

Talking points on EC/73/SC/CRP.4 UNHCR's programme in the United Nations: proposed programme budget for 2023

Thank you, Chair.

Chairman, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me start by thanking all of you for the support for UNHCR's programmes and budgets. As we have been discussing over the past few days, these are even more challenging times, requiring tireless and careful work on the part of our colleagues to continue to meet the growing needs of those who are displaced. In that regard, today, I would like to present to the Committee a brief statement on UNHCR's budget funded through the UN Regular Programme Budget. This statement complements EC/73/SC/CRP.4, UNHCR's programme in the United Nations: proposed programme budget for 2023.

As you know, based on Article 20 of the UNHCR Statute, the UN Regular Programme Budget funds a small portion of UNHCR's management and administration costs. These management and administration costs are used to perform key functions in executive direction, management, finance and oversight at Geneva HQs. With the expanding needs of the people UNHCR serves across the globe, our budget, and with that our MA costs, have increased over the past decade. However, UNHCR is proud of its effectiveness in containing MA expenditure, which represent around or less than 5% of the total expenditures in the past few years, and we continue to monitor this carefully.

In order to receive these resources from the UN Regular Programme Budget, UNHCR prepares submissions as part of the overall processes led by the UN Secretary General's office in NY. The conference room paper before you is an advance copy of these submissions, and focuses on UNHCR's programme performance for 2021 and the Proposed programme plan for 2023; the latter to the extent that it can be described given that our Planning of 2023 is in progress at this time.

Dear Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

A few highlights from this paper, and we will cover some of these issues in greater detail in Agenda Item 7 when we provide the update on budgets and funding.

First, our functions related to management and administration are critical to ensure that we, as an organization, continue to be effective and high performing, and that we can stay and deliver, even in fast moving and dramatic contexts such as the ones we experience today.

In 2021, despite a global pandemic and 40 new emergency responses activated in five regions, including Afghanistan and northern Ethiopia, UNHCR was able to deliver protection, assistance and solutions to forcibly displaced and stateless people. Specifically, UNHCR:

- Deployed expert emergency personnel swiftly, despite travel restrictions.
- Contributed to improved access to protection and assistance through the individual registration of refugees and asylum seekers.
- Supported Member States to establish or expand resettlement programmes.
- Made advances towards more predictable and equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing, including establishing more partnerships in support of comprehensive refugee responses, in line with the Global Compact on Refugees.
- Strengthened engagement with UN agencies, national and international NGOs and donors towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Second, UNHCR reached an all-time record level of expenditure in 2021. Provisional 2021 data indicates a 95 per cent implementation rate (as compared to 90 per cent in 2020). We continued to meet our Grand Bargain commitments to strengthen our delivery through local partners, disbursing approximately \$1.2 billion to national and international NGOs. Of this, some \$751 million was provided to 951 local and national responders, of which 728 were national NGOs. This marked the highest number of local and national partners that have received funding by UNHCR to date. Effective partner management and ongoing partner reforms, close engagement in the inter-agency environment, sound oversight, fund-raising, people management, are part of these core organizational functions that help us deliver more efficiently—using each dollar to make a greater difference.

The DHC, in her opening remarks, made note of UNHCR’s business transformations. As part of these reforms and transformations, in the area of resource management: i) we have shifted to a data driven, risk-managed resource allocation process; ii) introduced measures to increase operational flexibility; iii) and through the efforts of Regional Bureaux, we have prioritized and identified needs more swiftly optimized resource allocation to operations. These shifts also increase our efficiency—as we are able to target and focus resources where they are needed most, and manage our budget to make optimal use of the precious resources you entrust us with.

Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Moving to this year and beyond, UNHCR will continue to streamline and optimize systems and processes to enable UNHCR to work with greater agility and effectiveness and to optimize the time and resources dedicated to the people we serve.

As an example, valuable lessons learned from the pandemic over the past years will be carried forward, including leveraging digital technologies where possible, affording increased budgetary flexibility awarded to partners, and applying a risk-based approach to project monitoring.

The Global Compact on Refugees will continue to steer the work of the Office, providing a powerful tool for broadening the base of support for refugees and their host countries and communities. UNHCR will continue to work closely with governments and partners to

promote the inclusion of persons of concern in national emergency preparedness and response plans and in responding to emergency situations.

Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

A few more thoughts on the processes of budget submission and approval. The cycles for submission for the UN Regular Programme Budget, led by entities in NY, and the Annual programme budget, led here in Geneva and culminating in ExCom's approval of the Budget, do run somewhat in parallel. The preparation for the UN Regular Programme Budget for 2023 started at the end of 2021 and is being completed now. The programme content will be reviewed by the United Nation's Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) in April, and then approved by the 5th Committee of the General Assembly in December.

On the other hand, the preparation of the Annual programme budget of UNHCR for Refugees for 2023 will be completed end of July, with submissions and review by Standing Committee and approval by the Executive Committee. Since our country operations are still preparing their 2023 and beyond plans, all programmatic aspects reflected in EC/73/SC/CRP.4 will be further elaborated in UNHCR's Annual Programme budget for 2023 that you will review in August.

In its resolution 59/276, the General Assembly had recommended a level of UNRB funding to be at 50.8 per cent of UNHCR's management and administrative (MA) costs, specifying that not to represent a ceiling. Nonetheless, the share of MA funded from the UN Regular Budget has decreased over the years. In 2022, it is projected at 21.5 per cent, which would be less than half the recommended level.

To make up for the gap in UNRB funding, UNHCR finances this from its voluntary contributions – which would, otherwise be used to provide funding to our Programme. It is with this in mind that I call for your strengthened collaboration and support to ensure that UNRB funding can meet the needs of UNHCR to protect, assist and seek solutions for forcibly displaced and stateless people across the world.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

I thank you for your attention. My colleagues and I stand ready to address any question that you may have on this agenda item.