

UNHCR Annual Programme Budget 2026

94th Meeting of the Standing
Committee
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Global context



DISPLACEMENT

Number of forcibly displaced and stateless people was **129.9 million at the end of 2024** and is **projected to reach 136 million by end of 2026**.



CORE PROTECTION (MANDATE)

UNHCR **focuses on protection and solutions, life-saving interventions, and emergency response** where the Organization can deliver the greatest value.



EVOLVING FUNDING LANDSCAPE

In 2025, amidst shrinking financial support, **UNHCR underwent a major transition**, making tough decisions to sustain critical activities.



EMERGENCY RESPONSE

In 2025, UNHCR responded to 22 emergency declarations in 16 countries, including the return of Afghan nationals and crises in South Sudan and the Sudan.

Overview



Strategic focus

- **UNHCR will be more targeted** in its operational responses, prioritizing areas where it adds the **most value**.
- Prioritize **protection, lifesaving interventions, emergency response** and **solutions**.



Efficiency and impact

- **Budget demonstrates efforts to deliver smarter** through internal transformation and efficiency measures.
- A leaner, more focused organization, committed to **maximizing impact where it matters most**.



Optimized planning and budgeting

- **UNHCR applies a needs-driven approach to planning that reflects** bottom-up operational priorities, **protection** and **solutions** outcomes.



Global Compact for Refugees

- Aligned with the Global Compact on Refugees, advance strategic shift toward **sustainable responses** where development partners have indicated ability to engage.

Main Changes



Population Groups

The distribution of the budget by population group remains consistent with trends from previous years with 69% of the budget for refugees and asylum seekers. Among others, displacement from Sudan is projected to increase the number of asylum seekers and refugees in Chad, Egypt, South Sudan, Uganda.



Impact Areas

Realizing Rights in Safe Environments (Respond) remains the largest budget area at \$3,219M (despite a ↓30% vs. 2025). *Securing solutions* (Solve) increased by 2%, reaching \$1,575 million.



Regional Shifts

The largest proportional decreases are in Middle East and North Africa and Europe (34% and 24% respectively).



Budget Structure

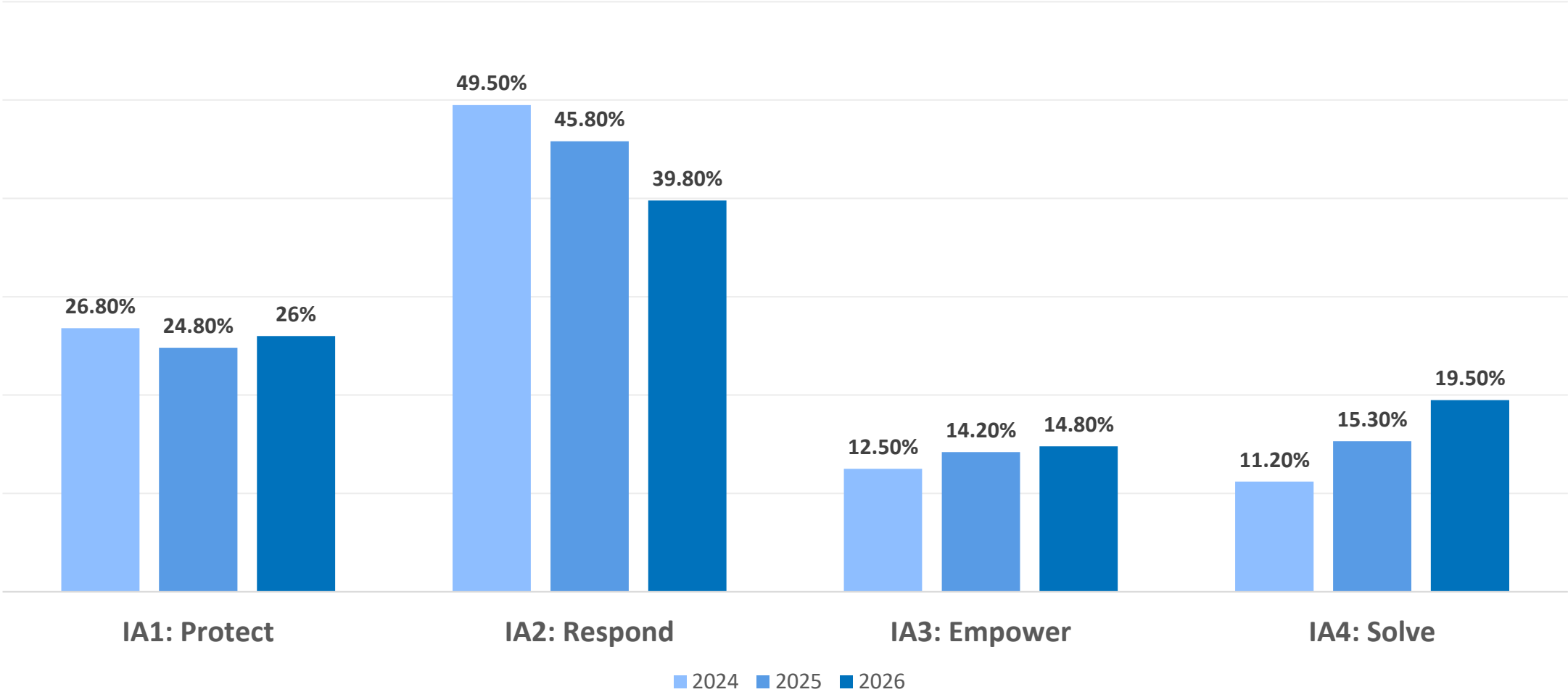
Overall stability in the relative budget distribution by programme (PG), programme support (PS) and management and administration (MA) costs.



Workforce and Presence

Reduction and rationalization of workforce, consolidation of functions and operational footprint guided by UNHCR's comparative advantages.

2024 - 2026 impact areas budget trend



2024-2026 Budget trends: Outcome and Enabling Areas



The budget share **for protection-related outcome areas remain stable** or is increasing, underscoring UNHCR's commitment to safeguarding protection responses.



Outcome areas focused on **durable solutions** reflect a sustained organizational commitment to solutions, with a stronger emphasis on return and reintegration.

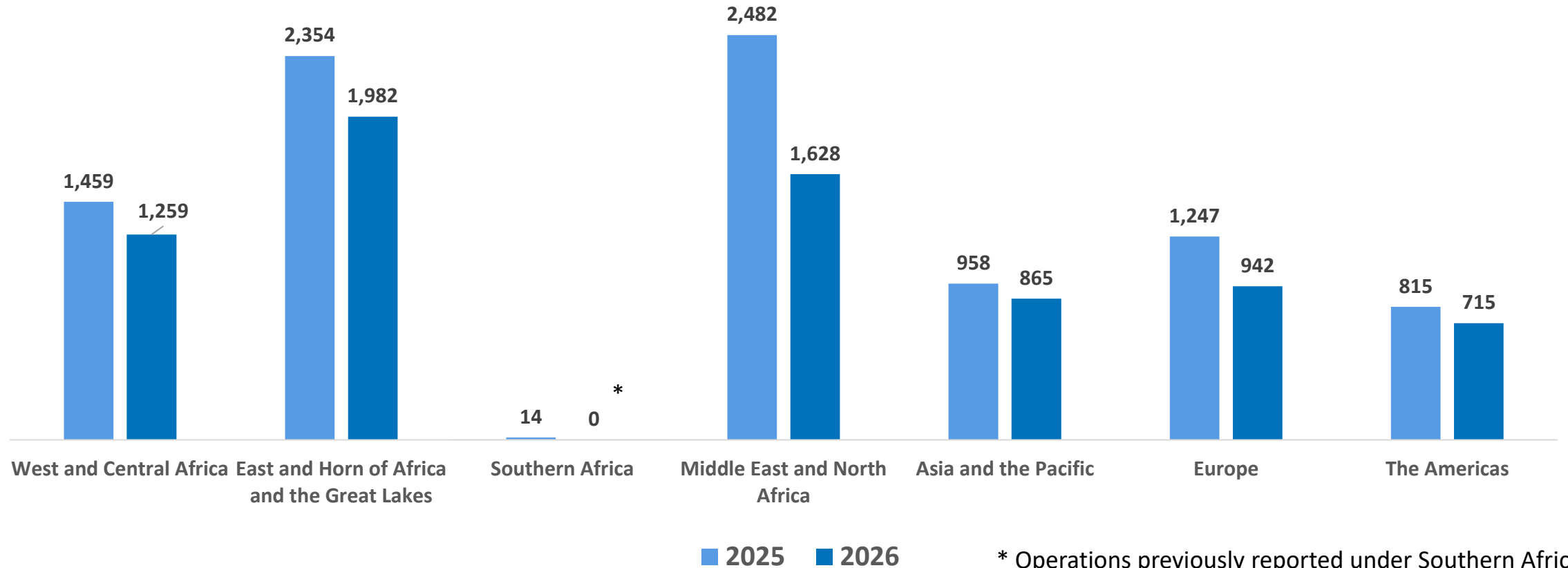


Broader strategic transition from direct service toward enabling durable solutions, indicating a shift from broad humanitarian assistance to **more targeted support**.



All enabling areas show a slight decrease in budget share, **except for enabling area 20 (external engagement)**, with a slight increase due to the need to maintain donor relations and support public advocacy.

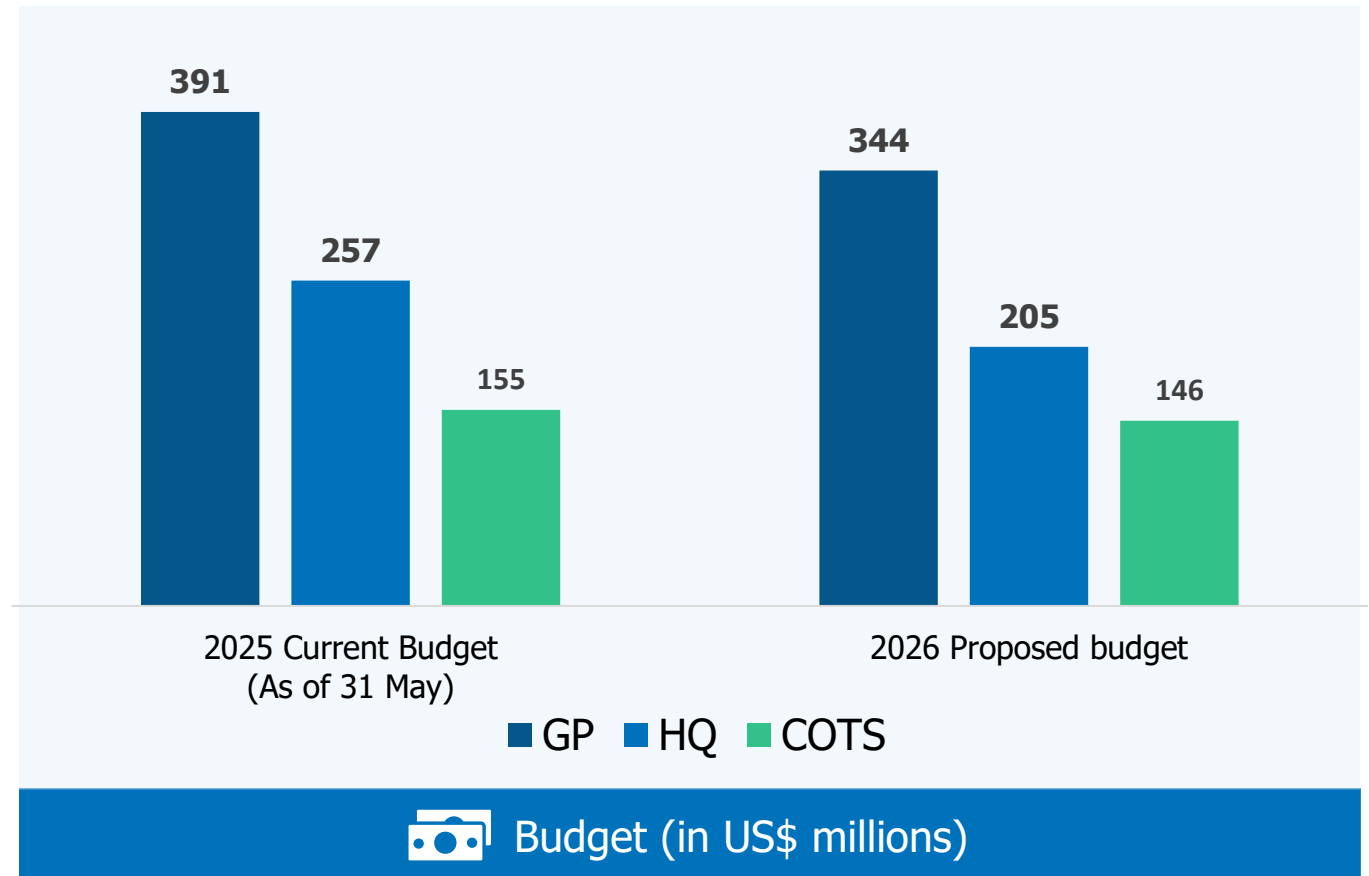
2025-2026 Budget by regions



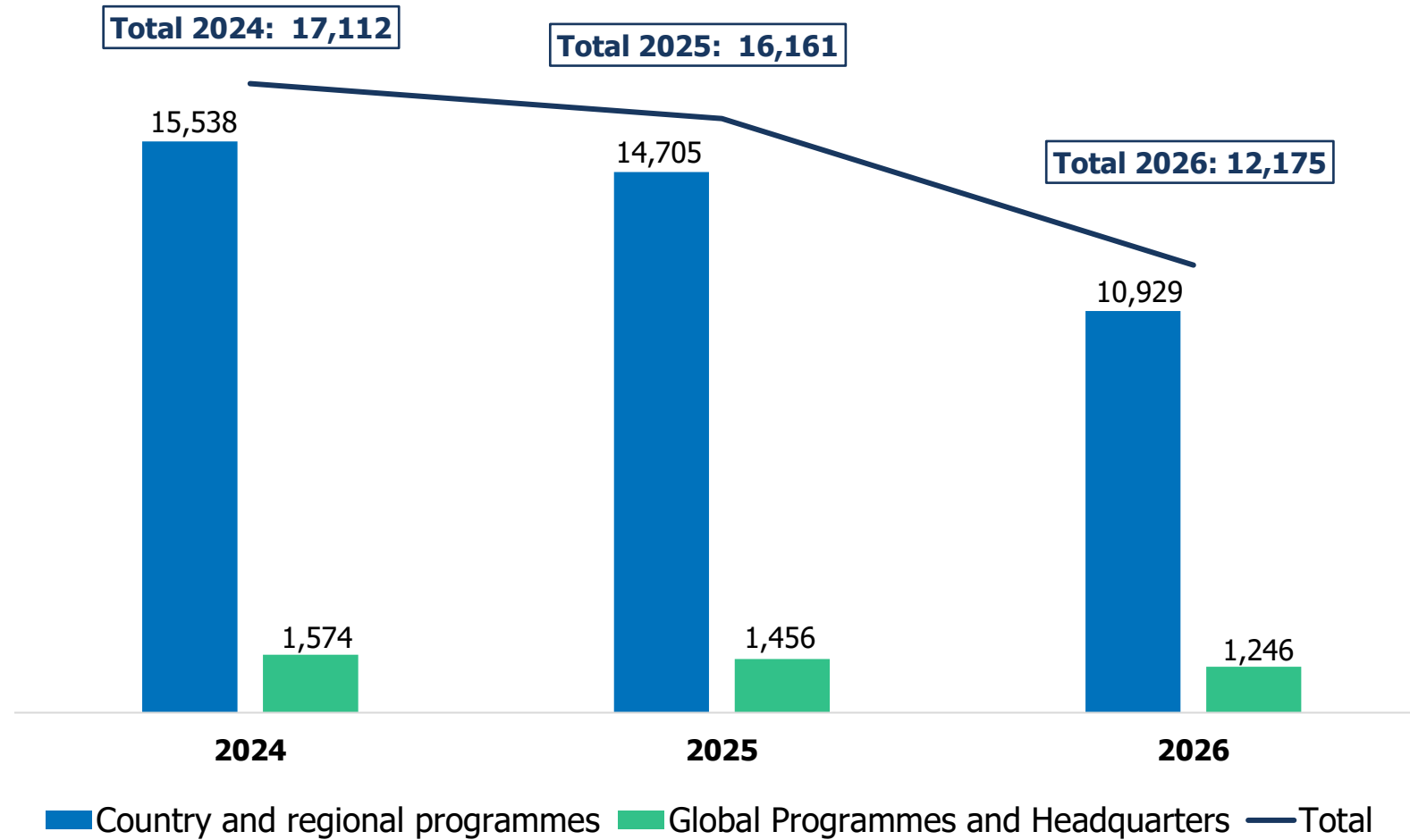
* Operations previously reported under Southern Africa region have been reassigned to the Bureaus for West and Central Africa and East and Horn and Great Lakes

2025 – 2026 Global Programmes, Headquarters and Country Operational Technical Support Budgets (COTS)

- **Restructuring of Headquarters (HQ) and Global Programmes (GP)** will reduce the number of divisions and entities in 2026.



Three-year outlook on posts in the programme budget



ACABQ Report on the 2026 Programme Budget



Financial resources

Provide estimated operational requirements in addition to needs-based estimates (para 8)



- Will continue to consult with Member States in strengthening the presentation of budgetary and prioritization information against resources available, including examining the WFP approach, its benefits, lessons learned and applicability to UNHCR.

Include evolution of expenditure and detailed staffing plans and tables (para 13)



- Annex 1, Table 5 outlines two-year expenditure trends and current year forecasts. Budgeted staff posts provided by location and grade, including year-on-year variances. Actual staff planning is undertaken after approval of the budget in line with rules.

Information on impact of cost containment measures and expected efficiencies in 2026 estimates (para 14)



- Detailed information on anticipated savings from reduced staffing has been provided to Member States through special briefings during the year, along with estimates of savings from efficiency measures.

Resource mobilization

Inform on rate of return and gains from investments made in private funding mobilization (para 17)



- From 2015-2025, private funding mobilized at \$5.1 billion in cash income. Increasing investments have been accompanied by a steady growth in income, with recent investments expected to yield further results in the coming years. The cost-to-income ratio (cash only) has steadily improved over time. UNHCR remains committed in the diversification of its funding base and enhancing financial sustainability.

Inform on joint outreach to donor base, diversification and mobilization efforts (para 20)



- Update on funding is provided at each Standing Committee, highlighting new contributions, new types of financing, new donors. Further updates provided in Global Report. UNHCR maintains regular outreach with donors, including annual bilateral discussions with major donors.

Post resources

Update on staffing changes and impact on UNHCR expenses (para 24)



- UNHCR will continue providing updates and briefings on the restructuring efforts, the impact on staff and the estimated termination costs for affected individuals. As the process is ongoing, complete updates can only be provided in Q1 2026.

Describe evolution of numbers of staff in-between assignment and steps taken to reduce the number of staff in between assignment (para 26)



- The staff in-between-assignments period provides flexibility for both staff and the organization in a rotational agency. This approach is cost-effective and operationally efficient. Due to changing context, UNHCR has strengthened safeguards and has reduced the paid leave time for staff in between assignments.

Achieve a more equitable geographical representation (para 27)



- UNHCR continues to prioritize a diverse and representative workforce, recognizing its role in enhancing decision-making, strengthening humanitarian response, and improving community engagement.

Other matters

Pursue efforts to expand procurement from developing countries and update on coordination with other UN entities (para 32)



- Take note of the positive comments by ACABQ about the efforts made by UNHCR to strengthen coordination and collaboration, for which regular updates are provided through the Standing Committee. UNHCR will continue to promote local sourcing in its procurement.

Information on management of reserves for after service health insurance and repatriation liabilities (para 33)



- Information has been shared on this topic by the Controller on the 03 Sept Informal Consultative Meeting and through a CRP. UNHCR will go back to Member States in 2026 with a proposal to address the unfunded component of termination indemnities.

Information on impact of Global Shared Services on staffing requirements (para 34)



- The Global Shared Services is designed to deliver high quality and cost-effective support services, with a reduction of overall effort globally in the execution of functions in IT, HR, Finance and Supply. Process architecture is being mapped, more detailed information can be provided first half of 2026.

Other matters

Update on Sustainable programming (para 35)



- Has been discussed with Member States through dedicated informal briefings in February and May 2025 and at the Standing Committee meetings in March and June 2025. We will provide updates in the next report.

Implementation of the Joint Inspection Unit's Recommendations (para 36)



- Recommendations 1 is agreed in principle but need to be reviewed for specific implementation in UNHCR. Recommendations 2 and 3 are not addressed to UNHCR but to governing bodies (Executive Committee) and may not be fully applicable to UNHCR.

Income from services provided to other entities (para 37)



- UNHCR aligns with UN inter-agency principles on costing and pricing. UNHCR will review how it can report in the future to demonstrate how any financial risks in providing these services are managed.

