

## **CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

**81st meeting of the Standing Committee**

**5-7 July 2021**

**Agenda item 4 (b)**

**Oral update on UNHCR's coordination efforts to measure the impact arising from hosting, protecting and assisting refugees**

Madame Chair/Mr Chairperson, distinguished participants –

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. The Measuring Impact work is part of the three processes that inform our collective assessment of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). It complements and informs the ongoing work on the Global Indicator Framework (GCR) and the analysis of pledges and commitments made during the Global Refugee Forum (GRF). In particular, it has been

our aim that this initiative will assist in generating data for the GCR Indicator framework.

The Measuring Impact work reflects the longstanding concern of refugee hosting states that their contributions to refugee protection have been insufficiently recognized.

Unfortunately, refugee numbers continue to grow. The fact that so many refugee situations remain unresolved further underlines the need to ensure more equitable burden and responsibility sharing. The COVID 19 pandemic has highlighted the value of inclusion in health systems, notably in terms of testing and vaccination programmes and the need to be able to measure the cost of inclusion has become ever more important.

Since the outset, the “Measuring Impact” process was designed to have UNHCR coordinate a Member State led initiative with two main objectives: 1) to contribute to greater responsibility sharing; and 2) to jointly agreeing amongst member states a methodology and approach to measure the cost of inclusion.

The initiative continues to be supported technically with expertise from the World Bank (WB), the Joint Data Center (JDC) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Let me express again UNHCR’s strong appreciation for their invaluable engagement.

Madame Chair/ Mr Chairperson,

The OECD support, represented in the “Financing for Refugee Situations Survey 2020” meets their commitment made at the Global Refugee Forum and is the follow-up to the [“Survey on Financing Refugee Hosting Contexts \(2018\)”](#). It was designed with the intent to collect information on Official Development Assistance (ODA) and ‘beyond aid’ trends for the benefit of refugees, refugee returnees and host communities in developing countries since the adoption of the GCR. It will provide data on ODA to support 5 of the 15 indicators of the GCR Indicator Report. The survey covers the period 2018-2020 mid-year and contributes to measuring the gap in international cooperation.

Despite the fact that the pandemic slowed down certain aspects of our work, I am very pleased to announce a major contribution to this effort. In February this year, the WB and UNHCR finalized and released the report, [“The Global Cost of Inclusive Refugee Education”](#). Based on two years of participatory work with a number of Member States, the methodology provides an analytical framework for measuring and projecting the cost of inclusion in this sector. Notably, the paper highlighted that the average annual cost of educating refugees is less than 5 percent of public education expenditure in developing nations, which host 85 percent of the world’s refugees. The inclusion of refugees in national education systems

has an estimated annual cost of US\$4.85 billion globally (a pre-COVID estimated cost). We believe this is doable. It is not a number that is out of reach. It provides a benchmark to use in discussions with development and private sector actors in working towards achieving education goals for refugees and the financing required to do so.

Major refugee hosting countries spoke at the launch of the report, in April, including Education Ministers from Uganda and Colombia. They highlighted their countries' experiences in providing refugees with access to national education systems. Uganda shared that their costed education plan (launched in 2019), which includes refugee education, has helped increase the quality of education for many refugees. Colombia highlighted how the government has sought to ensure the enrolment of refugees and migrants in the education system; and how these efforts are informing the recently launched Temporary Protection scheme.

We are likewise aware that the report is informing advocacy efforts, to contribute supporting education in major refugee hosting countries. It is also informing national efforts to cost education.

UNHCR, the World Bank and JDC have continued to build-up greater evidence to support the costing methodology put forward for education. We started exploring the possibility to use the ongoing High-Frequency Phone Surveys related to COVID socio-economic impact. These surveys

already include an education module which can be employed (possibly after some adjustments) to gather information on the education costs faced by those forcibly displaced. An area that has been challenged in the current methodology for costing inclusion in national education systems was the cost directly incurred by families in sending their children to school. We hope that this additional cost can be teased out through additional data collection efforts on displaced Venezuelans in Ecuador and potentially on Syrian refugees based in Jordan.

In September 2020, UNHCR, the World Bank and OECD briefed Member States and observers on progress thus far and proposed ways forward for 1) regional discussions and 2) undertaking a similar exercise vis-à-vis costing of health inclusion for refugees. We requested Member States to advise us if interested to participate or lead on either agenda point. We reached out to individual Member States who had been engaged and had noted their continued interest. Unfortunately, we have been unable to garner concrete support.

Madame Chair/ Mr Chairperson,

Our agreed aim in 2020/2021 was to consolidate the practical work developed during 2018 and 2019 and to add another sector, health, to the agreed plan of activities, with meetings to take place at the regional level hosted by Member States.

We have not yet been able to support the planning and implementation of regional and local level follow up as previously foreseen last summer. We believe this is mainly due to the challenging year.

Notwithstanding the disruptive effects of the pandemic, UNHCR, the World Bank and JDC stand ready to provide support to this initiative. If Member States believe that it would be simpler, given COVID implications, to continue the dialogue from headquarters, we will be pleased to recalibrate our efforts and approach.

I believe that COVID has underscored the need to measure the impact of inclusion in national services. I propose to organize a meeting in early September with interested participants to discuss how best to take things forward. The invitation to participate is an open one, as it has been since the beginning of the initiative. I should also note that UNHCR would warmly welcome and provide briefings to new participants and contributors to the Measuring Impact, an exercise led by the Member States.

Thank you.