively**.

To **optimize resources and cut costs**, we are rationalizing global stockpiles, ensuring sufficient relief supplies for **one million people** at any given time. We are closing low-turnover warehouses,

redeploying excess stock globally, and expanding secondary bidding for core relief items and transportation. **Proximity sourcing** will also help diversify supply sources, reduce costs and environmental impact, and support local economies.

Additionally, we are enhancing collaboration with external partners to drive efficiencies across the humanitarian supply chain and expand sustainable supply solutions.

Strengthening Security Measures

Distinguished Delegates,

The increasing complexity of humanitarian operations, most recently in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, has heightened risks for our personnel. In **2024**, UNHCR reported **522 security incidents**, and by **February 2025**, 70 incidents had already been recorded. We remain vigilant in assessing risks and adapting security measures accordingly.

To address these challenges, we are prioritizing **partnerships and innovation** to strengthen security. We are working closely with the **UN Security Management System** to enhance risk management. Automated solutions are being developed to streamline training and compliance reporting, saving time and resources.

Our structural engineer is **optimizing security specifications**, repurposing equipment, and identifying cost-saving solutions at the local level. Additionally, we are utilizing **technological tools** to conduct **remote blast assessments**, ensuring tailored, cost-effective security evaluations.

At a time of **growing needs and financial constraints**, maintaining our capacity to implement security risk management, train personnel, and respond effectively is essential.

Closing Remarks

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Your continued support and partnership are critical to our shared humanitarian commitments. Despite the challenges, UNHCR are committed to delivering protections assistance and solutions to forcibly displaced and stateless people.

I thank you for your attention and look forward to our continued collaboration.