

**Seventy-seventh meeting of the Standing Committee
10-12 March 2020**

Agenda item 3b

Oral update on the global programmes

The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), affirmed by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2018, and the Global Refugee Forum (GRF), which took place a year later, have created momentum for enhanced and innovative approaches and partnerships to ensuring that the response to the needs of refugees, the internally displaced, stateless people and returnees is comprehensive and provided, as much as possible, within national structures. In this context, UNHCR undertakes a wide range of activities of a global nature that are coordinated by its divisions at Headquarters. These are technical activities that directly support field operations, both operationally and through policy development. Referred to as global programmes, they include programmes on: (i) public health; (ii) human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and reproductive health; (iii) nutrition and food security; (iv) water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); (v) education, livelihoods and economic inclusion; (vi) shelter and settlements; (vii) energy and environment; and (viii) cash-based interventions. Furthermore, they comprise UNHCR's engagement as co-lead of the global shelter cluster and the global camp coordination and camp management cluster.

The Director of Division of Resilience and Solutions, Mr. Sajjad Malik, will provide an oral update on UNHCR's global programmes. Given the broad scope of the programmes, the activities have been grouped under three cross-cutting themes.

I. Ensuring that the basic needs of persons of concern to UNHCR are met and that the technical integrity of responses is maintained to provide effective field support:

- **Cash-based interventions:** UNHCR has met its grand bargain commitment to double the use of cash as a proportion of its assistance by 2020. UNHCR has delivered \$2.4 billion in cash-based assistance since 2016 (including \$650 million in 2019) in more than 100 countries. The High Commissioner has pledged, together with the heads of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the World Food Programme (WFP), to increase the use of common cash systems in country operations. Common cash delivery mechanisms will translate into more coherent responses and a more efficient use of funding. In addition, UNHCR cash assistance will, whenever feasible, leverage opportunities to include refugees in national systems, including national safety nets with the goal of facilitating the transition toward self-reliance and reducing aid dependency.
- **Education:** Investing in equitable, quality education in national systems contributes to resilience, while preparing children and youth for participation in cohesive societies. In 2019, UNHCR supported over 8,200 refugee students in 54 countries with a scholarship from the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (known by its German acronym DAFI). In the same year, the initiative had a record number of over 2,500 newly enrolled students. Over 12,500 students benefitted from digital blended programmes through the Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium. However, access for refugees to secondary education remains a critical gap, and UNHCR and partners continue to work towards increasing the enrollment of refugee youth in national secondary education systems. To this end, in 2019, ten operations received support to prioritize access to secondary education as part of the Secondary Youth Education Initiative promoting the inclusion of refugees in national education systems. Moreover, 'Refugee Education 2030: A Strategy for Inclusion', launched in September 2019, outlines UNHCR's approach to supporting refugee inclusion in national education systems in line with the GCR and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.
- **Health, nutrition and food security:** During 2019, operations in more than 35 countries were supported through the global programmes in addressing a range of needs, including the assessment of access of persons of concern to tuberculosis screening and treatment services; the roll-out of the new health information system; medicine supply management; and the assessment of nutritional status of persons of concern. This support contributed to

UNHCR's broader objective to ensure, whenever possible, that refugees are included in national health systems. UNHCR also made significant progress on the roll out of the new Integrated Refugee Health Information System to strengthen surveillance and monitoring of public health programmes, with 16 out of 18 countries being reached. While levels of food assistance have improved in some refugee operations in 2019, many operations continue to face increasing reductions and people receive less than what is required to meet their daily food needs. Based on recent data, there has been a deterioration in the food security of refugees in Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mauritania, Nigeria and Zambia, while a significant reduction in food rations have taken place in Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi and South Sudan. Therefore, UNHCR and WFP work closely together to improve the food security of people of concern, while also promoting self-reliance, as per the GCR objectives.

- **Shelter cluster and global camp coordination and camp management cluster:** UNHCR continues its role as the co-lead of the global shelter cluster, along with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the global camp coordination and camp management (CCCM) cluster, together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). In 2019, UNHCR led 16 of the 30 activated country-level shelter clusters, including the two newly activated clusters activated in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (July) and Burkina Faso (December). In 2019, UNHCR (co-) led
 - 14 of the 23 CCCM clusters and cluster-like coordination mechanisms.

II. Strengthening partnerships and expanding collaborative solutions in line with the GCR to better respond to the needs of persons of concern:

- **UN-Habitat:** UNHCR strengthened its partnership with UN-Habitat with the signing of an updated memorandum of understanding. This partnership will develop innovative solutions for the design of settlements, drawing on best practices in urban planning and strengthening linkages between the humanitarian and development spheres. Through this partnership UNHCR will pursue improved data and evidence-based approaches with the aim of better tailoring responses in urban areas and improving engagement with municipalities and local actors.
- **The World Bank:** The UNHCR-World Bank Group (WB) cooperation has begun changing the policy dialogue on the inclusion of refugees in national service delivery systems and their economic inclusion, e.g. through access to labour markets. This partnership actively contributes to the operationalization of the GCR, particularly in creating development opportunities for refugees in protracted situations and their host communities. Under the nineteenth replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA) for July 2020 – June 2023, the WB committed to review refugee policy and institutional environments systematically in countries eligible for the new IDA19 Window for Host Communities and Refugees, to inform further support for the creation of socioeconomic development opportunities for refugee and host communities in these countries. This collaboration has grown into a solid, strategic partnership rooted in the principle of complementarity, in line with the two organization's respective comparative advantages.
- **UNICEF:** UNHCR has worked with UNICEF to develop a two-year (2020-2021) blueprint for joint action. Titled "A Fair Deal for Refugee Children", it focuses on improving the response in the priority areas of education, WASH and child protection, and represents a contribution to the SDGs in these specific areas. This blueprint aims to see transformative results and valuable learning achieved in 8-10 focus countries and seeks to bridge the humanitarian-development nexus by working to strengthen national systems to be inclusive of refugee children and their families. The inclusion of millions of refugee children in the areas of education, WASH and child protection will be underpinned by efforts to strengthen these national systems and a renewed focus to advocate for refugee's full social and economic inclusion in national policy and plans.
- **OECD, UNCTAD and IOM:** In line with the second objective of the GCR, and to operationalize the Policy Guide on Entrepreneurship for Refugees and Migrants, UNHCR, in collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

and IOM, organized 14 multi-stakeholder forums in 12 countries.¹ The forums brought together the private sector, governments, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders to discuss the inclusion of refugees in employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. They resulted in concrete policy and programme related recommendations developed by different stakeholders, such as local authorities, chambers of commerce, and ministries, to facilitate the access of refugees to business support services (business development trainings, financial services, business incubators, business coaching, etc.). UNHCR and other participants will review the progress periodically to assess the impact and develop follow-up steps.

- **IKEA:** In 2019, through our partnership with IKEA and Better Shelter, 76,000 persons of concern received refugee housing units, including 25,000 internally displaced persons. By leveraging the expertise of the private sector, UNHCR and IKEA have developed unique approaches to providing adequate shelter in the context of protracted displacement.
- **FAO:** A global memorandum of understanding between UNHCR and Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) was signed on 25 October 2019, with the aim to support greater food security for refugees. It also explores opportunities for agricultural and economic development activities in refugee contexts. Through the memorandum of understanding, the agencies have defined mutual areas of interest to support the self-reliance and resilience of refugees and host communities related to agricultural and pastoral activities, rural value chains, market development, land tenure, energy access and natural resources management.

III. Developing innovative approaches to meeting the evolving demands in the complex contexts in which UNCHR operates:

- **CashAssist:** UNHCR is progressing with the institutionalization of cash-based interventions and has developed systems, tools and guidance to facilitate cash delivery, including CashAssist – UNHCR’s cash management system – which ensures that cash transfers are made to our persons of concern in a timely and accurate manner, while avoiding duplication of payments and minimizing the risk of fraud. CashAssist has been implemented in 10 operations, with another 50 operations planned in the coming 2 years.
- **Shelter and settlements:** With a view to improving settlement planning in country operations, UNHCR continued to build on the masterplan settlement approach, including supporting the operationalization of key elements in four operations (Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Niger and Uganda). The masterplan provides a framework to apply the principles of urban planning to the design of a fully functional settlement, which builds upon existing infrastructure (such as schools, health centers, markets etc.) and can cater to the needs of refugees and the host community. This operational approach contributes to achieving the goals of the GCR and strengthens the collaboration with local authorities and partners. For example, the application of the principles of the masterplan in Cox’s Bazaar, together with UN-Habitat, incorporated a range of improved technical approaches in response to the complex operating environment.
- **Energy:** UNHCR is applying a multi-stakeholder approach (member States, multilateral and inter-governmental institutions, UN agencies and NGOs, research institutes, and the private sector) through the Clean Energy Challenge, which was launched by the High Commissioner during the GRF. The challenge, developed in close coordination with the World Economic Forum Humanitarian Investment Initiative, is a joint initiative of the shelter and settlements, WASH, protection, food security, education, livelihoods, health and energy sectors, and is grounded in an integrated approach to settlements. UNHCR’s role in the challenge is that of enabler, in the spirit of the recently launched Global Strategy for Sustainable Energy, seeking partnership with other stakeholders on the delivery of inclusive responses that better meet the basic needs of persons of concern to UNHCR within the sectors included in the initiative.
- **WASH:** UNHCR recently launched a new WASH dashboard, which includes a real-time monitoring component. The dashboard currently includes information on WASH operations in 152 sites, in 29 countries, involving more than 4.2 million refugees living in camps and settlements. More remains to be done on understanding access to basic WASH services. As such, the dashboard will facilitate operational planning and highlight both

¹ These countries are: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Estonia, Ghana, Italy, Mozambique, Panama, Pakistan, and Ukraine

gaps in data as well as in WASH services provision and availability, at site, country, regional or global level. In addition, the internal integration of WASH data with the Integrated Refugee Health Information System allows UNCHR to assess whether water-related diseases may be correlated with a breakdown of WASH services.

- ***Economic inclusion:*** UNHCR partnered with Sida and Grameen Credit Agricole Foundation on a financial inclusion programme for refugees in Uganda, which is expected to provide microcredit loans and other financial and non-financial services to about 100,000 refugees and members of the host community (70 per cent will be women) over the next 4 years. UNHCR aims to empower displaced people to address their needs through a range of technologies and being part of a digital financial ecosystem, rather than simply delivering assets. This allows persons of concern to UNHCR to provide for their families' basic needs and contribute to society.

UNHCR, 6 March 2020