

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

Distr. : Restricted  
15 February 2019  
English  
Original: English and French

**Standing Committee**  
74<sup>th</sup> meeting

---

**Global programmes (including HIV/AIDS)**

*Summary*

This paper provides an overview of the latest developments in UNHCR's programmes in the areas of public health, shelter and settlement, environmental management and energy, as well as cash assistance, to protect persons of concern to the organization. Finally, the paper provides an update on UNHCR's efforts to strengthen data and identity management.

## Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction.....	1-3	3
II. Upholding technical integrity.....	4-12	3
III. Paving the way for sustainability .....	13-20	4
IV. Strengthening data and identity management.....	21-27	5

## I. Introduction

1. UNHCR operates in an increasingly complex and unpredictable environment. In order to ensure protection and solutions for persons of concern, the organization needs to adapt and remain flexible, working closely together with affected communities, governments and a wide range of other partners.
2. The current decentralization and regionalization process aims to place the authority and resources of UNHCR closer to the point of delivery to enable greater flexibility and to leverage relationships with stakeholders in line with broader United Nations reform efforts.
3. The objective of UNHCR's global programmes is to uphold the technical integrity of its operational responses and ensure that assistance and services provided are comprehensive and anchored in existing national structures. In line with the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), UNHCR's global programmes are strengthened through a broad range of partnerships within the humanitarian, development and private sector realms.

## II. Upholding technical integrity

4. Supporting operations with the appropriate technical approaches to respond to large-scale emergencies remained at the forefront of the work of the Division of Programme Support Management in 2018. The operational and coordination capacity for shelter and cash assistance was strengthened in Bangladesh, Colombia, Ecuador, Uganda and Venezuela (the Bolivarian Republic of). The largest biometric verification exercise in UNHCR's history was conducted in Uganda using the organizational tools available in its digital population registration and identity management ecosystem (PRIMES). Over the course of seven months, over 1 million refugees and other persons of concern were verified in more than 65 different sites, generating accurate population figures to support protection and assistance activities by governments, UNHCR and partners. This exercise resulted in the reduction of population figures by 25 per cent and strengthened the integrity of both the registration and distribution processes.
5. Over 13,000 refugee housing units (RHUs) were deployed to 27 different operations including in Brazil, Iraq, Niger and the United Republic of Tanzania. To improve settlement development, "master plan" guiding principles were developed and disseminated. The master plan approach to settlement planning provides a framework for the spatial design of humanitarian settlements and enables alignment with national, sub-national and local development plans. It also facilitates efforts to link humanitarian responses with long-term development efforts.
6. Additional urban shelter and settlement guidance, developed in partnership with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), will be made available in 2019 to all operations, reflecting the priorities highlighted during the 2018 High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges. UNHCR will continue engaging strategically with the private sector, including through collaboration with Better Shelter, a social enterprise. Through this partnership, RHUs will be deployed to operations with significant shelter shortages. Together with the AutoDesk Foundation, technical shelter design software will be rolled out to field operations, combined with online and face-to-face training. These critical partnerships will help transform technical programmes into solutions, which enhance protection.
7. UNHCR supports HIV-related activities in over 35 countries and significant progress has been made to integrate refugees in national HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis programmes. The most recent data shows that, out of 32 refugee hosting countries surveyed, 93 per cent provided refugees with access to antiretroviral treatment through national services, 88 per cent provided testing for HIV/AIDS and 96 per cent supported access to early infant diagnosis for children born to HIV-infected women. Following an assessment conducted in 2018 on the health and protection needs of refugees in Bangladesh, two drop-in centres at Cox's Bazar and Ukhyia will be added to provide some 1,900 highly vulnerable women and girls with

access to sexual and reproductive health services. In Rwanda, 180 youth peer educators were trained and supported in five Congolese refugee camps in 2018, in an effort to reduce vulnerability to HIV among youth. In South Sudan, more than 32,200 people were counseled and HIV tested, out of which 421 people provided with antiretroviral medication. All those newly diagnosed were screened for tuberculosis and those found to be malnourished received nutrition supplements.

8. In 2018, UNHCR provided technical and field support to the operations in Djibouti, Kenya, Rwanda and Sudan, as well as in other countries, to assist with the inclusion of refugees in national health insurance. Enhancing resilience and facilitating equitable access to health care, UNHCR rolled out a new integrated refugee health information system (iRHIS) in 2018 and began collecting and analysing current data from health services in refugee settings. The development of iRHIS, involved collaboration with around 350 partners. The system will soon be fully operational in 16 countries, reflecting data from 135 sites, some 500 health facilities and 3,000 clinicians, covering around 5 million refugees.

9. Going forward, UNHCR will work in close collaboration with governments to advocate that refugees have access to public health services, including reproductive health, HIV/AIDS services and that their needs in the areas of food, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene are met. UNHCR is expanding its partnerships, for example with the International Labour Organization (ILO), to accelerate the inclusion of refugees, including those not living in camps, in national health systems and health financing mechanisms. In line with sustainable development goal 3, which aims to ensure healthy lives for all, UNHCR will explore ways to engage with governments to develop multi-year integration plans that support refugees in sustainable ways.

10. In 2018, UNHCR completed the review, development and roll-out of a new quality assessment tool for health facilities, known as a “balanced score card” (BSC). The new version of the BSC utilizes up-to-date technology that makes the results of assessments immediately available to the operations. Decisions are subsequently made in a timely manner, and resources can be targeted where they are needed most. In 2018, assessments were conducted in Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda, covering 20 sites in total. The tool provided an objective and standardized approach to the assessments and offered descriptive information to complement the statistics collected in iRHIS. This is expected to lead to improved quality of health services and reduced morbidity and mortality.

11. Reductions in food assistance and limited livelihood opportunities continue to hamper the ability of refugees to become self-reliant. In eastern Chad for example, the situation has deteriorated considerably over the past 3 years, with several settlements reporting global acute malnutrition rates greater than 15 per cent, considered an emergency level. In 2019, UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP) committed to undertaking technical and strategic missions to strengthen joint responses to food insecurity in such locations.

12. In an effort to uphold standards, UNHCR’s global programmes also seek to respond more effectively. For example, UNHCR has deployed an innovative water-tracking monitoring system through mobile sensors in Uganda, allowing for the collection of current data on water levels and distribution rates at all water points.

### **III. Paving the way for sustainability**

13. As a core consideration in its programmes, UNHCR strives to reduce its environmental footprint, minimize environmental degradation and enhance access to clean energy for refugees and host communities.

14. To this end, UNHCR is monitoring its waste production, water use, energy needs and greenhouse gas emissions. In 2019, with the support of partners such as the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNE), UNHCR will establish its first comprehensive environmental management system in Jordan. The Office is collaborating on clean energy provision and solid waste management globally with the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) and Engineers Without Borders

(EWB) in Norway. UNHCR is also working with the IKEA Foundation and Practical Action in Jordan and Rwanda, to provide refugees with clean and sustainable sources of energy and cover community and institutional needs. In Burundi and Sudan, UNHCR is working with WFP, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) to implement the first “climate change adaptation project”, which will be expanded to the United Republic of Tanzania. These projects will address damage to forests and land, as well as improve energy efficiency. In Sudan, UNHCR is working with Land Life Company and Innovation Norway to scale up the use of new technology for forest restoration in refugee hosting areas.

15. UNHCR continues to increase cash assistance for vulnerable persons of concern, having delivered \$1.7 billion between 2016 and 2018 to more than 16 million people in 100 countries. Cash assistance is an integral part of UNHCR’s protection and solutions strategy in country operations, and the organization aims to provide 20-25 per cent of its assistance through cash transfers.

16. In 2019, UNHCR will continue to leverage its partnerships to deliver cash assistance in the most efficient manner. This is reflected in the commitment made in December 2018 by [UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(OCHA\) to deliver this form of assistance through a common cash system.](#)

17. UNHCR’s standard approach is to establish cash transfer services that are managed by private sector service providers and available to all partners on the same terms and conditions. Examples include the Common Cash Facility (CCF) in [Jordan](#), the Lebanon One Unified Inter-organisational System for E-cards (LOUISE) in Lebanon and the Greece Cash Alliance in Greece. UNHCR is working together with WFP in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq and Uganda, as well as other countries, to mitigate the risk of abuse of power by private sector service providers.

18. Monitoring undertaken in operations shows that cash assistance, together with other forms of assistance and services, prevents displaced populations from resorting to negative survival strategies, such as removing children from schools, child labour and begging. UNHCR will continue to conduct post-distribution monitoring in its major operations, including in countries affected by the Syria and Venezuela situations.

19. UNHCR has facilitated access to formal bank and mobile money accounts in Cameroon, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Niger, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia, among other countries. With access to their own accounts, refugees may be encouraged to save money and obtain loans, a step towards financial inclusion in host countries. The use of formal, refugee-owned payment mechanisms also facilitates their access to remittances.

20. In line with the GCR, 22 operations have to date developed multi-year multi-partner (MYMP) strategies to better align UNHCR's planning with that of governments, the United Nations system and other partners. The ongoing review of UNHCR's results-based management (RBM) system takes into account the need for field operations to develop, implement and monitor protection and solutions strategies. In addition, the simplified system will combine core mandatory indicators based on globally endorsed frameworks, such as the GCR, the sustainable development goals and sphere standards, with locally defined indicators, thereby giving operations the flexibility to develop and manage their strategies and plans based on local contexts.

#### **IV. Strengthening data and identity management**

21. UNHCR strives to ensure that reliable data is available to partners and donors to ensure evidence-based decision-making. Field operations also need to be supported with well-functioning systems to enable the collection and analysis of data. While registration is a key protection tool for refugees, there are other ways to gather data, including through

surveys and undertaking technical estimations. There is a need for enhanced capacity in this area, particularly at the country and regional level.

22. UNHCR aims to ensure that every refugee has a unique digital identity that will empower and facilitate their inclusion. As it stands, over 7 million refugees are registered in UNHCR's digital population registration and identity management ecosystem. As registration remains a cornerstone of UNHCR's ability to protect people of concern, efforts are continually made to develop appropriate tools that will enable field practitioners in the most remote locations to register and respond more efficiently. An offline version of UNHCR's software PRIMES, has facilitated registration activities in non-connected and complex environments. It is currently operational in 17 country operations, including Brazil, Kenya and Uganda.

23. In 2019, PRIMES will be deployed to some 20 countries, while anonymized data will be made available through the UNHCR–World Bank Joint Data Center to ensure the inclusion of the needs of people of concern in development planning. Specific support will be provided to the operations in Ethiopia, Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania to strengthen registration processes, increase biometrics coverage and track the process of assistance delivery through the global distribution tool.

24. The Joint Data Center allows UNHCR to benefit from the substantial technical knowledge of the World Bank, particularly the socio-economic conditions of people of concern. The UNHCR-WFP data-sharing addendum, signed in September 2018, is another positive example of data-sharing. UNHCR is seeking to reinforce similar cooperation with other partners, including in the humanitarian and development spheres, in order to better align data.

25. UNHCR's operational data portals receive over 40,000 individual visits per month, cover 23 situations in 99 countries and include a portal co-managed with the International Organization for Migration on the regional response to the Venezuelan crisis. In addition to the UNHCR WFP Data Sharing Addendum which outlines the principles of data protection for sharing personal data, a framework for data sharing in practice has been developed, which offers guidance on how to assess the benefits and risks of data-sharing in a given scenario.

26. KoboTool box, a collaborative inter-agency tool to support mobile data collection, has over 4,600 users in 59 countries, improving precision and the response time between data collection and analysis. In 2018, over 580 people, both internal and external to UNHCR, were trained on information and data management practices and standards. In 2019, UNHCR will consolidate operational data libraries available, combined with anonymized microdata to provide comprehensive data and analysis for public and research use.

27. In March 2018, international recommendations on refugee statistics were adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission. The recommendations provide the basis for building consistency and comparability in relation to the numbers, conditions and needs of refugees. A similar set of recommendations for internally displaced persons are being finalized in 2019, along with practical guidance and tools for use by national statistical entities. Adopting standards for data collection and management, which are in line with internationally recognized methods in the humanitarian and development fields, will enhance data and systems inter-operability as well as the quality and timeliness of information.

---