

DESS Director's statement in the Standing Committee
Emergency Preparedness and Response and Security of UNHCR workforce
and operations
(8 March 2023)

Introduction

Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

I am pleased to update you on the efforts UNHCR is taking with respect to emergency preparedness and response, supply chain, and security of the workforce and its operations.

In 2022, UNHCR declared 35 emergencies, and already in 2023, is responding to new crises as seen in the earthquake affecting millions of people in Turkiye and Syria, the new refugee influx from Somalia to Ethiopia, and the internal displacement situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo which risks potential refugee outflows. My Division is actively supporting the more than 19 UNHCR country operations who have identified a high risk of additional displacement for which preparedness measures are needed. It is therefore my priority to further strengthen UNHCR's global preparedness and response capacity.

Emergency preparedness and response – partnering Regional Bureaux and operations

Distinguished delegates,

It is our pleasure to inform you that UNHCR has launched its new Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response on 31 January 2023. The new Policy emphasises the importance of preparedness with a strong focus on risk analysis and contingency planning as a springboard for an effective response. In activated emergencies, the Policy articulates how operations may utilize simplified and expedited procedures for supply, partnership agreements and access to human resources to meet immediate life-saving protection needs.

To further support the field operations, we launched an Emergency Preparedness and Response Portal, which is now accessible to all staff offering preparedness guidance, templates and tools, and highlights regional hazards and risks, including those as a consequence of climate change.

Distinguished delegates,

Our enhanced emergency deployment mechanisms aim to ensure that the right people are deployed at the right time to the right place, for which more than 400 people are requested annually. To meet demand, the number of our global emergency trainings have been doubled. Today in Brindisi Italy, our new cohort of 80 roster members colleagues are undergoing emergency management training including

simulation exercises (WEM) to enhance their ‘readiness capacity’ to be deployed anywhere in the world within 72 hours.

These efforts are strongly complemented by UNHCR’s 20 global Emergency Standby Partners who continue to provide in-kind expert deployments and service package support. UNHCR is sincerely grateful for their great commitment, collaboration and partnership.

Simple, Swift and Sustainable supply chain

Distinguished delegates.

The ongoing global structural interruptions to supply, coupled with inflation and concurrent emergencies, call for UNHCR to transform its supply chain to provide a **simple, swift and sustainable** service, aiming at increasing better collaboration and simpler processes for its workforce and partners; enhancing response and delivery capacity particularly in emergencies; and reducing the environmental footprint across different aspects of the supply chain management.

Deployment of the new enterprise resource planning system (Cloud ERP) along with the supply strategy, currently under review, will facilitate this transition and guide the future work of our supply workforce. Our strategic objectives focus on fostering a skilled global supply chain workforce, optimizing the delivery of goods and services through integrated planning, and building an agile global logistics infrastructure. Our global emergency stockpiles already target 1 million persons offering a greater supply response capacity in new emergencies.

Climate action remains a crucial focus area. To mitigate the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on forcibly displaced people and their host communities, UNHCR envisions to incorporate sustainability considerations into all supply activities. This includes adopting greener core relief items, applying social and economic considerations for their sourcing, and increasing the quantity and quality of sustainable goods and services procured. By prioritizing proximity procurement wherever the opportunity exists, UNHCR is not only reducing its delivery costs and related CO2 emissions, but also supporting local economies. By lowering costs, our sustainability undertakings will enable UNHCR to provide life-saving support to more people forced to flee.

Strengthening the culture of security

Distinguished delegates.

UNHCR continues to place the security of staff as one of its key priorities. Together with the network of field security workforce, we identify and address potential risks to enable operational deliveries in a safe and secure manner.

On security policies and practices, in 2023, the organization's Standard Operating Procedures for responding to critical incident management will be revised. Additionally, we will develop guidance on supporting employees who are victims of domestic violence, working closely with the Staff Health and Wellbeing Service.

With respect to security learning and training, our Security Management Learning Programme for UNHCR managers working in high-risk operations will take place at different intervals during the year. UNHCR also contributes to Inter-agency efforts, by supporting UNDSS in facilitating the training for the Designated Officials for Security. Our women's security training programmes continue to expand, most recently in Ukraine, as well as person-centred approaches in security risk management, focusing primarily on locally recruited personnel, who are often the first responders.

Finally, security for partner organizations has always been of paramount importance to UNHCR. We will build support and develop tools for partners in addition to working with other sister UN humanitarian agencies on areas such as UN civil military coordination and access which are of mutual benefit.

We look forward to continue working with all of you.

I thank you.