

Remarks for the 97th Standing Committee meeting
Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme
Agenda item 2(c) – Oral Update on Integrity
8-9 September 2026

Statement by the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Ms. Edem Wosornu, to be adapted slightly based on discussions in the previous session on HR (Length: 2 minutes)

Madame Chair,
Distinguished delegates,

Thank you for the expressions of support that you have extended to our workforce. At a time when funding cuts and mounting pressures on the humanitarian sector continue to have a profound impact on UNHCR and our colleagues, your solidarity is appreciated.

As we navigate this period, let me assure you that maintaining a strong culture of integrity, accountability, and ethical conduct remains a top priority for the High Commissioner and for the entire senior management team. We are grateful for your partnership and look forward to your continued support for the vital work of our integrity entities.

We recognize that **change and uncertainty can heighten integrity risks**. This is why the High Commissioner's internal Integrity Action Plan is timely. It sets out time-bound measures addressing concerns raised by colleagues, including fear of speaking up, accountability, abuse of authority, and leadership conduct. It also includes actions related to protection against retaliation and mandatory ethics and code of conduct learning, with a particular focus on managers.

In this context, the **independent perspectives of the Ethics Office and the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediator** are invaluable in helping us identify concerns early, support colleagues, and reinforce trust.

Our commitment to integrity is also reflected in UNHCR efforts to **strengthen fraud prevention and risk management** across the organization. This includes targeted engagement in higher-risk operations such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan, and the Sahel region. A forthcoming global fraud risk assessment, led by the Enterprise Risk Management team, will further strengthen our prevention, detection, and response measures.

Another priority is **preventing and responding to sexual misconduct**. UNHCR continues to invest in victim-centered and locally driven prevention efforts, including supporting refugee-led and women-led organizations in 13 countries to develop awareness materials on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. The Victim Care Team is currently supporting 52 situations on sexual harassment. We are also spearheading a UN-wide survey for victims of sexual harassment to better inform policy and practice.

These efforts are part of UNHCR's broader integrity framework, in which our **Inspector General**, Stephan Grieb, plays a critical role. You will hear from him on oversight and misconduct-related trends during the Executive Committee in October. This will complement today's discussion on our broader approach to strengthening integrity across the organization, as outlined in the update shared ahead of this session.

With that, let me hand over to the Director of the Ethics Office and the Ombudsman and Mediator to update on their work. Colleagues from risk management and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment are also with us to answer questions.

Thank you

The AHC-P to hand over to the following colleagues, who will make 3-minute interventions:

- Jovanie Philogene, Head of Ethics Office
- Youssoupha Niang, Ombudsman and Mediator

Following their interventions, the Chair then opens the floor for questions from Member States, with the following colleagues available on the podium to address questions.

- **Caroline Dulin Brass**, Chief of Section, Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment
- **Hanne Raatikainen**, Head of Design, Development and Risk Management Service, UNHCR's Chief Risk Management Officer