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High Commissioner's Programme**

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Summary record*, Thursday, 19 June 2025, at 10.00 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Marcelo Vázquez Bermúdez.....(Ecuador)

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The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m.

5. Programme budgets and funding (resumed)

(a) Update on budgets and funding (+ decision) (EC/76/SC/CRP.18) (resumed)

1. The **Director of the Division of External Relations of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** provided an update on the funding situation for 2025, highlighting the persistent gap between growing needs and declining contributions. As of the end of May, only 22 per cent of the required funding had been received, with total income at \$2.35 billion, limiting the ability of UNHCR to respond with agility. She acknowledged the solidarity of major refugee-hosting countries, including Colombia, Chad, Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Türkiye and Uganda, which together host nearly 40 per cent of the world's refugees. She underscored the need for stronger international responsibility-sharing and thanked all donors, including private individuals, for their support amid cuts to Official Development Assistance. Flexible and unearmarked funding, which represented 36 per cent of resources from January to May, was highlighted as crucial for rapid and equitable responses, particularly in underfunded or shifting emergencies, such as those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon and Ukraine. Private sector contributions were expected to reach \$730 million in 2025, of which \$300 million would be unearmarked, but UNHCR still anticipated ending the year with just \$3.64 billion, nearly one-third less than in 2024. Consequently, \$1.4 billion in critical programmes would be cut, affecting support for up to 13 million forcibly displaced and stateless people. All sectors were impacted, including a 50 per cent reduction in financial assistance, shelter and non-food items and a 23 per cent cut to gender-based violence programming. While voluntary repatriation and local integration activities were being preserved where possible, the overall impact was severe. With 2026 projections indicating even lower income and increased reliance on tightly earmarked funds, she urged all partners to sustain support for protection, solutions and emergency response, reminding that behind every figure are people in urgent need.

2. The representative of **Pakistan, speaking on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Group**, thanked UNHCR for the update on budget and funding as reflected in its 2024 Global Report and expressed appreciation for the work of UNHCR staff at all levels. The Group had deep concern over the growing budget shortfalls affecting humanitarian operations at a time of rising forced displacement driven by emerging conflicts, protracted crises and climate-related factors. Emphasizing that hosting communities in OIC countries were being disproportionately affected, the representative called for greater burden- and responsibility-sharing and expressed concern over the closure of UNHCR offices and reductions in services in countries including Bangladesh, Lebanon, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and others. He requested more transparency on cost savings from staff reductions and called for full implementation of pledges made during the Global Refugee Forums of 2019 and 2023. He also urged expansion of third-country resettlement and reaffirmed the need for safe, voluntary and dignified repatriation supported by investments in countries of origin. The representative further opposed the introduction of new asylum categories, called for the use of universally accepted terminology and encouraged full engagement in the upcoming high-level conference on the Rohingya situation. Lastly, he referenced the statement by the OIC General Secretariat condemning the Israeli attack on 13 June against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

3. The representative of **Uganda, speaking on behalf of the Africa Group**, thanked UNHCR for the detailed reporting and noted that budget and funding updates have become a growing source of concern due to deepening financial crises and shifting donor priorities. Stressing that the African continent hosts more than 50 million persons of concern and that the crisis in the Sudan remains the world's most severe humanitarian emergency, the representative underlined the continent's commitment to international responsibility-sharing. She expressed alarm that by mid-year, only a small fraction of the 2025 budget had been covered, raising fears of a deteriorating situation for both refugees and host countries. She emphasized that African States continue to provide land, infrastructure and services to support displaced populations despite economic constraints and called on other member States to match this commitment. She urged clarity on how UNHCR intends to address the

widening funding gap and requested information on anticipated cost savings by region and programme resulting from ongoing staff cuts.

4. The representative of **Sweden** thanked the Deputy High Commissioner and the presenters for their valuable inputs and confirmed his country's alignment with the forthcoming statement of the European Union and its member States. Sweden welcomed the 2024 Global Report and echoed concerns about rising forced displacement in the context of limited financial resources. Acknowledging the increasing pressure on UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies, the representative called for continued reforms to ensure that aid reaches those in need. He praised the engagement of UNHCR in the United Nations reform and the humanitarian reset, encouraging greater alignment with broader processes within the United Nations. The representative emphasized the urgency of enhancing collaboration with development actors, the private sector and host communities to promote inclusion and self-reliance among refugees. He recognized the importance of voluntary, safe and dignified returns and reaffirmed Sweden's commitment as a longstanding multi-year and flexible donor. He concluded by inviting others to join the Nordic-Dutch-Swiss pledge on quality humanitarian funding.

5. The representative of the **United Republic of Tanzania** said her country aligned itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Africa Group and stressed that funding unpredictability is placing host countries in increasingly difficult positions. The representative noted that while her country is working to rebuild its economy and support its citizens, it continues to host displaced persons from neighbouring countries, a responsibility that stretches national resources. The representative called for more transparent and practical updates from UNHCR on its strategy to assist host countries and cited recent communications from the World Food Programme indicating possible cuts to food assistance starting in January 2026. She cautioned that deprioritization of health and protection services could have dire consequences and stressed the need for investment in durable solutions, particularly voluntary repatriation to safe areas in countries of origin. While appreciating the need for cost-saving measures, such as office closures and staff reductions, the representative requested more information on their concrete outcomes. Tanzania also asked for clarification on plans to transition the UNHCR office into the Resident Coordinator's structure and urged greater localization by hiring qualified national staff, which would contribute to long-term cost efficiency and sustainability.

6. The representative of **Switzerland** expressed concern over the growing financial deficit in 2024, which had increased to 52 per cent despite a decreasing overall budget. The representative noted uneven regional impacts, with budget reductions of 30 per cent in Europe and 17 per cent in Asia-Pacific, while the North, Middle East and Africa region saw an increase of almost 12 per cent. He called for better written explanations of budget changes and urged UNHCR to establish a forum for discussing criteria for reallocations in future budget cuts. While welcoming the increased contributions as of 30 April 2025, the representative raised questions about the feasibility of reducing the projected 77.8 per cent financial deficit and its implications for resource allocation.

7. The representative of **Denmark** confirmed his country's alignment with the forthcoming statement of the European Union and acknowledged the updates on budgets and funding. While welcoming the efforts to align operational structure with financial realities, he expressed deep concern about the overall funding crisis affecting UNHCR and the wider humanitarian system. The representative requested more information on how UNHCR is prioritizing amid resizing, including implications for staffing and coordination with host countries. He emphasized the value of multi-year, unearmarked and flexible funding and encouraged broader support for the pledge of the Global Refugee Forum on quality humanitarian funding. The representative also called for continued efforts to increase efficiency, align with the humanitarian reset initiative and United Nations reform processes and ensure locally led humanitarian action. He urged UNHCR to apply an age, gender and diversity approach consistently and concluded by expressing support for the focus on sustainable responses.

8. The representative of **Ethiopia** said her country aligned itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Africa Group and thanked UNHCR for its transparency in presenting the current budget and funding situation. While

recognizing the importance of efficiency, she stressed that cost-cutting must not come at the expense of refugees' dignity, rights and essential services. The representative expressed concern about potential gaps in critical sectors such as health, water, sanitation, education and protection, which would exacerbate pressure on already strained host communities. She called on UNHCR to enhance resource mobilization with new and existing donors, improve inclusivity in planning and prioritization with host governments and ensure that protection principles remain central in all budget decisions. She reaffirmed her country's commitment to refugee protection and urged the international community to improve responsibility-sharing.

9. The representative of the **Kingdom of the Netherlands** confirmed his country's alignment with the forthcoming statement of the European Union and expressed appreciation for the updates and the organization's personnel. Acknowledging that the funding gap cannot be filled by a few donors alone, he urged broader participation, especially by so-called "missing middle" countries. The representative commended UNHCR co-leadership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on the Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Rohingya refugee response plans and encouraged further joint planning, including in return contexts. While recognizing the advantages of a multi-year budget approach for building trust and enabling coordination, he advised caution in advancing this transition during a period of leadership change and financial instability. The representative supported improvements in multi-year planning and the COMPASS tool and requested an update on its use and integration with other systems.

10. The representative of **Norway** thanked UNHCR for its update and voiced concern about the impact of a major donor's abrupt funding freeze and broader humanitarian budget cuts. With global displacement at an all-time high, she emphasized the importance of maintaining a needs-based and impartial approach in prioritizing humanitarian action. The representative cautioned that sectors such as protection, gender-based violence and child protection were among the hardest hit by current cuts and noted that soft earmarking might be necessary to prevent underfunding of critical areas. She called on UNHCR to establish transparent criteria to assess the severity of needs across operations and encouraged donors to uphold principles of good humanitarian donorship, including predictable and unconditional funding.

11. The representative of **Germany** expressed deep concern over the projected 80 per cent funding gap for 2025, stating that it posed a serious setback for providing protection and assistance to displaced persons. He acknowledged the efforts made by UNHCR to adapt to the challenging financial context and encouraged continued focus on protecting core staff and frontline responders. The representative stressed the need to safeguard life-saving protection work and emergency responses in line with the global humanitarian overview. He emphasized the importance of aligning reform efforts with ongoing humanitarian and United Nations system reforms and called on all partners to step up contributions in the spirit of burden- and responsibility-sharing. The representative concluded by noting that his country had already frontloaded its 2025 contributions and encouraged others to do likewise.

12. The representative of **Canada** expressed appreciation for the organization's efforts to enhance transparency, stability and results-based management, especially through the implementation of the COMPASS system and the new budgetary structure. He welcomed the alignment of the budget with the Global Compact on Refugees and the Sustainable Development Goals and noted the strengthened link between financial resources and results. The representative requested clarification on internal mechanisms to prevent the erosion of core protection capacities during the ongoing transition. He also emphasized the importance of aligning refugee responses with the humanitarian coordination system led by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in order to ensure coherence and avoid fragmentation. The representative concluded by recognizing the financial challenges and encouraging UNHCR to maintain transparency about the impact of reductions while using this moment to rethink strategic priorities and reinforce system-wide effectiveness.

13. The representative of **Australia** welcomed the updates on annual budgets and thanked the organization for its efforts in responding to protracted crises. He acknowledged the pressures on the humanitarian system and expressed concern over decreased regional

expenditures, particularly a 17 per cent drop in the Asia-Pacific region. Noting that only 9 per cent of the 2025 budget was allocated to the region, he highlighted the continued needs in Myanmar, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. The representative reaffirmed his country's commitment through a new \$370 million multi-year humanitarian package and praised the ongoing support provided by host countries. He requested further information on how humanitarian needs were prioritized in the 2025 budget and asked about the frameworks guiding assistance decisions under regional response plans. The representative stressed the importance of predictable, multi-year, flexible funding and noted that 80 per cent of Australia's 2025 contribution is unearmarked.

14. The representative of **China** thanked the Deputy High Commissioner and the Director General for their presentations and noted that the anniversaries of the United Nations and UNHCR provided opportunities for reflection. In light of the liquidity crisis affecting the United Nations and UNHCR, the representative welcomed the Secretary-General's UN80 initiative aimed at increasing efficiency. He noted efforts by UNHCR to streamline operations and focus on key mandates, but underscored that reforms will take time. The representative encouraged coordination across United Nations agencies and greater transparency with member States and staff. He expressed hope that reforms would not reduce support to developing countries and urged UNHCR to explore all avenues to maximize resources. The representative reaffirmed his country's appreciation of the role of the organization and its willingness to strengthen cooperation to advance humanitarian objectives.

15. The representative of **Uganda** spoke in a national capacity and aligned with her earlier statement made on behalf of the Africa Group. Thanking fellow hosting countries for their continued commitment amid declining funds, she also expressed gratitude to donors providing flexible and unearmarked contributions. The representative described the difficult messaging that her country must deliver on World Refugee Day to refugees who face hunger and inadequate services, highlighting the painful gap between local commitment and international response. She noted that rapid changes and staff reductions within UNHCR may have long-term costs and called for deeper consultation and transparency with host countries. Stressing that hosting countries bear the brunt of poor coordination and underfunding, she urged UNHCR and donors to align strategies and reaffirmed the Global Compact on Refugees as the essential blueprint for shared responsibility and sustainable support.

16. The representative of the **United States of America** addressed all sub-items under the agenda item and acknowledged the financial pressures many governments face. The representative urged the United Nations to refocus on effective delivery of its core mandates and commended UNHCR for streamlining operations while maintaining protection priorities. She welcomed efforts to develop shared services and achieve economies of scale within the United Nations system. The representative encouraged UNHCR to remain focused on areas of comparative advantage and to maintain robust oversight over humanitarian funding despite the challenging fiscal context.

17. The representative of **Peru** thanked UNHCR for preparing the session documents and highlighted the unprecedented scale of forced displacement in the Latin American region. With nearly 1.6 million Venezuelans residing in Peru, the representative emphasized the national efforts to strengthen institutional capacity and uphold international protection standards. He expressed concern over how budgetary restructuring could affect the quality of life of millions in the region and underscored the value of UNHCR support and donor contributions. Reporting a 90 per cent implementation rate of pledges made by his country since the 2019 Global Refugee Forum, he detailed progress in legal recognition, family reunification and access to services. The representative stressed that political commitment must be matched by adequate funding and technical assistance and reaffirmed his country's commitment to joint solutions while urging donors and UNHCR to preserve the progress made.

18. The representative of the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** addressed items 5A and 5C jointly, recognizing the complexity and urgency of the current challenges, especially on the eve of World Refugee Day. The representative acknowledged the difficult but necessary decisions UNHCR must take to protect its capacity to provide assistance and solutions to forcibly displaced people. She emphasized her country's readiness

to be a constructive partner and suggested exploring targets that are both aspirational and reflective of expected levels of activity. She also proposed further discussion to clarify how the organization's budget corresponds with the Global Humanitarian Overview. The representative requested clarification on the recent decrease in funding for Impact Area 3, which includes community empowerment and gender equality, and asked whether these cross-cutting priorities remain adequately resourced. Commending the shift to a results-based budget structure, she supported continuing the annual budget cycle and welcomed efforts to enhance data quality and improve reporting.

19. The representative of **Pakistan** expressed appreciation for the organization's humanitarian efforts to assist over 120 million forcibly displaced people globally, including through shelter, food, healthcare, resettlement, voluntary repatriation and self-reliance. He reiterated Pakistan's historic partnership with UNHCR, having hosted Afghan nationals for over four decades, and highlighted a recent initiative that provided 4,500 fully funded scholarships, over half of which were allocated to women, to Afghan students. He expressed serious concern over the growing budget shortfalls and their impact on protection and assistance in refugee-hosting countries, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, where UNHCR expenditures have declined by 17 per cent. The representative cautioned that this decline resulted in reduced services and increased vulnerabilities, straining national systems and risking social unrest and exposure to criminal or armed groups. He called for full implementation of pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum in 2019 and 2023 and commended member States who have contributed early in 2024. On third-country resettlement, he welcomed increased applications from Asia and the Pacific but noted the lack of clarity on acceptance rates. The representative requested more transparency on the criteria guiding the acceptance or rejection of resettlement cases and asked whether UNHCR is developing normative guidelines to ensure consistency and fairness.

20. The representative of **France** confirmed his country's alignment with the forthcoming statement of the European Union and made additional remarks in its national capacity. He acknowledged that restructuring within UNHCR is inevitable but insisted that it must be conducted in consultation with member States and local partners and be aligned with the broader UN80 reforms and the humanitarian reset initiative. The representative expressed concern over the negative consequences of reforms on displaced persons, host communities and UNHCR staff. He reaffirmed France's support for UNHCR and the multilateral system as the fairest and most effective expression of solidarity. Stressing the need for a collective response involving States, development actors, civil society and the private sector, he reaffirmed his country's financial commitment, having contributed EUR 120 million in 2024 and EUR 40 million so far in 2025. He urged UNHCR to diversify its donor base, cautioning against over-reliance on a limited group of contributors. Finally, the representative reiterated his country's strong support for the Global Compact on Refugees, calling it the most effective tool for meeting the needs of forcibly displaced persons and highlighting the importance of the upcoming high-level meeting for its continued implementation.

21. The representative of **Chile** thanked UNHCR for its budget report for 2025 and noted the importance of the UN80 and humanitarian reset initiatives. She emphasized the need for dialogue, transparency and inclusion to ensure legitimacy, effectiveness and sustainability. The representative expressed concern that current conditions do not allow for business as usual and welcomed the presentations delivered by UNHCR, urging that the information be made more accessible and detailed in documents. She requested a reassessment of how budget documents reflect constraints and the real-world implications for those affected by cuts. She emphasized the need for clarity regarding the number of people who will no longer receive protection or assistance, such as the estimated 13 million, and expressed concern over suspended or terminated programmes, particularly those addressing gender-based violence and child protection. The representative supported the shift from a results-based budget to one tied to specific goals and welcomed multi-year planning in line with the Global Compact on Refugees and the UNHCR Strategic Directions 2022–2026. She also reiterated her country's call for more flexible funding and reaffirmed its support for UNHCR and the work of its staff under difficult conditions.

22. The representative of the **Republic of Korea** expressed appreciation for the update on funding and reiterated her country's commitment to enhancing the quality of its

contributions. She reported a fivefold increase in its unearmarked funding to UNHCR in 2024 compared to the previous year and emphasized the importance of flexible funding in enabling timely responses to emergencies. In addition to core support, the Republic of Korea had provided approximately \$40 million in earmarked assistance in 2023 for operations in the Syrian Arab Republic, Myanmar, Afghanistan and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and support to host communities. The representative welcomed the organization's reforms to improve efficiency, including progress on localization and coordination and encouraged the organization to strengthen its monitoring and accountability mechanisms, particularly in relation to cash-based interventions implemented by local partners. She also called on UNHCR to maintain transparency with member States and to ensure reforms are aligned with broader United Nations reforms and the humanitarian reset initiative.

23. The representative of **Kenya** said that her country aligned with the earlier statement delivered by Uganda on behalf of the Africa Group and expressed deep concern about the rising levels of displacement amid significant funding cuts and fiscal realignments. She thanked financial and in-kind donors, especially those providing unearmarked and multi-year contributions and urged others to prioritize flexibility in humanitarian funding. The representative cautioned that underfunding not only jeopardizes humanitarian work but risks reversing gains made in health, education, food security and child protection. Highlighting the dehumanizing impact of interrupted services on children, she called for urgent action to ensure that children remain a core priority and that resources are allocated in proportion to their needs. She requested dedicated sessions to examine the impacts of funding cuts on sectors like food security and child protection, expressing particular concern about the consequences of cuts to the World Food Programme's operations in Kenya. Drawing a parallel to the Marshall Plan, she called for transformative and deliberate investments to support post-conflict recovery and noted that Impact Area 4 on durable solutions remains underfunded. The representative urged UNHCR to mobilize additional stakeholders and provide further details on its engagements to strengthen solutions, especially in countries of origin.

24. The representative of **Colombia** expressed appreciation for the organization's work in providing humanitarian assistance to displaced communities and supporting durable solutions such as voluntary returns and local reintegration. The representative highlighted the role of UNHCR in strengthening Colombia's public policies on forced displacement. However, due to financial cutbacks, her country was now facing significant challenges, including the discontinuation of key programmes such as support for children at risk, housing legalization initiatives and access to housing. The representative urged UNHCR to reconfigure and present a revised country plan to reflect the current financial realities. She called for urgent measures to mobilize and use resources effectively, diversify the donor base and align efforts with government priorities. The representative underscored the importance of continued international cooperation and multilateral engagement, reaffirming her country's belief in the role of specialized United Nations agencies. She appealed for cohesion from the international community, particularly for Latin America, a region traditionally known for its solidarity.

25. The representative of **the Sudan** said her country aligned with the earlier statements made by the representatives of Uganda on behalf of the Africa Group and Pakistan on behalf of the OIC Group. The Sudan welcomed the establishment of a supplementary budget of \$163.7 million for 2024, dedicated to the Sudan situation, recognizing the massive scale of humanitarian needs and displacement. The representative noted that two years of war had created the world's largest displacement crisis, with almost 14 million Sudanese displaced, 10 million internally and 3.7 million across borders, highlighting the human stories behind those statistics. Neighbouring countries had shown solidarity, but the regional refugee response plan was only 12 per cent funded, leaving a gap of approximately \$1.6 billion. The Sudan detailed the consequences, including food ration cuts in Chad, overwhelmed clinics in South Sudan and overcrowded classrooms in Egypt. Within the Sudan, 80 per cent of community kitchens had shut down. While expressing gratitude to donors, the representative cautioned that unless additional flexible funding is urgently secured, preventable loss of life will occur. The Sudan called for predictable, timely and unearmarked funding to close the gaps in the regional and internal humanitarian response plans, invest in protection and

gender-based violence services and increase development financing for host communities inside the Sudan.

26. The representative of **Brazil** thanked UNHCR for its comprehensive update and acknowledged its efforts in managing the unprecedented financial crisis through difficult but necessary decisions. She expressed deep concern over the reduction in operations at a time when global displacement had surpassed 129 million people. The representative highlighted the impact of budget cuts in the Americas region, which jeopardize essential and innovative protection initiatives in the face of complex displacement dynamics. The representative noted that the Operation Welcome programme had been significantly affected, especially in terms of shelter and assistance. While recognizing the need for localization and resource rationalization, she emphasized that these must not translate into added burdens on local governments and civil society actors without adequate support, capacity-building and predictable financing. She called for more transparency from UNHCR regarding the criteria and methodology used for prioritization and urged regular briefings to ensure informed engagement by member States. The representative reaffirmed the focus on protection as the core mandate of UNHCR and insisted that humanitarian action must remain guided by the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

27. The representative of **Türkiye** thanked UNHCR for the detailed budget presentation and emphasized that the reduction in humanitarian funding severely compromises the effectiveness of humanitarian operations globally, including those of UNHCR, and increases the vulnerability of refugees and displaced persons. The representative stated that despite the downsizing of UNHCR operations in Türkiye due to budget constraints, international, regional and bilateral cooperation remains crucial to ensure fair burden- and responsibility-sharing. He underlined the need for long-term, multidimensional solutions such as expanding resettlement and facilitating voluntary returns. The representative reiterated his country's continued commitment to improving the living conditions of refugees, especially the most vulnerable and stressed that only through enhanced international cooperation can the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees be realized. His country will maintain its collaboration with UNHCR and continue advocating for equitable mechanisms of burden-sharing.

28. The representative of **Malawi** said that her country aligned with the statement made by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Africa Group and thanked UNHCR for the update on the budget and funding situation, as well as donors and host countries for their contributions and support. She expressed concern about the impact of funding cuts on the ability of UNHCR to deliver humanitarian assistance and called for an increase in flexible and unearmarked funding to enable the organization to address emergencies and needs, particularly in Africa. The representative emphasized that while Malawi and other countries continue to host refugees without discrimination, financial resources should not be overly restricted in their use. She urged continued support to member States and highlighted the importance of providing essential services such as accommodation, health, sanitation and education. The representative reaffirmed the importance of burden-sharing and called on UNHCR to continue fulfilling its mandate and responsibilities towards host countries. She reiterated Malawi's commitment to keeping borders open and emphasized the need to address root causes of displacement, avoid man-made humanitarian crises and support voluntary return and resettlement as part of a vision for a better future.

29. The **Director of Strategic Planning and Results (UNHCR)** thanked delegations for acknowledging the severe consequences of underfunding, noting its drastic impact on protection, solutions and lives. She explained that budget cuts have led to cancelled or reduced activities and emphasized the importance of solidarity and burden- and responsibility-sharing. She responded to requests for information on 2024 expenditures from several countries and pointed to available written materials online, promising further elaboration during her upcoming presentation on the 2024 Global Report. She acknowledged the calls by member States for more transparency on how priorities and allocations are determined against needs-based budgets and confirmed that efforts are underway to improve the Conference Room Paper format to provide real-time information.

30. Addressing the 2025 budget, she explained that funding expectations were reduced at the start of the year, prompting operations to prioritize ongoing emergencies, core protection and sustainable solutions with development actors. She stated that decisions were revised several times in response to the evolving situation, and their implementation is still ongoing. Projected savings include a 30 per cent reduction in staffing costs by the end of 2026. She reassured that UNHCR is assessing the impact of cuts, particularly on gender-based violence and child protection, while pointing out that some services are covered through health budgets or provided by other United Nations agencies. On COMPASS and Business Transformation Programme (BTP) integration, she confirmed that they had been successfully aligned and there was a smooth data flow. Responding to Pakistan, she referenced existing resettlement norms and promised further information from the protection team. She acknowledged the need for greater clarity in budgeting and prioritization and responded to the Republic of Korea on cash-based interventions (CBI), noting declines due to the scale-down in Ukraine but affirmed that CBI remains a priority. She concluded by reaffirming the commitment to monitoring, reporting and transparency.

31. The **Director of the Division of External Relations (UNHCR)** thanked member States and the private sector for early-year contributions that helped mitigate initial financial concerns, while cautioning that funding gaps are expected to worsen mid-year. She highlighted the strengthened funding strategy, including increased private sector partnerships, exploration of multilateral climate funds for shelter activities and enhanced project-based fundraising, which recently secured \$29 million. She emphasized the importance of localization, acknowledging that local organizations, including those led by women and displaced populations, have been severely affected by cuts, despite UNHCR reaching 27 per cent funding to local actors in 2024. She also addressed ongoing efforts related to the United Nations Accountability to Affected Populations framework and the humanitarian reset initiative, underlining alignment with United Nations leadership, cluster consolidation and enhanced coordination in mixed internally displaced people and refugee contexts across 16 countries. She urged member States to strengthen synergies between humanitarian and development funding streams to support transitions from emergency to long-term solutions.

32. The **Deputy High Commissioner (UNHCR)** intervened briefly to underscore the severity of the current funding crisis, linking internal budgetary decisions to broader geopolitical developments and highlighting frustration expressed by humanitarian actors, particularly local ones, during the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Humanitarian Affairs Segment high-level session. She expressed appreciation for the thoughtful and supportive comments made by delegations, while acknowledging the emotional and operational toll of managing drastic resource reductions. She emphasized the significant financial strain ahead, particularly in the second half of the year and in 2026 and reaffirmed the importance of enhanced communication with member States, noting that oral briefings may often be the most efficient means of sharing information. She announced that the High Commissioner intends to convene another member State briefing before the summer break.

33. In terms of liquidity, she shared that only two months of operating cash remain and urged all donors to accelerate disbursements. Addressing the pace of budget reviews, she explained that although country operations were affected first, the broader review process had only been ongoing for five to six months, requiring compressed consultations and difficult decisions. She acknowledged the inevitability of mistakes but hoped to demonstrate responsible and compassionate implementation by September. Finally, she reiterated that local actors and affected communities remain central to the organization's work, called for greater support and flexibility and reaffirmed the organization's commitment to intensified collaboration, including shared premises and coordinated delivery with other United Nations entities such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

34. The **Chairperson** proposed the adoption of the draft decision contained in Annex 9 of Conference Room Paper 18, which takes note of the final budget for 2024 and the current budget for 2025, including supplementary budgets established by 30 April 2025.

35. *It was so decided.*

(b) Global Report 2024

36. The **Director of the Division of External Relations (UNHCR)** presented the 2024 Global Report, highlighting key achievements, challenges and trends across global displacement contexts. She emphasized that conflict remained the primary driver of forced displacement, citing 59 active conflicts, the highest number since 1946, and referencing contexts such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Lebanon, Myanmar, the Sudan and Ukraine. The Sudan was described as the largest displacement crisis in the world, with over 14 million displaced, surpassing that of the Syrian Arab Republic. She noted that over half of forcibly displaced persons remained within their countries and 73 per cent of refugees were hosted by low- and middle-income countries. She said that underfunding forced reductions in operations, including frozen recruitments and fewer cash distributions, though protection was maintained as a priority. She underscored the role of the Global Refugee Forum in driving progress, the growing use of digital tools like the global help platform in 146 countries and expanded feedback mechanisms.

37. Despite difficult returns under duress, such as those involving Afghans and South Sudanese, she mentioned that there were improvements in resettlement and efforts to combat statelessness. She cited progress in countries such as Turkmenistan, Thailand and South Sudan, as well as the African Union's new protocol on statelessness. In the Syrian Arab Republic, more than 470,000 refugees and 370,000 internally displaced persons returned in 2024, supported by joint UNHCR and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) efforts, area-based recovery and legal assistance. She noted that flexible funding, which amounted to \$1.4 billion, including \$764 million unearmarked, was vital for protection, returns and resettlement programming. The protection services of the organization reached over 18.4 million people in 130 countries, with significant results in access to territory, registration, documentation and legal aid. She called attention to the importance of flexible funding for mandated protection functions that no other organization can fulfil. Despite receiving over \$5 billion in 2024, UNHCR was only 48 per cent funded, marking the first year it fell below the 50 per cent threshold.

38. The **Director of Strategic Planning and Results (UNHCR)** provided additional key data on outcomes and impact, underlining that despite severe funding gaps, UNHCR maintained steady progress across core protection and solutions areas. Nearly \$5 billion was spent to support close to 130 million forcibly displaced, stateless and returnee individuals and households in 120 countries in 550 locations, with the efforts of an 18,000-person workforce. She emphasized that COMPASS, now in its third year of use, helped reflect where further investment was needed and highlighted increased achievements particularly in protection environments, including asylum systems and birth registration for internally displaced persons. She mentioned that notable improvements were seen in gender equality, with a rise in countries having over 50 per cent women's participation in leadership structures. UNHCR provided cash assistance to 5.3 million people and invested more in solutions in 2024 compared to previous years, including voluntary return and reintegration. Flexible and context-specific strategies were implemented regionally, with significant investments in health services and shelter in regions such as East and Horn of Africa, Asia-Pacific and West and Central Africa. She said that more than 4.6 million people obtained civil or legal documentation in 88 countries, and she recorded progress in aligning national laws with the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol. She also commended Colombia and Mexico for reducing asylum claim backlogs.

39. On statelessness, the Director mentioned that UNHCR had been engaged in 45 countries, contributing to the highest-ever number of individuals acquiring nationality, though 4.4 million remain stateless across 101 countries. The organization reached 68.1 million internally displaced persons in 38 countries, focusing on protection, shelter and technical legal assistance. She mentioned that significant strides were made in gender-based violence and child protection services, highlighting the safe spaces provided by Pakistan for Afghan women and girls. The Director stated that accountability to affected populations improved through feedback mechanisms in 133 countries and increased partnerships with local and refugee-led organizations.

40. While overall cash assistance declined in some contexts, like the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, early in the year, she noted that it increased later on to support returns. She

cautioned that underfunding in shelter and basic services led many households to resort to negative coping strategies. Conversely, she mentioned that record numbers of refugees benefited from resettlement and complementary pathways in 2024, with nearly 285,000 departures. Also, she remarked that returns were supported through a wide range of assistance, including documentation and reintegration support. In education, 46 per cent of refugee children were enrolled in national systems, with Cameroon highlighted as a positive example. While most refugees in 107 countries had legal work rights, access to employment remained limited and required greater collaboration with development and financial actors. Finally, she emphasized continued investments in healthcare, particularly in emergencies and for mental health, with the highest expenditures in countries including Uganda, Lebanon, the Sudan, Ethiopia and Bangladesh.

The meeting rose at 13:01 p.m.
