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

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Proposed revisions to the UNHCR financial rules

Summary

Over the past 18 months, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has continued to experience significant and rapid reductions in funding, necessitating substantial structural adjustments. In this context, the organization has undertaken a comprehensive review of the frameworks and mechanisms supporting its operational continuity, including its financial regulatory framework.

This paper presents the High Commissioner's proposed revisions to select financial rules – particularly those relating to the operational reserve and commitments – for the purpose of strengthening liquidity management and enhancing the organization's ability to maintain operational continuity. Annex I provides the set of revised financial rules proposed by UNHCR. Annex II contains a draft decision for consideration of the Standing Committee at its ninety-seventh meeting.

The proposed revisions to the UNHCR financial rules are submitted to the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme for consideration and endorsement.

I. Introduction

1. Over the past 18 months, UNHCR has faced significant and rapid reductions in funding, prompting major structural adjustments. Against this backdrop, UNHCR has deemed it necessary to review and reassess the framework and mechanisms available to the organization to ensure the continuity of its operations, while remaining fully compliant with applicable financial and staff rules.
2. Between November 2025 and June 2026, UNHCR held a series of informal briefings with Member States to discuss proposals to the budget model and the structure of its reserves. A central element of this review was to assess the adequacy of the reserves available to enable UNHCR to respond effectively to the current financial situation and withstand potential future downturns. These exchanges highlighted the need to review certain provisions of the UNHCR financial rules to streamline several aspects that would strengthen the organization's capacity to manage similar challenges in the future.
3. Since 1957, the High Commissioner has been authorized to issue and to amend the UNHCR financial rules, in consultation with the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme and in a manner consistent with the Financial Regulations of the United Nations.¹
4. The current UNHCR Financial Rules for Voluntary Funds Administered by the High Commissioner for Refugees were promulgated by the High Commissioner through [A/AC.96/503/Rev.12](#) with effect from 1 January 2023, after consultations with the Executive Committee during its seventy-third session in 2022.
5. Annex I provides the set of revised financial rules proposed by UNHCR, presented in a tabular format that allows for comparison with the existing rules, while providing the rationale for the proposed changes. The revised financial rules will be submitted for endorsement at the seventy-seventh plenary session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme in October 2026. Subject to endorsement, they will be promulgated by the High Commissioner with effect from 1 January 2028, allowing sufficient time for integration and alignment with the 2028 programme budget.
6. In preparing the proposed revisions, UNHCR took into account the feedback received during the consultations with Executive Committee Member States and, where appropriate, drew upon language contained in the financial regulations and rules of other United Nations entities, while maintaining consistency with the overarching United Nations financial regulations.

II. Overview of the proposed changes

7. The proposed changes to the UNHCR financial rules submitted for consideration through this paper fall broadly into the following categories: (a) redefining the establishment, funding and utilization of an operational reserve; (b) streamlining and clarifying the concepts related to coverage of commitments; and (c) implementing other amendments and updates as deemed useful to improve clarity and to adapt to contextual changes occurring since the last revision took place.

A. New operational reserve [new financial rules 402.1 through 403.2]

Overview of current reserve instruments

8. Under the current financial rules 414.5-414.9,² UNHCR has an operational reserve that functions as budgetary space to cover unexpected cost increases or other priority needs within the current budget period. It is not a funded reserve that could substantively support

¹ See General Assembly resolution 1166 (XII), rule 1.5.

² See [A/AC.96/503/Rev.12](#).

operational continuity within a budget year or across subsequent financial periods. Apart from a \$10 million year-end allocation within the Annual Programme Fund, the current operational reserve should rather be understood as an unfunded programmatic budgetary space available for allocation in a given period.

9. Under the current financial rules 402.1-403.1, UNHCR has a Working Capital Fund to ensure liquidity pending receipt of anticipated contributions with a ceiling currently at \$100 million. At the end of 2025, UNHCR closed the accounts with funding available in this reserve amounting to \$65 million, while \$35 million was utilized to exceptionally cover expenses in the Annual Programme Fund due to a shortage of other sources of income.

Current needs of UNHCR

10. The United Nations High-Level Committee on Management and Finance and Budget Network define reserves as “funds provided or set aside to address risks/purposes related to funding and/or liquidity needs in pursuit of the implementation of the organization’s objectives, which may be categorized more specifically based on the purpose for which such reserves are provided”.

11. UNHCR would need an operational reserve to allow the High Commissioner to better mitigate risks associated with granting spending authority prior to receiving funds from signed funding agreements or to meet cash requirements pending receipt of pledged contributions. In addition, the reserve would serve as a risk mitigation mechanism when entering into longer-term contracts that offer greater cost-efficiency. Finally, the reserve would provide flexibility to address unplanned and unforeseen changes, including increases in operating costs (as a result of changes in fuel prices, for example), high inflation, and sudden drops in funding that may necessitate the termination of contracts. Currently, UNHCR has in place mechanisms to set aside funds for covering after-service health insurance for staff, unused annual leave credit and repatriation grants, but does not have any reserves to cover termination benefits payable under the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules to staff whose contracts are terminated before their expiration date.

Review of United Nations practices on reserves

12. UNHCR conducted a comparative analysis of practices related to reserves adopted by other United Nations organizations, considering the observations issued in 2021 by the Working Group on Operational Reserves set out as part of the thirty-seventh Finance and Budget Network meeting,³ as well as the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report⁴ on budgeting in organizations of the United Nations system.

13. The observations of the Finance and Budget Network and the JIU showed that there were numerous reserves maintained by United Nations entities for different purposes adapted to their specific mandates. These included four types of reserves broadly covering: (i) unplanned and unforeseen events, (ii) liquidity issues and contingencies, (iii) staff-related liabilities, such as after-service health insurance, and (iv) capital investments needs.

14. For example, the World Food Programme’s (WFP) financial regulations provide that an operational reserve shall be set up at a level to be determined from time to time by the Executive Board, with the purpose of ensuring continuity of its operations in the event of a temporary shortfall of resources.⁵ The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)⁶ has also established an operational reserve that shall be fully funded and held in irrevocable and promptly available liquid assets. The level is calculated at 20 per cent of total regular resources income for that year. The decision to make a drawdown from the operational reserve rests solely with the Executive Director, who is required to report all drawdowns to

³ See <https://unsceb.org/assets/media/reports/report-3715-FBN-37th-session-conclusions-FINAL-8-February-2022.pdf>.

⁴ See [JIU/REP/2024/3 \(part II\)](#), table 6 on working capital funds and table 7 on reserve accounts and funds.

⁵ See WFP financial regulations https://executiveboard.wfp.org/document_download/WFP-0000141150, September 2025, Financial Regulation 10.5 and 10.6.

⁶ See [JIU/REP/2024/3 part II](#), table 6 on working capital funds, line 14 on UNFPA.

the Executive Board at its next regular session and in between sessions. The International Organization for Migration (IOM)⁷ has set aside funds to meet other end of service requirements through an established funding mechanism for terminal emoluments, which is funded by a yearly allotment based on the anticipated entitlements for staff departing in the coming year. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)⁸ maintains an operational reserve that is comprised of a regular resources reserve and another resources reserve (including for field accommodation), funded from different sources, that are collectively aimed at ensuring financial stability. The UNDP operational reserve is funded through defined formulas which are calculated annually with separate elements for income, expenditure, liabilities, and structural and cash flow-related risks.⁹

Proposal for a new operational reserve

15. Considering the need to strengthen the organization's resilience and ensure operational continuity, and informed by the approach taken by other organizations as well as the comments received from Member States, UNHCR proposes to establish a new operational reserve within the financial rules. The aim is to provide a more predictable and adaptive liquidity framework, as well as a sound mechanism to cover unplanned and unforeseen events, ensuring that the risk to UNHCR of a pre-funding shortfall is minimized.

16. Purpose: The operational reserve shall be used to cover any unforeseen or unplanned expenditure, including staff terminations. The reserve will also act as a liquidity mechanism pending the collection of voluntary contributions.

17. Level: Practices observed across United Nations entities, while also used in non-profit organizations, suggest that the level of operating reserves is set through formulas anchored generally in either percentages of budget or coverage of projected or past relevant expenditure (varying between two to four months). Some entities choose to set minimum (floor) or maximum (ceiling) levels, while others prefer to set a target level representing an optimal size of a reserve based on organizational risk assessment and policy considerations. Informed by such practices, UNHCR proposes to adopt a target level of the operational reserve of one and a half month's average expenditure, based on the level of the expenditures recorded in the prior year. For example, the expenditures recorded in 2025 amounted to \$3,830.5 million, resulting in an average over 12 months of \$319.2 million, which would constitute the basis for a target level of the operational reserve of \$478.8 million. The target level of a reserve does not need to be immediately funded but could rather be achieved through the progressive transfer of funds over multiple budget periods, as they become available.

18. Description of proposed revisions to the financial rules. To achieve this target level, UNHCR proposes:

- (a) to delete financial rules 414.5 to 414.9 that currently regulate the budgetary operational reserve, as they are no longer deemed relevant;
- (b) to merge the current Working Capital Fund into a new operational reserve with a broader scope, specifying in the revised financial rules 402.1 to 403.2 its target level, funding, utilization and reporting (note: the existing funds from the Working Capital Fund will be transferred to this newly established reserve); and
- (c) to update current financial rules 208.1 to 208.2 to reflect the discontinuation of the current operational reserve and to include certain aspects from financial

⁷ IOM Financial Report for the year ended 31 December 2024
<https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/116/c-116-3-financial-report-2024.pdf>, Note 11 Liabilities relating to employee benefits.

⁸ UNDP Financial Report and audited financial statement for the year ended 31 December 2024, A/80/5/Add.1, Note 22 Net Assets.

⁹ The regular resources operational reserve is calculated using a composite formula based on income (10 per cent of average recent contributions), expenditure (2 per cent of average recent spending), an additional 10 per cent buffer on these components, and a liquidity element equivalent to one month of cash needs.

rule 414.5, proposed for deletion, as requested by Member States during the informal briefings.

B. Commitments [revised financial rule 501.3]

19. Amendments are proposed to update financial rule 501.3 to reflect current financial practice and to provide greater clarity on the types of commitments covered by the rule. These revisions would strengthen safeguards against over-commitment and facilitate more effective and practical implementation. The proposed changes would also introduce a practicable method for demonstrating compliance, without altering the underlying approach through which UNHCR recognizes commitments towards its staff, vendors, funded partners and other third parties.

C. Other amendments and updates

20. Other amendments and updates include minor changes to replace outdated terminology, improve clarity and consistency, and delete financial rules that are no longer applicable to UNHCR.

21. In this context, it is proposed to update financial rule 211.2 on the United Nations regular budget allotment to UNHCR to better reflect the process of submission.

III. Conclusion

22. In light of the above, UNHCR submits for consideration of the Standing Committee the proposed revised financial rules attached in annex I, which also includes the rationale for the proposed change, as applicable.

23. Annex II contains a draft decision to be considered by the Standing Committee, acknowledging the proposed amendments and requesting the High Commissioner to submit a decision on the revised rules to the seventy-seventh plenary session of the Executive Committee for subsequent promulgation by the High Commissioner with effect from 1 January 2028.

Annexes

Annex I

Proposed revised UNHCR financial rules

Matrix of current UNHCR financial rules (Rev.12) and proposed UNHCR financial rules (rev.13)

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
Article I – General provisions		
Applicability and authority		
Rule 101.1 These financial rules of the Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are based on provisions of the United Nations Financial Regulations, and are established in accordance with paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 1166 (XII) and the subsequent directives of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme.		No change.
Rule 101.2 The High Commissioner shall promulgate financial rules and procedures consistent with the United Nations Financial Regulations in order to facilitate their implementation to ensure economy, efficiency, effectiveness and transparency in financial management. These financial rules clarify the applicability of the United Nations Financial Regulations and, except as may otherwise be provided by the General Assembly or the Executive Committee, these rules shall govern all financial activities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.		No change.
Rule 101.3 Exceptions to these rules may only be made by specific decision of the High Commissioner, in a manner consistent with the United Nations Financial Regulations.		No change.
Rule 101.4 These rules shall not apply to the subsequent administration of moneys, supplies or other items allocated by the High Commissioner under agreements with implementing partners.		No change.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
Rule 101.5 These rules may be amended by the High Commissioner in consultation with the Executive Committee in a manner consistent with the United Nations Financial Regulations.		No change.
Rule 101.6 In regard to any matter not specifically covered in these rules, the appropriate United Nations Financial Regulations and related Rules shall apply mutatis mutandis.		No change.
Financial and budget periods		
Rule 102.1 The financial period for UNHCR shall consist of a calendar year beginning on January 1 and ending on December 31.		No change.
Rule 103.1 For the purpose of allocating financial resources against the UNHCR programme budget, the budget period shall be agreed with the Executive Committee.		No change.
Effective date		
Rule 104.1 These rules come into effect as of 1 January 2023. Any financial policies and procedures in effect on that date, except to the extent they are in conflict with these rules, shall remain in force until cancelled, amended or replaced by the High Commissioner.	Rule 104.1 These rules come into effect as of 1 January 2023 ⁸ . Any financial policies and procedures in effect on that date, except to the extent they are in conflict with these rules, shall remain in force until cancelled, amended or replaced by the High Commissioner.	Small change to reflect new effective date for revised rules.
Responsibility and accountability		
Rule 104.2 The High Commissioner shall be fully responsible and accountable for the financial management of UNHCR. The High Commissioner may delegate authority for such financial management.		No change.
Rule 104.3 The Controller shall be responsible for the application of the financial rules of UNHCR on behalf of the High Commissioner.		No change.
Rule 104.4 All personnel of UNHCR are responsible and shall be accountable to the High Commissioner for the regularity of the actions taken by them in the course of their official duties. All personnel who take any action contrary to		No change.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
these rules, or to the administrative issuances issued in connection therewith, may be held personally and financially liable for the consequences of their action.		
Rule 104.5 In the High Commissioner's absence, the Deputy High Commissioner is in charge of the Office of UNHCR and disposes of all powers vested in the High Commissioner by these rules. Similarly, the powers which have been vested with UNHCR personnel by these rules will be exercised by their deputy or the officer-in-charge of the organizational unit concerned in the absence of the personnel. The High Commissioner will issue rules and procedures defining the delegation of authority and responsibility in UNHCR.		No change.
Definitions		
Rule 104.6 For the purpose of these rules, the following definitions in respect of specific terms used, listed in alphabetical order, shall apply: (a) "Advisory Committee" shall mean the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions; (b) "Appropriation" shall mean the total amount approved by the Executive Committee in the current UNHCR programme budget against which commitments may be entered into and expenses incurred for those purposes up to the amounts so approved; (c) "Budget allocation" shall mean financial authorization issued to enter into commitments and incur expenses for specific purposes, within specified limits and during a specified period; (d) "Budget period" shall mean the period for which a UNHCR Programme Budget is prepared; (e) "Commitment" shall mean a binding obligation on the part of UNHCR, arising from a written contract or other written agreement entered into by UNHCR that is expected to result in the disbursement of UNHCR financial resources; (f) "Contribution" shall mean resources formally pledged or provided to and accepted by UNHCR, whether contributed in cash or in kind, by parties external to the organization; (g) "Controller" shall mean the Controller of UNHCR or the personnel to whom the Controller has delegated authority and responsibility for the matter in question;	Rule 104.6 For the purpose of these rules, the following definitions in respect of specific terms used, listed in alphabetical order, shall apply: (a) "Advisory Committee" shall mean the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions; (b) "Appropriation" shall mean the total amount approved by the Executive Committee in the current UNHCR programme budget against which commitments may be entered into and expenses incurred for those purposes up to the amounts so approved; (c) "Budget allocation" shall mean financial authorization issued to enter into commitments and incur expenses for specific purposes, within specified limits and during a specified period; (d) "Budget period" shall mean the period for which a UNHCR Programme Budget is prepared; (e) "Commitment" shall mean a binding obligation on the part of UNHCR, arising from a written contract or other written agreement entered into by UNHCR that is expected to result in the disbursement of UNHCR financial resources; (f) "Contribution" shall mean resources formally pledged or provided to and accepted by UNHCR, whether contributed in cash or in kind, by parties external to the organization;	Small changes to (o) through (r).

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
(h) “Executive Committee” shall mean the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme; (i) “General Assembly” shall mean the General Assembly of the United Nations; (j) “High Commissioner” shall mean the High Commissioner or the personnel to whom the High Commissioner has delegated authority and responsibility for the matter in question; (k) “Impact areas” shall mean the highest level of the comprehensive results-based budget and represent the ultimate intended effects of UNHCR’s efforts. They are the basis for the budget structure and indicate how UNHCR’s mandate to protect, assist and find solutions for persons of concern will be operationalized in the budget period; (l) “Implementing partner” shall mean an entity to which UNHCR has entrusted the implementation of activities specified in a signed document, along with the assumption of full responsibility and accountability for the effective use of resources and the delivery of outputs as set forth in such a document; (m) “Moneys” shall mean funds that are in the form of cash or can easily be converted to cash. These include cash on hand, money in bank accounts, time and savings deposits, investments capable of being quickly converted into cash, and account receivables; (n) “Pledges” shall mean formal promises made in writing, at pledging conferences or otherwise, to make a specific voluntary contribution in cash or in kind to a UNHCR programme; (o) “Representative” shall mean the High Commissioner’s representative appointed to a country who may serve in more than one country. The Representative provides managerial leadership and oversight to ensure UNHCR’s effective performance in the country(ies) of her/his assignment; (p) “Supplementary budgets” shall mean such budgetary increases as may be approved by the High Commissioner, pursuant to rule 208.1, to meet new needs under any impact area, that arise after the approval of the UNHCR programme budget, and which cannot be fully met from the reserve. Supplementary budgets are considered increases to the UNHCR programme budget. They will be funded through contributions in response to special appeals; (q) “UNHCR” shall mean the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; and	(g) “Controller” shall mean the Controller of UNHCR or the personnel to whom the Controller has delegated authority and responsibility for the matter in question; (h) “Executive Committee” shall mean the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner’s Programme; (i) “General Assembly” shall mean the General Assembly of the United Nations; (j) “High Commissioner” shall mean the High Commissioner or the personnel to whom the High Commissioner has delegated authority and responsibility for the matter in question; (k) “Impact areas” shall mean the highest level of the comprehensive results-based budget and represent the ultimate intended effects of UNHCR’s efforts. They are the basis for the budget structure and indicate how UNHCR’s mandate to protect, assist and find solutions for persons of concern will be operationalized in the budget period; (l) “Implementing partner” shall mean an entity to which UNHCR has entrusted the implementation of activities specified in a signed document, along with the assumption of full responsibility and accountability for the effective use of resources and the delivery of outputs as set forth in such a document; (m) “Moneys” shall mean funds that are in the form of cash or can easily be converted to cash. These include cash on hand, money in bank accounts, time and savings deposits, investments capable of being quickly converted into cash, and account receivables; (n) “Pledges” shall mean formal promises made in writing, at pledging conferences or otherwise, to make a specific voluntary contribution in cash or in kind to a UNHCR programme; (o) “Representative” shall mean the High Commissioner’s representative appointed to a country who may serve in more than one country. The Representative provides managerial leadership and oversight to ensure UNHCR’s effective performance in the country(ies) of her/his assignment;	Delete text (o) on definition of Representative as they do not appear in any subsequent rule.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
(r) “UNHCR programme budget” shall mean the comprehensive UNHCR budget for the programmes to be implemented under the impact areas which is approved by the Executive Committee, including the Operational Reserve.	(p) “Supplementary budgets” shall mean such budgetary increases as may be approved by the High Commissioner, pursuant to rule 208.1, to meet new needs under any impact area, that arise after the approval of the UNHCR programme budget, and which cannot be fully met from the Operational Reserve . Supplementary budgets are considered increases to the UNHCR programme budget. They will be funded through contributions in response to special appeals ; (q) “UNHCR” shall mean the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; and (r) “UNHCR programme budget” shall mean the comprehensive UNHCR budget for the programmes to be implemented under the impact areas which is approved by the Executive Committee, including the Operational Reserve .	Delete reference to Operational Reserve (p). Deleted as needs may be covered by using unearmarked contributions, for example, which may come to UNHCR before or after the supplementary budgets (p). Delete reference to Operational Reserve (r).
Article II – Budgets		
Authority and responsibility		
Rule 201.1 The proposed UNHCR programme budget for each budget period shall be prepared by the High Commissioner.		No change.
Rule 201.2 The UNHCR programme budget shall be funded through: (a) Voluntary contributions; (b) United Nations regular budget; and (c) Other income.		No change.
Presentation, content and methodology		
Rule 202.1 The proposed UNHCR programme budget shall cover commitments and expenses for the budget period to which it relates and shall be presented in United States dollars.		No change.
Rule 203.1 The proposed UNHCR programme budget shall be presented along several dimensions: budget components, cost categories and UNHCR’s global results framework. The proposed UNHCR programme budget shall be accompanied by such information, annexes and explanatory statements as may be requested by or on behalf of the Executive Committee and such		No change.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
further annexes or statements as the High Commissioner may deem necessary and useful.		
Review and approval		
Rule 204.1 The High Commissioner shall submit for approval the proposed UNHCR programme budget for the following budget period to the Executive Committee at its annual plenary session. This proposed UNHCR programme budget shall include estimates of the cost of programmes under the impact areas, including the Operational Reserve, and shall be transmitted to all Member States at least five (5) weeks prior to the opening of that session.	Rule 204.1 The High Commissioner shall submit for approval the proposed UNHCR programme budget for the following budget period to the Executive Committee at its annual plenary session. This proposed UNHCR programme budget shall include estimates of the cost of programmes under the impact areas, including the Operational Reserve, and shall be transmitted to all Member States at least five (5) weeks prior to the opening of that session.	Deleted reference to Operational Reserve.
Rule 204.2 The annual UNHCR programme budget may be reported according to the global results framework, by population groups or other elements as agreed with the Executive Committee.		No change.
Rule 205.1 The High Commissioner shall, at least eight (8) weeks prior to the opening of the annual plenary session of the Executive Committee, submit his or her proposed UNHCR programme budget for the following budget period to the Advisory Committee for examination.		No change.
Rule 206.1 The Advisory Committee shall prepare a report to the Executive Committee on the UNHCR programme budget proposed by the High Commissioner. This report shall be transmitted to all Member States as soon as it is made available to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 207.1 The Executive Committee shall approve the UNHCR programme budget for the following budget period after consideration of the proposed UNHCR programme budget and the report of the Advisory Committee thereon.		No change.
Revised and supplementary budget		
Rule 208.1 The High Commissioner may, in the case of new needs that cannot be met fully from the approved UNHCR programme budget, approve supplementary budgets for which funds are sought from special appeals to	Rule 208.1 The High Commissioner may approve supplementary budgets: (a) in the case of new needs that cannot be met fully from the approved UNHCR programme budget; or	Revised rule. Adjusting the supplementary budget mechanism to provide flexibility to the High

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
donors. Supplementary budgets are reported to each subsequent meeting for the Standing Committee to take note of them.	(b) to provide assistance to refugees, returnees, and displaced and stateless persons for which there is no provision in the programmes approved by the Executive Committee. Funds for a supplementary budget may be sought, without limitation, from appeals to donors or funded through other sources. Supplementary budgets are reported to each subsequent meeting for the Standing Committee to take note of them.	Commissioner for new or unforeseen needs. Point (b) taken from previous financial rule 414.5 (a) to address Member States' observations during informal briefings.
Rule 208.2 The High Commissioner may effect transfers from the Operational Reserve as well as other adjustments within the UNHCR programme budget as may be required by changes affecting the programmes for which they were planned. The Standing Committee shall be informed of such adjustments and transfers at its next session.	Rule 208.2 The High Commissioner may effect transfers and adjustments within the UNHCR programme budget and from the Operational Reserve as may be required: (a) by changes affecting the programmes for which they were planned; (b) to increase existing allocations to meet priority needs under the current budget period of the UNHCR programme budget; (c) to cover unexpected cost increases in, and/or meet the costs of modifications to, programmes financed from the current or previous budget periods of the UNHCR programme budget. The Standing Committee shall be informed of such transfers and adjustments at its next session.	Revised rule to include (a) (b) (c). Points (b) and (c) taken from previous rule 414.5 (b) and (c) to address Member States' observations.
Rule 208.3 The approved level of the UNHCR programme budget in a given budget period may be allowed to increase by up to two (2) per cent if this results directly from exchange rate fluctuations.		No change.
Rule 209.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 2.9 is reflected in UNHCR financial rules 208.1 - 208.3.		No change.
Rule 210.1 Except for the changes provided in rules 208.1 - 208.3, no other change to the approved budget can be made without the approval of the Executive Committee.		No change.
United Nations regular budget		
Rule 211.1		No change.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
The United Nations Secretary-General prepares the UNHCR resource requirements to be borne by the United Nations regular budget in respect to the relevant portion of administrative expenditures incurred at UNHCR headquarters for the functioning of UNHCR, specifically covering regular budget posts and a lump-sum grant for the relevant budget period.		
Rule 211.2 Proposals to increase the United Nations regular budget allotment to UNHCR may be submitted, whenever necessary, by the High Commissioner, and shall follow the process approved by the United Nations Secretary-General.	Rule 211.2 Proposals to amend increase the United Nations regular budget allotment to UNHCR may be submitted, whenever necessary, by the High Commissioner to and shall follow the process approved by the United Nations Secretary-General.	Small changes to clarify the process of submission. <i>Note: United Nations Financial Rule 102.6: "The Secretary-General is responsible for preparing and presenting to relevant legislative bodies the statements on programme budget implications required by regulation 2.10."</i>
Rule 211.3 The allotment issued for the United Nations regular budget appropriation can be used only for the purposes approved by the General Assembly. In accordance with the provisions of article 20 of the Statute of UNHCR, unless the General Assembly subsequently decides otherwise, only administrative expenditures relating to the functioning of the Office of the High Commissioner shall be borne on the regular budget of the United Nations.		No change.
Rule 212.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 2.12 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 213.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 2.13 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 214.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 2.14 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Article III - Contributions and other income		
Rule 301.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 3.1 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 302.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 3.2 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 303.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 3.3 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
Rule 304.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 3.4 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 305.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 3.5 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 306.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 3.6 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 307.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 3.7 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 308.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 3.8 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 309.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 3.9 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 310.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 3.10 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 311.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 3.11 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Voluntary contributions		
Rule 312.1 Voluntary contributions may be accepted by the High Commissioner to fund the activities of the UNHCR programme budget: (a) In currencies which are usable or convertible by UNHCR; (b) In kind (where they are goods, services, or real property) (i) in a form that can be utilized for the purposes of UNHCR; and (ii) unless otherwise agreed by the High Commissioner. Voluntary contributions that directly or indirectly involve additional financial liability for the organization can be only accepted if deemed appropriate by the High Commissioner.		No change.
Rule 312.2 Restricted contributions are those subject to externally imposed stipulations which specify the purpose for which the contribution is to be used.		No change.
Rule 312.3 For unrestricted contributions, where the purpose of a contribution is not restricted or otherwise designated by the donor, the High Commissioner shall determine how and when the contribution will be used to support activities in the approved budget.		No change.
Rule 313.1		No change.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
Contributions accepted for purposes specified by the donor, which do not relate to the activities in the UNHCR programme budget, shall be treated as trust funds or special accounts under rules 413.1 and 414.1.		
Other income		
Rule 314.1 Other income includes income from sales of assets or supplies, income from revenue-producing activities, interest and investment income and other miscellaneous income. Other income shall be credited to the current financial period of the Annual Programme Fund or the relevant special account, unless otherwise directed by the Executive Committee.		No change.
Rule 314.2 Adjustments of prior years' expense (refunds, cancellation and additional charges) shall be applied to the current budget period of the appropriate funds, unless otherwise agreed with the donor. For trust fund accounts, adjustments shall be applied to the account from which the expense was incurred.		No change.
Article IV - Custody of funds		
Annual Programme Fund		
Rule 401.1 There shall be established an Annual Programme Fund for the purpose of accounting for the UNHCR programme budget.		No change.
Operational Reserve-Working Capital Fund for Voluntary Contributions		
Rule 402.1 For UNHCR to ensure liquidity, there shall be established a Working Capital Fund for Voluntary Contributions in an amount and for purposes to be determined by the Executive Committee, as and if required. The source of moneys of the Working Capital Fund for Voluntary Contributions shall be advances from Member States, voluntary contributions, or transfers from the Annual Programme Fund as approved by the Executive Committee.	Rule 402.1 An Operational Reserve shall be established to ensure operational continuity. The Operational Reserve shall be utilized to meet unforeseen or unplanned expenditures arising from cost increases or modifications not anticipated in the current or preceding programme budget of UNHCR, including those related to staff termination obligations, as well as to address unexpected funding shortfalls. The Reserve shall further serve as a liquidity mechanism to bridge cash flow gaps pending the receipt of voluntary contributions.	New rule on Operational Reserve.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
Rule 402.2 A Working Capital Fund for Voluntary Contributions is established at a ceiling determined by the Executive Committee. The Fund shall be financed from the following sources: (a) savings from prior years' Annual Programme Fund unless agreed otherwise with donors in the case of restricted contributions; (b) voluntary contributions; (c) other income.	Rule 402.2 The amount of the Operational Reserve will be set at a target level of one and half month's average expenditures (based on prior year level). The Reserve shall be financed from the following sources: (a) savings from prior years' Annual Programme Fund unless agreed otherwise with donors in the case of restricted contributions; (b) voluntary contributions; (c) other income.	New rule on Operational Reserve funding sources similar to previous Working Capital Fund rule.
Rule 403.1 The Working Capital Fund for Voluntary Contributions may be utilized for the following purposes: (a) to guarantee commitments and payments incurred against governmental pledges or firm pledges from organizations of established repute; (b) to guarantee commitments and payments in respect of revenue-producing activities of UNHCR; (c) to fund in the course of a given budget period, commitments and payments incurred under the UNHCR programme budget, pending the receipt of anticipated contributions. When this funding facility is used, the Working Capital shall be replenished as a matter of priority. Advances made from the Working Capital Fund for Voluntary Contributions to finance the Annual Programme Fund shall be reimbursed to the Fund as soon as receipts from contributions are available for that purpose.	Rule 403.1 When amounts from the Operational Reserve are used, the reserve shall be replenished as soon as funds become available for that purpose.	New rule on Operational Reserve replenishment captured as per Member States' observations during informal briefings.
	New Rule 403.2 The Standing Committee shall be informed of any use made of the Operational Reserve at its next session.	New rule on Operational Reserve reporting capturing previous rule 414.7 as per Member States' observations during informal briefings.
Rule 404.1 United Nations Financial Regulations 4.4 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 405.1 United Nations Financial Regulations 4.5 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 406.1 United Nations Financial Regulations 4.6 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 407.1 United Nations Financial Regulations 4.7 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
Rule 408.1 United Nations Financial Regulations 4.8 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 409.1 United Nations Financial Regulations 4.9 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 410.1 United Nations Financial Regulations 4.10 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 411.1 United Nations Financial Regulations 4.11 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 412.1 United Nations Financial Regulations 4.12 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Trust funds, reserves and special accounts		
Rule 413.1 Subject to the provisions of rule 414.1 below, the High Commissioner may establish trust funds, reserves and special accounts for moneys becoming available for purposes of the UNHCR programme budget and for other purposes that are consistent with the policies, aims and activities of UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 414.1 The purpose, the scope and the limits of each trust fund, reserves and special accounts shall be clearly defined by the High Commissioner in agreement with the donor, where applicable, and with the concurrence of the Executive Committee. Such funds and accounts shall be administered in accordance with the United Nations Financial Regulations and the present financial rules unless otherwise directed the Executive Committee. Savings from prior years shall be applied to the trust fund or special account where savings were made.	Rule 414.1 The purpose, the scope and the limits of each trust fund, reserves and special accounts shall be clearly defined by the High Commissioner in agreement with the donor, where applicable, and with the concurrence of the Executive Committee. Such trust funds, reserves and special accounts shall be administered in accordance with the United Nations Financial Regulations and the present financial rules unless otherwise directed by the Executive Committee. Savings from prior years shall be applied to the trust fund or special account where savings were made.	Small editorial changes.
Staff Benefits Fund		
Rule 414.2 There shall be established a Staff Benefits Fund to records transactions relating to staff end-of-service and post-retirement benefits.		No change.
Rule 414.3 Assets and financial liabilities associated with accrued end-of-service and post-retirement benefits shall be recorded in the Staff Benefits Fund.		No change.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
Rule 414.4 In principle, transfers from the Staff Benefits Fund will only be authorized for specific purposes related to staff end-of-service or post-retirement benefits, unless otherwise decided by the Executive Committee.		No change.
Operational Reserve		
Rule 414.5 The Operational Reserve is established to: (a) provide assistance to refugees, returnees, and displaced and stateless persons for which there is no provision in the programmes approved by the Executive Committee; (b) increase existing allocations to meet priority needs under the current budget period of the UNHCR programme budget; (c) cover unexpected cost increases in, and/or meet the costs of modifications to, programmes financed from the current or previous budget periods of the UNHCR programme budget, or from an Operational Reserve allocation made in a current or previous budget period.	Rule 414.5 The Operational Reserve is established to: (a) provide assistance to refugees, returnees, and displaced and stateless persons for which there is no provision in the programmes approved by the Executive Committee; (b) increase existing allocations to meet priority needs under the current budget period of the UNHCR programme budget; (c) cover unexpected cost increases in, and/or meet the costs of modifications to, programmes financed from the current or previous budget periods of the UNHCR programme budget, or from an Operational Reserve allocation made in a current or previous budget period.	Delete rule. Content captured in revised rule 208.1 and 208.2.
Rule 414.6 An Operational Reserve shall be constituted at an amount equivalent to five (5) per cent of the proposed programmed activities in the UNHCR programme budget being submitted for approval.	Rule 414.6 An Operational Reserve shall be constituted at an amount equivalent to five (5) per cent of the proposed programmed activities in the UNHCR programme budget being submitted for approval.	Delete rule.
Rule 414.7 The High Commissioner shall report to the Executive Committee at each annual session, and at each regular session of its Standing Committee, on the use made of the Operational Reserve.	Rule 414.7 The High Commissioner shall report to the Executive Committee at each annual session, and at each regular session of its Standing Committee, on the use made of the Operational Reserve.	Delete rule. Content captured in revised rule 403.2.
Rule 414.8 The High Commissioner may make transfers of appropriations and subsequent allocations from the Operational Reserve to other parts of the UNHCR programme budget for the purposes set out in rule 414.5 provided that the amount made available for any one programme shall not exceed \$50 million in any one financial period.	Rule 414.8 The High Commissioner may make transfers of appropriations and subsequent allocations from the Operational Reserve to other parts of the UNHCR programme budget for the purposes set out in rule 414.5 provided that the amount made available for any one programme shall not exceed \$50 million in any one financial period.	Delete rule.
Rule 414.9	Rule 414.9	Delete rule.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
An Operational Reserve allocation may be cancelled if sufficient funds are subsequently received in response to a related supplementary appeal (be it by UNHCR, an inter-agency appeal or a consolidated appeal), or if the funds, or part thereof, have not been committed at the end of a given budget period.	An Operational Reserve allocation may be cancelled if sufficient funds are subsequently received in response to a related supplementary appeal (be it by UNHCR, an inter-agency appeal or a consolidated appeal), or if the funds, or part thereof, have not been committed at the end of a given budget period.	
Bank accounts		
Rule 415.1 The High Commissioner shall designate the banks in which the funds of UNHCR shall be kept.		No change.
Rule 415.2 Under the delegation of authority from the High Commissioner, the Controller shall designate the banks in which the funds of UNHCR shall be kept. The Controller shall establish and close such official bank accounts as may be required and designate bank signatories to operate the accounts.		No change.
Rule 415.3 Bank accounts established for UNHCR field offices shall be maintained by remittances from UNHCR headquarters. Where appropriate and to the extent authorized by the Controller, remittances may be made from other UNHCR offices and through funds drawings on bank accounts maintained by UNHCR headquarters.		No change.
Rule 415.4 One currency shall not be exchanged for another except to the extent necessary for the transaction of official business.		No change.
Receipt of funds		
Rule 415.5 An official receipt, if requested, shall be issued in respect of all moneys received as of the date the funds are received.		No change.
Rule 415.6 All moneys received shall be deposited in an official UNHCR bank account not later than the business day following the date of receipt.		No change.
Investments		
Rule 416.1		No change.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
The High Commissioner may make investments of moneys of UNHCR not needed for immediate requirements, having regard to the particular requirements as to the liquidity of funds.		
Rule 416.2 The Controller shall ensure, including by establishing appropriate guidelines, that funds are invested in such a way as to place primary emphasis on minimizing the risk to principal funds while ensuring the liquidity necessary to meet the organization's cash-flow requirements. In addition to these criteria, investments shall be selected on the basis of achieving the highest reasonable rate of return and shall accord with the principles of the United Nations.		No change.
Rule 416.3 On behalf of the High Commissioner, the Controller shall report annually on investments to the Executive Committee.		No change.
Rule 417.1 Revenue derived from investments shall be credited to the relevant Fund. Unless otherwise authorized by the Controller, no interest shall be payable on funds administered by UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 418.1 Revenue derived from investments of the Working Capital Fund for Voluntary Contributions shall be credited as investment revenue of the Annual Programme Fund.	Rule 418.1 Revenue derived from investments of the Working Capital Fund for Voluntary Contributions shall be credited as investment revenue of the Annual Programme Fund.	Delete rule.
Article V - Utilization of funds		
UNHCR programme budget		
Rule 501.1 The UNHCR programme budget approved by the Executive Committee shall constitute an authorization to the High Commissioner to incur commitments and make payments, for the intended purposes and up to the amounts so approved, subject to rule 501.3 below.	Rule 501.1 The UNHCR programme budget approved by the Executive Committee shall constitute an authorization to the High Commissioner to enter into incur commitments, incur expenses and make payments, for the intended purposes and up to the amounts so approved, subject to rule 501.3 below.	Small editorial changes.
Rule 501.2 The High Commissioner may commit the necessary funds for the implementation of programmes in accordance with: (a) the terms of the approval given by the Executive Committee for the UNHCR programme budget; or		No change.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
(b) the terms and conditions of the UNHCR supplementary appeals; or (c) the conditions governing other funds and accounts.		
Rule 501.3 The High Commissioner may incur commitments for the implementation of programmes to the extent that moneys and governmental pledges are available in the appropriate fund or account. The High Commissioner may also, pending the receipt of the contributions, enter into commitments up to one-half of the total amount of firm pledges from organizations of established repute. Furthermore, the High Commissioner may enter into commitments under the current budget period of the UNHCR programme budget including the reserve, up to the amount funded from the Working Capital Fund for Voluntary Contributions as provided for in rule 403.1 (c). This authority is subject to the following conditions: (a) at the end of each budget period, all commitments of UNHCR shall be covered by the total of: (i) moneys available, (ii) governmental pledges, (iii) firm pledges made by organizations of established repute and guaranteed by the Working Capital Fund for Voluntary Contributions, provided that a memorandum record shall be kept of such pledges, and (iv) funds drawn from the Working Capital Fund for Voluntary Contributions as provided for in rule 403.1 (c); (b) at any given time, the total amount of moneys available in all UNHCR funds and accounts excluding trust fund accounts shall be sufficient to meet the total payments due at that time.	Rule 501.3 (a) The High Commissioner may enter into commitments during the current budget period for the implementation of programmes, up to the level of available resources which shall comprise the following: money received, firm pledged voluntary contributions, all other sources of income, and the Operational Reserve. (b) Sub-paragraph (a) above is deemed satisfied so long as the following categories of commitments entered into during the current budget period for the implementation of programmes do not exceed available resources: (i) all contractual obligations to third parties for goods, services and other procured items; (ii) non-cancellable amounts payable under contractual obligations to implementing partners; (iii) estimated costs covering contractual obligations to staff for a period of six months; and (iv) commitments arising under any contractual obligations other than the categories of obligations referred to in (i) through (iii) above and which will result in expenditure during the current budget period.	Revised the rule to clarify the definition of “commitment” and to address Member States’ observations during informal briefings.
Rule 502.1 Appropriations shall be available for commitment during the budget period to which they relate.	Rule 502.1 Appropriations shall be available for commitments during the budget period to which they relate.	Small editorial change.
Rule 503.1 Appropriations shall remain available for twelve (12) months following the end of the budget period to which they relate to the extent that they are required to discharge commitments in respect of goods supplied and services rendered in the budget period and to liquidate any other outstanding legal obligation of the budget period. The balance of the appropriations shall be surrendered.		No change.
Rule 504.1 At the end of the 12-month period provided in rule 503.1 above, the then remaining balance of any appropriations retained will be surrendered back to the respective funding source. Where a commitment remains valid at the end		No change.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
of the 12-month period, it shall be cancelled and funded from the current appropriations.		
Rule 505.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 5.5 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 506.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 5.6 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Commitments against appropriations for future budget periods		
Rule 507.1 The High Commissioner may enter into commitments for future budget periods, provided that such commitments: (a) are for activities which have been approved by the Executive Committee and are expected to continue beyond the end of the current budget period; or (b) are authorized by specific decisions of the Executive Committee.		No change.
Internal control		
Rule 508.1 The High Commissioner is responsible to establish and maintain a system of internal control designed to provide reasonable assurance that organizational aims and objectives can be met, whilst safeguarding resources and assets of UNHCR. The system of internal control shall incorporate an ongoing process to identify and prioritize the risks to the achievement of UNHCR's aims and objectives, evaluate the likelihood and impact of those risks being realized, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.		No change.
Rule 508.2 (a) To preserve the integrity and efficiency of the internal control system, the following principles will be adhered to in the process of administering the resources of the organization: (i) Utilization of resources, including posts, is in accordance with the purposes for which those resources were entrusted to or approved for use by UNHCR and in accordance with these financial rules; (ii) Commitments and expenses incurred are consistent and in conformity with the directives of the Executive Committee or, as appropriate, with the purpose and conditions of the funds or accounts referred to under article V; (iii) Commitments and expenses are necessary and justified to achieve the directives assigned to the organization by the Executive Committee in an efficient and effective manner;	Rule 508.2 (a) To preserve the integrity and efficiency of the internal control system, the following principles will be adhered to in the process of administering the resources of the organization: (i) Utilization of resources, including posts, is in accordance with the purposes for which those resources were entrusted to or approved for use by UNHCR and in accordance with these financial rules; (ii) Commitments and expenses incurred are consistent and in conformity with the directives of the Executive Committee or, as appropriate, with the purpose and conditions of the funds or accounts referred to under article V;	Small editorial change in (vi).

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
(iv) Payments are made for valid organizational liabilities and in accordance with the purpose for which the applicable/relevant financial commitment was established where applicable; (v) Payments are made on the basis of adequate supporting documents in accordance with the requirements stated in rules 508.5 to 508.10; (vi) Appropriate segregation of duties has been applied in the review and approval of financial transactions to ensure such transactions are fairly reflected in the accounts in line with the intended purpose; (vii) Detailed records are maintained, together with the corresponding supporting documents, explanations and justifications necessary to substantiate all funds received, commitments, disbursements and expenses recorded in the accounts. (b) The Controller shall also implement systems that leverage technology in support of these principles.	(iii) Commitments and expenses are necessary and justified to achieve the directives assigned to the organization by the Executive Committee in an efficient and effective manner; (iv) Payments are made for valid organizational liabilities and in accordance with the purpose for which the applicable/relevant financial commitment was established where applicable; (v) Payments are made on the basis of adequate supporting documents in accordance with the requirements stated in rules 508.5 to 508.10; (vi) Appropriate segregation of duties is has been applied in the review and approval of financial transactions to ensure such transactions are fairly reflected in the accounts in line with the intended purpose; (vii) Detailed records are maintained, together with the corresponding supporting documents, explanations and justifications necessary to substantiate all funds received, commitments, disbursements and expenses recorded in the accounts. (b) The Controller shall also implement systems that leverage technology in support of these principles.	
Rule 508.3 The Controller shall designate personnel to perform: (a) the certification function. The certifying personnel will be personally responsible and accountable, for managing the utilization of resources assigned to them, including posts, in accordance with the purposes for which those resources were approved, the principle of efficiency and effectiveness, and these financial rules. The certifying personnel must be prepared to submit explanations and justifications in relation to the commitments and expenses certified by them; (b) the approving function. In approving areas under their authority, approving personnel verify that transactions are in compliance with relevant frameworks. For commitments, it includes that they are certified by designated personnel. For payments, it includes verifying the legality of payments and compliance with rules 508.5 to 508.10.		No change.
Rule 508.4		No change.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
Apart from the employment of staff, all undertaking for goods and services shall require a commitment registered in the accounts against which relevant payments or disbursements may be made. However, the High Commissioner shall establish thresholds below which reservations may not be required.		
Disbursements / payments		
Rule 508.5 The Controller shall establish internal control mechanisms with relation to payments and shall designate the personnel authorized and/or mechanisms to approve payments and release disbursements on behalf of UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 508.6 Payment shall be made on the basis of supporting vouchers and other documents which indicate that the goods or services have been received in accordance with the documents establishing the commitment, that payment has not previously been made, and that the payment is properly due.		No change.
Rule 508.7 (a) Payments in advance of the delivery of goods or performance of contractual services may be made if generally accepted commercial practice or the essential interest of UNHCR so demand. Whenever such an advance payment is requested, the reasons therefore shall be recorded by the designated personnel. (b) Progress payments may be permitted pursuant to normal commercial practice or in the interests of UNHCR, in accordance with administrative issuances issued by the Controller.		No change.
Rule 508.8 To the extent possible, all disbursements should be made by applicable electronic transfer modalities to ensure highest level of internal controls. On an exceptional basis, the use of cheques, bank instructions or cash disbursements may be authorized by the Controller.		No change.
Rule 508.9 Disbursements shall be recorded in the accounts as of the date when the disbursement is made.		No change.
Rule 508.10 Where disbursements are not electronic, e.g., cheque, bank instructions or cash, instructions shall be subject to authorization by two members from a panel designated by the Controller. The Controller may, where adequate safeguards are provided, authorize the release of disbursement instructions		No change.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
by one designated official only. The authority granted and responsibility assigned to such signatories is a personal one and cannot be sub-delegated.		
Management of assets		
Rule 508.11 The High Commissioner is responsible and accountable for managing the supplies, inventory, property, plant and equipment and intangible assets of UNHCR effectively and efficiently in furtherance of the mandate and activities. The High Commissioner may delegate authority, as appropriate, for such management of supplies, inventory, property, plant and equipment and intangible assets, including actions necessary for their receipt, maintenance, consumption and disposal.		No change.
Rule 508.12 Verification shall be carried out periodically on existence and condition of property, plant and equipment, inventories and intangible assets of the organization, and records maintained in accordance with administrative issuances established by the High Commissioner.		No change.
Rule 508.13 (a) The High Commissioner shall establish review mechanisms for UNHCR headquarters and other locations to render written advice in respect of loss, damage, impairment or other discrepancy regarding the property, plant and equipment, and inventories of UNHCR. Where review bodies are established, the High Commissioner shall establish the composition and terms of reference of such review bodies, which shall include procedures for determining the cause of such loss, damage, impairment or other discrepancy and the disposal action to be taken. (b) Where the advice of a review body is required, no final action in respect of loss, damage, impairment or other discrepancy may be taken before such advice is received. In cases where the High Commissioner decides not to accept the advice of such a body, this shall be recorded in writing, along with the reasons for that decision.		No change.
Rule 509.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 5.9 is reflected in UNHCR rules 501.1, 501.2 and 507.1.		No change.
Implementation of programmes		
Rule 509.2		No change.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
Programmes can be implemented directly or through partners.		
Rule 509.3 The implementation of programmes, including through partnership with implementing partners, will be subject to delegation of authorities by the High Commissioner relating to the management of approved resources, including by senior managers in country operations, regional bureaux, and at headquarters.		No change.
Rule 509.4 When implementation of programmes is undertaken through implementation with a partner, an agreement or a formal exchange of letters between UNHCR and the implementing partner(s), shall be concluded in accordance with modalities as determined by the High Commissioner.		No change.
Rule 509.5 External auditors will be engaged by UNHCR as needed, following a risk-based approach, to undertake audits of projects implemented by partners.		No change.
Rule 510.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 5.10 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.
Ex gratia payments		
Rule 511.1 The High Commissioner may make such ex gratia payments as are deemed to be necessary in the interest of the organization, provided that a statement of such payments shall be submitted to the United Nations Board of Auditors with the financial statements. Ex gratia payments may be made in cases where although no legal liability on UNHCR exists, the moral obligation is such as to make payment desirable in the interest of UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 511.2 The Controller, under delegated authority from the High Commissioner, may personally approve ex-gratia payments for values not exceeding \$25,000. Ex gratia payments to staff members of UNHCR or another agency of the United Nations system as well as ex gratia payments exceeding \$25,000 shall require the personal approval of the High Commissioner.		No change.
Procurement		
General principles		
Rule 512.1 Procurement functions include all actions necessary for the acquisition, by purchase or lease, of property, including products and real property, and of		No change.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
services, including works. The following general principles shall be given due consideration when exercising the procurement functions of UNHCR: (a) Best value for money; (b) Fairness, integrity and transparency; (c) Effective international competition; (d) The interest of UNHCR.		
Rule 513.1 Tenders for goods and services shall be invited by advertisement, except where the High Commissioner deems that, in the interests of the organization, a departure from this rule is desirable.		No change.
Authority and responsibility		
Rule 513.2 (a) The High Commissioner is responsible for the procurement functions of UNHCR, shall establish its procurement systems and shall designate the personnel responsible for performing procurement functions. (b) The High Commissioner shall establish a Committee on Contracts at UNHCR headquarters and/or at the regional and the local level, as required. The committees will review the procurement actions leading to the award or amendment of procurement contracts by UNHCR, which, for purposes of these rules, includes agreements or other written instruments such as purchase orders and contracts that involve income to UNHCR. Rules and procedures of the committees defining in particular the composition, the authority and the responsibility of the committees will be issued by the High Commissioner.		No change.
Competition		
Rule 513.3 Consistent with the principles set out in rule 512.1 and except as otherwise provided in rule 513.5, procurement contracts shall be awarded on the basis of effective competition, and to this end the competitive process shall, as necessary, include: (a) Acquisition planning for developing an overall procurement strategy and procurement methodologies; (b) Market research for identifying potential vendors; (c) Consideration of prudent commercial practices; (d) Formal methods of solicitation, utilizing invitations to bid or requests for proposals on the basis of advertisement or direct solicitation of invited vendors, or informal methods of solicitation, such as requests for quotations.		No change.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
The High Commissioner shall publish administrative issuances concerning the types of procurement activities and monetary values for which such methods of solicitation are to be used. Such formal and informal methods of solicitation may be conducted by means of electronic data interchange, provided the High Commissioner has ensured that the electronic data interchange system is capable of ensuring authentication and confidentiality of the information transmitted; (e) Public bid openings; for purposes of bidding by means of electronic data interchange, the virtual opening of bids is considered public.		
Formal methods of solicitation		
Rule 513.4 (a) When a formal invitation to bid has been issued, the procurement contract shall be awarded to the qualified bidder whose bid substantially conforms to the requirements set forth in the solicitation documents and is evaluated to be the one with the lowest cost to UNHCR. (b) When a formal request for proposals has been issued, the procurement contract shall be awarded to the qualified bidder whose proposal, all factors considered, is the most responsive to the requirements set forth in the solicitation documents. (c) The High Commissioner may, in the interest of UNHCR, reject bids or proposals for a particular procurement action, recording the reasons for rejection in writing. The High Commissioner shall then determine whether to undertake a new solicitation, to directly negotiate a procurement contract pursuant to rule 513.5 or to terminate or suspend the procurement action.		No change.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
Exceptions to the use of formal methods of solicitation		
Rule 513.5 (a) The High Commissioner may determine for a particular procurement action that using formal methods of solicitation is not in the best interest of UNHCR: (i) When there is no competitive marketplace for the requirement, such as where a monopoly exists, where prices are fixed by legislation or government regulation or where the requirement involves a proprietary product or service; (ii) When there has been a previous determination or there is a need to standardize the requirement; (iii) When the proposed procurement contract is the result of cooperation with other organizations of the United Nations system, pursuant to rule 513.6; (iv) When offers for identical products and services have been obtained competitively within a reasonable period and the prices and conditions offered remain competitive; (v) When, within a reasonable prior period, a formal solicitation has not produced satisfactory results; (vi) When the proposed procurement contract is for the purchase or lease of real property and market conditions do not allow for effective competition; (vii) When there is an exigency for the requirement; (viii) When the proposed procurement contract relates to obtaining services that cannot be evaluated objectively; (ix) When the High Commissioner otherwise determines that a formal solicitation will not give satisfactory results; (x) When the value of the procurement is below the monetary threshold established for formal methods of solicitation. (b) When a determination is made pursuant to paragraph (a) above, the High Commissioner shall record the reasons in writing and may then award a procurement contract, either on the basis of an informal method of solicitation or on the basis of a directly negotiated contract, to a qualified vendor whose offer substantially conforms to the requirement at an acceptable price.		No change.
Cooperation		

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
Rule 513.6 (a) The High Commissioner may cooperate with other organizations of the United Nations system to meet the procurement requirements of UNHCR, provided that the regulations and rules of those organizations are consistent with UNHCR rules and United Nations Financial Regulations. The High Commissioner may, as appropriate, enter into agreements for such purposes. Such cooperation may include carrying out common procurement actions together or UNHCR entering into a contract relying on a procurement decision of the United Nations or another United Nations organization or requesting another United Nations organization to carry out procurement activities on behalf of UNHCR. (b) The High Commissioner may cooperate with a Government, non-governmental organization or other public international organization in respect of procurement activities and, as appropriate, enter into agreements for such purposes.		No change.
Written contracts Rule 513.7 (a) Written procurement contracts shall be used to formalize every procurement action with a monetary value exceeding specific thresholds established by the High Commissioner. Such arrangements shall, as appropriate, specify in detail: (i) The nature of the products or services being procured; (ii) The quantity being procured; (iii) The contract or unit price; (iv) The period covered; (v) Conditions to be fulfilled, including the UNHCR general conditions of contract and implications for non-delivery; (vi) Terms of delivery and payment; (vii) Name and address of the vendor. (b) The requirement for written procurement contracts shall not be interpreted to restrict the use of any electronic means of data interchange. Before any electronic means of data interchange is used, the High Commissioner shall ensure that the electronic data interchange system is capable of ensuring authentication and confidentiality of the information transmitted.		No change.
Rule 514.1 United Nations Financial Regulation 5.14 is not applicable to UNHCR.		No change.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
Internal audit		
Rule 515.1 All financial transactions and related activities covered by these rules shall be subject to audit by internal auditors.		No change.
Article VI - Accounting		
Rule 601.1 The financial statements of UNHCR shall be prepared annually in United States dollars in accordance with the present financial rules, decisions of the appropriate legislative bodies and the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).		No change.
Rule 602.1 The High Commissioner shall approve and submit annual financial statements for UNHCR, certified by the Controller, to: (a) the United Nations Board of Auditors within three months after the close of each financial period; and (b) the Executive Committee at its next session. The audit certificate, the report of the Board of Auditors and, if any, the report of the Advisory Committee thereon shall also be submitted to the Executive Committee.		No change.
Rule 603.1 Appropriate separate accounts shall be maintained for all trust funds, reserves and special accounts established by UNHCR.		No change.
Rule 604.1 The accounts of the UNHCR shall be presented in United States dollars. Accounting records may, however, be kept in such currency or currencies as the High Commissioner may deem necessary.		No change.
Write-offs		
Rule 605.1 The High Commissioner may, after investigation, authorize the writing-off of losses of assets, including cash, inventories and property, plant and equipment, provided that a statement of all such amounts written off shall be submitted to the Board of Auditors with the annual financial statements submitted in accordance with rule 602.1.		No change.

Existing UNHCR financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12)	Proposed UNHCR financial rules	Rationale
Article VII - Board of Auditors		
Rule 701.1 Article VII of the United Nations Financial Regulations is applicable to UNHCR in its entirety.		No change.

Annex II

Decision for consideration by the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee,

Recalling rule 101.5 of the Financial Rules for Voluntary Funds Administered by the High Commissioner for Refugees (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12),

Having been consulted on the proposed revision of the financial rules for voluntary funds administered by the High Commissioner for Refugees (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12) as set out in annex I of conference room paper EC/77/SC/CRP.21,

Requests the High Commissioner to submit a decision on the revised financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.13) to the Executive Committee at its seventy-seventh plenary session for endorsement and for subsequent promulgation by the High Commissioner with effect from 1 January 2028.
