

Oral Update on Measuring the Impact of Hosting, Protecting and Assisting Refugees

**Remarks by the Director of the Division of Resilience and Solutions,
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Mr Chairperson, distinguished delegates

I am pleased to present this update on UNHCR's efforts to coordinate an initiative on "*Measuring the Impact of protecting, hosting and assisting refugees.*" As participants may recall, this responsibility derives from the UN General Assembly's Omnibus Resolution on UNHCR of December 2017. It reflects the longstanding concern of refugee hosting states that their contributions to refugee protection have been insufficiently recognized.

With the significant increase in refugee numbers in recent years, this concern has grown appreciably. The fact that so many refugee situations remain unresolved further underlines the need to ensure more equitable burden and responsibility sharing. With the sudden un-anticipated emergence of the COVID 19 pandemic, this task has acquired even greater urgency and relevance.

From the outset of the "Measuring Impact" process, UNHCR's approach has had two objectives in mind. Firstly, contributing to greater responsibility sharing. Secondly, designing an agreed methodology and approach. Equally, the process has been informed by a shared understanding that our collective efforts should preferably be based on establishing reliable data and information.

Recognizing the interests of different stakeholders, UNHCR has adopted a participatory approach to developing the initiative and methodology. This has allowed for the exploration of different proposals and initiatives. In addition, in acknowledgement of the complexities of the exercise, the effort has been greatly assisted by technical support and expertise from the World Bank (WB) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Let me express again UNHCR's strong appreciation for their invaluable engagement.

Mr Chairperson,

UNHCR has recently shared the Progress Report on the Measuring Impact exercise. It sets out in some detail the evolution of the discussions and contributions of participants – and the main conclusions - of the work accomplished during the three workshops held in 2019. I should like to highlight a few of the main achievements from UNHCR's perspective.

Firstly, agreement on the key lines of enquiry, namely (i) capturing the contributions of hosting and donor states and (ii) devising a metric to measure the differences and gaps.

Secondly, forging a common understanding of what is required to measure and evaluate impact and of how this can be pursued

Thirdly, agreement that fiscal costs incurred by states consequent to refugee emergencies are among the most accessible entry points for this complex process.

Fourthly, that the costs in some sectors such as education and health are easier to capture than others, notably employment, the consumption of natural resources and prices.

Fifthly, substantial progress in devising different methodologies to obtaining average and detailed cost information informed by practical regional and national examples.

Mr Chairperson

These achievements must also be placed within the framework of the three processes that will inform our collective assessment of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) in future. That is to say, the Measuring Impact process complements and informs the ongoing work on the Global Indicator Framework (GCR) and the analysis of pledges and commitments made at last December's first ever Global Refugee Forum (GRF).

In particular, it is both our aim – and our expectation – that the Measuring Impact process will particularly assist in generating data for the GCR Indicator initiative. In that context, we are confident that the establishment of the Joint UNHCR-World Bank Data Centre (JDC) on Forced Displacement in 2019 - and the ongoing consolidation of UNHCR's data related work into the Global Data Service (GDS) - will enable further significant progress on this important undertaking.

We are acutely aware of the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in recent months. This has required a global emergency response from UNHCR on an unprecedented scale. As Divisions at Headquarters, including the Division of Resilience and Solutions (DRS) has been at the forefront of planning and assisting our UNHCR Response Emergency.

In consequence, we have had to re-organize the priorities of our 2020 Work Plan including the elements we had envisaged on the Measuring Impact process. These had included a commitment to the initiation of workshops at the national – and possibly regional level – to enable a broader participation of local stakeholders. There was also agreement in principle on initiating a pilot impact evaluation to offer a comprehensive accounting beyond individual sectors.

Our agreed aim was to consolidate the practical work developed during 2018 and 2019 and to add another sector, health, to the agreed plan of activities. The focus on health now has acquired additional relevance for our future consideration in the light of the global pandemic. At the same time,

we are fully aware that there are – and will continue to be - very considerable socio-economic consequences for all stakeholders. Necessarily, this may require a recalibration of our efforts and approach.

Like all other organizations confronted by this challenge, UNHCR has had to adapt to the constraints. Our primary focus has been on adjusting our operational footprint to ensure we can continue to deliver for refugees, stateless persons and IDPs. At the same time, we have been in regular exchange with our partners to determine the extent of future needs and to capture and collect data and information on the specific implications of the COVID 19 pandemic for refugee protection.

Mr Chairperson,

Notwithstanding the disruptive effects of recent months, we believe that it is timely and important to take stock of the implications for our future work on Measuring Impact. To that end, we will be reaching out to interested participants to schedule a discussion on how best to take things forward. Let me underline that the invitation to participate is an open one, as it has been since the beginning of the initiative. In that context, I should also note that UNHCR would warmly welcome new participants and contributors to the Measuring Impact exercise.

Mr Chairperson,

May I take this opportunity to thank all participants for their commitment and support for the Measuring Impact process. A collective effort is required to ensure progress on the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). It is our firm expectation that the same spirit of cooperation and common purpose will also continue to characterize our work on the Measuring Impact process.

I thank you for your attention.