

Deliver Better Roadmap
Additional remarks for the 93rd Standing Committee meeting
Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme
Kelly T. Clements, Deputy High Commissioner
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Mister Chair,
Distinguished delegates,

Before we dive into the agenda item on budgets and funding, as promised yesterday, let me update you on our accelerated work to deliver better for people forced to flee and stateless persons. Work that began far before the financial crisis of the moment, but which is even more urgent now. With dwindling resources, the pressure to deliver smarter and more effectively is greater than ever – something many of you noted in your statements in the past two days. I am pleased to share some concrete examples of progress since we last met in March, just three months ago, including our internal, bilateral and UN wide efforts.

UNHCR is part of supporting and shaping the ambitious inter-agency efficiency plans and system reforms, within the broader UN80 efficiency agenda and the Humanitarian Reset led by the Emergency Relief Coordinator. The efficiency agenda is now on turbo charge exploring new approaches to common services and delivery. And we are leading initiatives within the UN System High-Level Committee on Management, which I have talked about in this setting before, such as UN Fleet, treasury services and global insurance management. There are some 18 initiatives being developed across the system, for further exploration and potential implementation. UNHCR is also proactively pursuing opportunities to generate cost-savings through UN-wide collaboration in areas such as travel and emergency surge capacity, to name a couple.

And within the Humanitarian Reset, UNHCR is championing leaner, more adaptable coordination models, strong protection leadership, and locally led response frameworks, which we discussed in parallel this morning in ECOSOC's High-Level Humanitarian Affairs Segment. Our efforts focused on what can be improved, and how the humanitarian aid sector can become lighter and more efficient, avoiding duplication. The broader issue we discussed are the gaps currently. One concrete example is our collaboration with partners on the humanitarian supply chain, through the ECHO Strategic Supply Chain initiative and our role in leading efforts on sustainable supply.

As I mentioned in my opening remarks yesterday, we are also intensifying our collaboration with other UN agencies. One example is our work with OCHA on a joint financial tracking system to streamline reporting and coordination, enhance transparency in humanitarian funding, and ensure that resources are directed where they are most needed. Another example is the joint work we are doing with IOM, which beyond the collaboration on the route-based approach and in mixed situations, now extends to a joint review of our enabling functions to identify areas where additional efficiencies and cost savings can be achieved. We are joining forces to build on each other's strengths, streamline processes, enhance technology adoption, and share resources to get more done effectively.

These additional gains are possible due to our recent business transformation. Our new systems allow us to implement further economies of scale, both with others and internally. As part of our review and restructuring, we will move fully to global shared service to provide a centralized, secure, and scalable platform for transactional, location-independent services

such as human resource and payroll transactions, finance processes such as payments and bank reconciliations, procurement and supply chain, and IT services.

More than a support function, global shared services are drivers of organizational transformation— by simplifying workflows operations can redirect efforts toward protection and solutions, enhancing service quality, and reducing duplication. As of 1 October this year, some important payroll, supply and finance services will be operational.

Standardizing and optimizing our existing processes will also make it easier to integrate with the future UN global consolidated models being designed under the ongoing UN reform agenda. Allowing us to join common services platforms, offer our services to the rest of the UN or, in the future, potentially outsource some of them.

Doing more for refugees and spending less on ourselves has long been one of our top priorities, and you have heard about it from this podium. We will soon publish our deliver better roadmap, a very conscious choice of wording to stress that for UNHCR, delivering better is not only about efficiencies of enabling functions, but about reducing the bureaucracy on colleagues working on the frontlines and seeking to innovate and rethink the way we do business. It will further strengthen our transparency and accountability in how we allocate resources, ensuring they go where they can make the greatest impact.

So how will we do this in practice? We will systematically include value for money in our operational delivery. We will track corporate indicators to demonstrate how we deliver on our mandate complementing and deepening existing data. Moreover, we are committed to update you on an annual basis on efficiency gains achieved across our operations building on the Secretary General's Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review. Lastly, we will systematically bring together operational and support data using key performance indicators to inform real-time course corrections where necessary, improve quality and deliver faster.

Some important figures to highlight: We were able to generate almost 60 Mio USD efficiency gains last year alone, with more expected this year. Looking ahead, we reviewed travel entitlements which we are expecting to generate recurring 5 Mio USD of annual savings. We plan to optimize office spaces generating 10 Mio USD in annual savings and right size our vehicle fleet by 25% resulting in 5 Mio USD annual savings, and we revamp our ICT support resulting in some 5.6 Mio USD savings annually. Through an innovative approach to secondary bidding on procurement, we reduced costs by 13 Mio USD. And those are just a few examples of the important strides we have made. We will share more of those success stories in the months to come. And importantly put those savings into programmes that are short now.

But let me conclude with an important point. For UNHCR delivering better also means staying true to our mandate and adhering to humanitarian principles: to reach those most in need, even in places where no one else can or will go. We do this not because it is easy – or efficient – but because we are mandated to do so.

To stay the course, we need your support – from national and local authorities, hosts, donors and partners. And we need your continued investment and backing when we innovate, embrace emerging technologies, and take transformative steps beyond business as usual. These efforts involve measured risks, but they are essential to remain agile and effective. We call on your continued backing as we work closely with local partners, community-based organizations and those directly affected. This path is more complex and takes time, but it builds deeper roots and delivers more sustainable results. We count on your partnership, as you can count on our unwavering commitment to do everything we can to deliver better for refugees and stateless people, wherever they are.