

**Executive Committee of the
High Commissioner's Programme**

Distr.: General
5 September 2025

English only

Standing Committee

Ninety-third meeting

17-19 June 2025

Held at the International Conference Center Geneva (CICG) ▪ room D

Summary record*, Thursday, 19 June 2025, at 3.00 p.m.

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

Contents

- 5. Programme budgets and funding (resumed)
 - (b) Global Report 2024 (resumed)
 - (c) Review of the budget structure and management efficiencies (EC/76/SC/CRP.19)
- 6. Governance
- 7. Any other business

* Summary records, prepared by external service providers, summarize the discussions and record decisions taken. Though extensive, they do not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings. Corrections to a summary record should concern only errors made regarding, for example, an official title, and a statistic or a statement reflected from the discussion. A correction does not allow for any additions or for changes to be made of a political character. Any proposed substantive corrections will be checked against the sound recording of the meeting before any change can be made. Requests for corrections should be sent to the ExCom Secretariat: hqexcom@unhcr.org, and any corrected records will be reissued with a new date. Feedback on the summary records may also be sent to the ExCom Secretariat for consideration in the preparation of future summaries.

The meeting was called to order and resumed at 3.06 p.m.

5. Programme budgets and funding (resumed)

(a) Global Report 2024 (resumed)

1. The representative of the **European Union** acknowledged the 2024 Global Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which confirmed a continued negative trend with over 122 million forcibly displaced persons by April 2025. He expressed support for UNHCR personnel and concern over budgetary shortfalls affecting humanitarian operations, noting that unprecedented budget cuts had severely impacted the United Nations system, including UNHCR, leading to difficult operational trade-offs that adversely affected displaced persons and their host communities. He urged UNHCR to ensure safe, inclusive, and targeted protection programmes, uphold quality standards and retain dedicated protection expertise, especially for sexual and gender-based violence. He emphasized the importance of systematically prioritizing protection as a core principle, integrating it across operations and maintaining specialized expertise despite financial constraints. The representative reaffirmed the European Union's support, highlighting the bloc's \$1.3 billion of contributions in the previous year while encouraging new donors to step up. He welcomed the role of UNHCR in the humanitarian reset and UN80 initiatives, emphasizing the urgency for structural reforms to improve coordination, reduce duplication and enhance system efficiency. He also urged UNHCR to continue supporting the UN80 and humanitarian reset initiatives, while aligning its internal review with these efforts to make the United Nations more agile, transparent, cost-efficient, effective and accountable across its three pillars: peace and security, human rights and sustainable development. He suggested that reform proposals consider both cost and quality factors, building on lessons from past reforms. To optimize resources and synergies, he pointed out the importance of addressing fragmentation and duplication of efforts, and strengthening inter-agency cooperation, particularly in improving coordination and clarifying roles with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other agencies. In light of financial constraints, the representative urged sustainable and context-specific responses that foster inclusion, self-reliance and broader stakeholder engagement.

2. The representative of **Mexico** acknowledged the organization's efforts in assisting over 306 million people, despite only 48 per cent of the required funding being covered amid a complex global context. She highlighted Mexico's close cooperation with UNHCR at both national and regional levels, which had been essential for strengthening their asylum system by facilitating the local integration of refugees and asylum-seekers through improved access to employment, education, and social protection and also welcomed the recent visit of the High Commissioner. The representative underlined the need for open, inclusive discussions and clear information to strengthen the organization's strategy. She noted the importance of flexible and diverse funding for sustaining operations in Latin America and the Caribbean, called for raising the visibility of the region's needs and stressed the importance of consolidating progress and addressing remaining gaps, in line with ongoing bilateral discussions and briefings. She reaffirmed Mexico's solidarity with UNHCR and its staff, advocating for open and inclusive dialogue spaces in the review process and calling for clear, actionable information to enable constructive input from States and stakeholders. She urged all States to uphold the principles of solidarity and shared responsibility to ensure continued assistance and protection across regions.

3. The representative of **Switzerland** acknowledged the considerable efforts of personnel and partners on the ground, noting the increasingly complex, dangerous, and sensitive nature of displacement situations. He highlighted the significant gap between growing protection needs and limited capacity to respond, citing data from 2023 showing a decline in protection services and a drop in the number of people able to benefit from protection support, with over seven million affected. Emphasizing that current efforts are insufficient to meet needs, he underlined the importance of improving coordination and information-sharing among stakeholders. The representative reaffirmed Switzerland's support for strengthening local systems and called for greater involvement of development actors. He encouraged the mobilization of additional funding sources, particularly from the private sector, whose contributions have halved compared to 2021. He also noted the need

for more flexible and predictable financial support, highlighting the High-Level Officials Meeting in December as an opportunity to assess the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees and advance joint efforts.

4. The representative of **Egypt** expressed appreciation for the dedication of the High Commissioner and the organization's personnel and shared that the number of UNHCR-registered refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt had exceeded 900,000, with the country also hosting another 10 million other migrants. She affirmed Egypt's commitment to its "one refugee approach," ensuring equal protection and access to essential services for all refugees. She shared that Egypt enacted a new refugee law in December 2024, aligned with the 1951 Refugee Convention, which establishes a national committee for assessing asylum applications, prioritizes vulnerable persons and explicitly prohibits forced deportation. She underscored that the inclusion of refugees strains Egypt's resources and infrastructure and stressed the urgent need for funding commitments anchored in the principle of equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing. The representative welcomed the efforts of UNHCR to measure the impact of refugee hosting and stressed the need for balanced durable solutions that do not prioritize one intervention over others. She further cautioned against narratives that portray hosting refugees as economically beneficial. While reaffirming refugees' right to work as recognized under Egypt's new refugee law, the representative highlighted that refugees' access to employment can affect host communities, many of whom already face challenges in finding decent jobs and accessing further training opportunities. She expressed concern over the use of loans to support refugee-hosting countries as it undermines the principle of equitable burden sharing, advocating instead for support through grants, technical cooperation and predictable funding mechanisms. Finally, the representative reiterated Egypt's commitment to working with international partners to address the root causes of conflict and to ensure comprehensive and sustainable refugee protection and assistance.

5. The representative of the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** expressed concern regarding the 2024 Global Report, stating that the recent Venezuelan migratory phenomenon is not the result of conflict or persecution under the 1951 Convention, but largely due to unilateral economic coercive measures that have led to the deterioration of essential services and restrictions on access to food, health, education and financing. He also expressed concern over the lack of recognition in the report of structural causes for the migration. The representative also cautioned that conflating migrants with refugees and the selective application of humanitarian principles undermines international legal frameworks and institutional legitimacy. He stressed that interventions by international institutions should not be conditioned by donor interests or funding availability. Venezuela reaffirmed its willingness to cooperate with the multilateral system on the basis of truth, mutual respect and international law, and called for depoliticized and shared responsibility in protecting vulnerable populations.

6. The representative of **Spain** expressed appreciation for the presentation of the 2024 Global Report, expressed concern over the effects of funding cuts on displaced persons and host communities and commended the continued commitment of UNHCR staff working on the front lines under difficult conditions. He reaffirmed Spain's commitment to multilateralism and a rules-based international order, emphasizing the importance of internal review systems to promote transparency and reinforce the humanitarian leadership of the United Nations system. He called for a comprehensive and interconnected approach that links humanitarian response, development and peacebuilding, tailored to specific socio-economic contexts. The representative welcomed the implementation of the roadmap on forced displacement and mixed movements as a way to anticipate risks, uphold rights and deliver targeted, effective responses through coordinated engagement with countries of origin, transit and destination. He underscored the importance of maintaining the centrality of protection by preserving protection team capacities, integrating protection across all responses and ensuring specialization, particularly in areas such as gender-based violence. He further encouraged UNHCR to strengthen collaboration with the private sector, international financial institutions, and local actors. He noted that \$104 million had been raised in private donations from Spain in 2024, making them the largest private donor globally, and reaffirmed Spain's continued commitment to international protection, centred on people and human rights.

7. The **Director of the Division of Strategic Planning and Results (UNHCR)** responded to questions about spending on child protection, explaining that the slight decrease in expenditure in 2024 compared to 2023 was partly due to a different measurement approach. She emphasized that commitment and efforts remain the same and noted close collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). She clarified that decreases in regional allocations in Europe were because of reduced needs in Ukraine and Türkiye. In Asia, the decline was due to decreased programming in Afghanistan and in the response to the Pakistan 2022 floods, while the commitments and presence in Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Indonesia were maintained or increased.

8. Referring to several questions on investments and solutions and acknowledging the Standing Committee's feedback for UNHCR to increase budget allocations for Impact Area 4, she explained that most of the related activities are done through advocacy, partnerships, and strategic fundraising for external initiatives rather than direct funding. She noted that budgetary allocations will always be lower than actual investment needs, although efforts are underway to better reflect funds raised through catalytic and advocacy means, even if they do not flow directly through UNHCR. On currency management concerns raised by Switzerland, she detailed how UNHCR mitigates currency volatility through hedging, local sourcing, staggered fund transfers, and multi-currency bank accounts.

(c) Review of the budget structure and management efficiencies (EC/76/SC/CRP.19)

9. The **Director of the Division of Strategic Planning and Results (UNHCR)** presented the review of the budget structure and management efficiencies that had been requested by the Executive Committee in October 2020. She noted that comments and feedback from a previous informal consultative meeting had been incorporated into the paper. She recalled that the 2020 reforms introduced three major changes: (1) multi-year country-level planning aligned with the Global Compact on Refugees and national development plans; (2) a simplified Global Results Framework allowing contextual flexibility; and (3) the new COMPASS system to support planning, budgeting, and reporting. These changes replaced the former pillar structure with a results-based approach and shifted from a biennial to an annual budget period, formally approved starting in 2022. As such, the review process drew from internal lessons learned, oversight bodies, feedback from member States and the practices of other United Nations agencies. The new structure had been met with broad support, particularly its alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Global Compact on Refugees and clearer presentation of impact and outcome areas. While management efficiencies were difficult to quantify due to the lack of a pre-reform baseline data, she highlighted that improvements in resource allocation, flexibility, time savings and reporting had been observed. The streamlined structure had led to time savings and more efficient planning and approval processes, and improved communication of results through the Global Report had reduced the need for ad hoc reporting. Regarding the COMPASS system, she shared that while feedback was positive, the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) had emphasized the need for improving the management and communication of indicators to better support results-based management. UNHCR had addressed this recommendation with a new indicator module, although more work on functionality, data quality and capacity building was still needed.

10. On the annual budget period, she noted benefits such as improved oversight, alignment with the United Nations regular budget cycle, and operational flexibility, as well as better strategic coherence and a reduced administrative burden. She recommended maintaining the current 12-month budget period while conducting further analysis of a potential shift to multi-year budgeting. The existing budget structure, centred on impact and outcome areas, would be retained with possible refinements. She committed to continuing to consult with member States to assess the feasibility and implications of any future adjustments.

11. The representative of the **Philippines** appreciated the comprehensive update on the budgetary outlook and management efficiencies but expressed concern about the persistent and widening gap between assessed needs and actual funding. While echoing calls for more predictable, unearmarked, multi-year contributions, she requested clarity on the concrete steps to diversify the organization's resource base, such as private sector engagement,

leveraging issue-based pooled funds or developing tailored donor strategies. She encouraged the use of scenario-based budgeting to outline operational priorities under varying funding levels, inquiring whether UNHCR had mapped potential funding or operational shocks and their corresponding response scenarios. She expressed strong support for the adoption of clear efficiency indicators across the organization to demonstrate the measurable value of allocated resources, ensure that aid reaches those most in need and reinforce trust. Finally, she reaffirmed the Philippines' full support for the organization's principled, pragmatic multilateralism, noting their modest but enduring commitment through complementary protection pathways, regional cooperation and consistent engagement.

12. The representative of the **Russian Federation** expressed appreciation for the report and expressed general agreement with its positive assessment of the one-year budget. He recalled the findings of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System, which supported the use of shorter budget cycles for humanitarian organizations due to the inherent volatility of their work. In preparation for the upcoming session of the Executive Committee, the representative requested that member States be provided with the opinion of the United Nations Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) regarding the maintenance of a one-year budget. He stressed that ACABQ, as an authorized United Nations expert body, holds greater legitimacy in such matters than the Multilateral Performance Network (MOPAN), which is not part of the United Nations system. He also requested an estimate of the efficiency gains from the one-year budget, suggesting that a quantitative assessment could be based on methodologies developed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. Finally, he expressed the expectation that the organization would provide a more substantive analysis in the future on the possibility of shifting to multi-year budgeting, drawing on the experience of other international organizations.

13. The representative of **Uganda** agreed that the annual budget allows more flexibility in reallocation and storytelling but suggested that elements of multi-year planning could be integrated into the annual budget for predictable costs such as administrative expenses, staff salaries, and office rents, to provide institutional security. The representative also proposed breaking down impact areas further to disaggregate administrative costs from direct operational or service costs.

14. The representative of **Switzerland** thanked UNHCR for the presentation on the report and welcomed the pragmatic, step-by-step approach, particularly in light of income fluctuations. While supporting the continuation of annual budgeting, he stressed the importance of increasing flexible resources to better respond to emergencies. He concurred with the ongoing assessment of both annual and multi-annual approaches, and appreciated the alignment of the organization's system with the Global Compact on Refugees, reiterating the importance of cooperation and financing agreements with other stakeholders.

15. The representative of **Australia** lauded the review of the budget structure and management efficiencies and appreciated the efforts of UNHCR staff during the internal restructuring. Recognizing the organization's efforts to manage budget cuts while global displacement and protection needs rise, Australia urged continued focus on the core mandate and support for the most vulnerable. She emphasized that protection must remain a system-wide priority and encouraged maintaining operations in urgent contexts, including in the Asia-Pacific. She also urged strengthened collaboration with partners and innovative whole-of-route and whole-of-society approaches.

16. The **Director of the Division of Strategic Planning and Results (UNHCR)** responded to questions raised by member States, beginning with the Russian Federation. She noted that UNHCR values the input of the ACABQ, regularly incorporates their feedback into formal budget documents, and sometimes briefs member States in advance of submitting responses. She clarified that while the ACABQ has not provided specific comments on the organization's 12-month budget period, they expressed concerns in broader United Nations reports about increased workload due to annual budgeting. This feedback will be considered in a future review of the feasibility and implications of shifting to multi-year budgeting. On efficiency gains from the annual budget structure, she acknowledged that while quantitative assessments were limited, qualitative evidence suggested time-saving and planning benefits. She indicated that UNHCR would explore the applicability of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group's methodology for measuring efficiency.

17. Responding to Switzerland's statement, she expressed appreciation for the recognition of the alignment of the results framework with the Global Compact on Refugees and agreed with the suggestion to continue using the 12-month budget alongside further review. Addressing the Philippines' comments, she acknowledged the need to better articulate how projected funding fits within a needs-based budget and stated that this will be examined further. Responding to Uganda, the Director welcomed the suggestion of presenting predictable costs in a multi-year format alongside annual budgeting. She also explained how administrative and programmatic expenditures are categorized within the organization's reporting, emphasizing the transparency of expenditure reports and the differentiation between management, programme support, and direct delivery costs. She highlighted that most staff involved in field activities contribute to direct programme delivery, and reiterated that management and administrative costs remain modest and within the indirect support cost ceiling.

6. Governance

18. The **Chairperson** invited delegations to suggest issues for inclusion in the High Commissioner's opening statement at the upcoming plenary session of the Executive Committee, noting that the statement would form the basis for the annual plenary session's general debate.

19. The representative of **Uganda**, noting that this marks the High Commissioner's final Executive Committee session, expressed appreciation for his leadership and longstanding service. She invited the High Commissioner to reflect on his tenure by sharing his personal account of the past decade, highlighting institutional progress, key challenges, and achievements during his leadership. The representative requested insights into the evolution of the organization's workforce, funding environment, and strategic initiatives, including successes, lessons learned, and priorities that he would recommend for his successor. She noted that this could offer valuable guidance for the future and help member States understand which practices to sustain and which to improve. The representative also requested the High Commissioner's reflections on stakeholders and how engagement with underrepresented actors could be strengthened. Finally, the representative inquired whether the organization's role in climate-induced displacement may grow over time and whether the foundational principles of the 1951 Convention remain sufficient and relevant in addressing today's displacement challenges.

20. The representative of the **United Republic of Tanzania** outlined four key issues their delegation would like the High Commissioner to address in his statement regarding governance. These include sustainable responses, climate impacts and alternatives on the ground for hosting governments, private sector partnerships and their impact, and partnership with other United Nations agencies at the national level, specifically concerning "one office, one business, one programme and one leadership".

21. The representative of the **Kingdom of the Netherlands** welcomed the opportunity to suggest points for the High Commissioner's opening statement, expressing interest in hearing the High Commissioner's reflections on how the organization's review process aligns with the UN80 and humanitarian reset initiatives. He also requested information on how UNHCR is coordinating with partner organizations regarding adjustments to organizational footprints resulting from budget cuts and restructuring to ensure that assistance continues to be delivered by the best-positioned agencies. Additionally, the Netherlands proposed the inclusion of implications of funding reductions in the organization's localization commitments and how such impacts might be mitigated.

22. The representative of **Kenya** expressed interest in hearing more from the High Commissioner on the role of the organization in mobilizing support for peace efforts, including follow-up to the peacebuilding pledge made at the previous Global Refugee Forum. She also requested further information on the organization's climate action, particularly in refugee-hosting countries, and echoed the Netherlands' interest in how the humanitarian reset initiative may affect the organization's work. Finally, the representative reiterated the need for more detailed information on partnerships with other agencies, specifically on roles and responsibilities in joint operations, as also noted by the United Republic of Tanzania.

7. Any other business

23. The representative from **Colombia** briefly announced that Colombia would host a regional conference on forced displacement on 2-4 September 2025 in Riohacha, La Guajira, expressing confidence that it would facilitate a multi-sectoral dialogue to address challenges related to migration and return while respecting human rights.

24. The representative of **Kenya** announced that 30 June 2025 would mark the end of Kenya's chairmanship of the Platform on Disaster Displacement, to which UNHCR is a standing invitee, and invited other delegates to a movie screening at the Graduate Institute to commemorate this event. She also requested UNHCR to coordinate with other agencies to avoid scheduling clashes for major meetings, noting the difficulty for small delegations to attend concurrent important events.

25. The representative from **the Sudan** recommended including reflections on the impact of economic sanctions on forcibly displaced persons and the role of humanitarian organizations in ensuring accountability to affected populations. She further requested the High Commissioner's views on the neutrality of humanitarian organizations, specifically on whether "passive neutrality" or "not telling the full stories" constitutes complicity with crimes or contradicts their role, as well as ways forward in reshaping the humanitarian system.

26. The **Chairperson**, after thanking everyone for their participation, declared the ninety-third meeting of the Standing Committee closed.

The meeting adjourned at 4:34 p.m.
