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High Commissioner's Programme**

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Summary

This paper provides an overview of developments in the global programmes of UNHCR since the last update to the eighty- third meeting of the Standing Committee in February 2022 (EC/73/SC/CRP.3). It focuses on interventions and implementation in the following key areas: (i) livelihoods and economic inclusion; (ii) cash-based interventions; (iii) education; (iv) food security and nutrition; (v) public health (including mental health and psychosocial support); (vi) shelter and settlement; (vii) water, sanitation and hygiene; and (viii) energy and environment.

I. Introduction

1. In 2022, conflict and persecution continued to leave a devastating impact on the world's most vulnerable, including refugees, internally displaced persons, stateless persons and returnees, who now account for more than 1 per cent of the world's population. Despite the many challenges, including the ongoing effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and climate change, UNHCR global programmes succeeding in supporting millions of displaced women, men and children.

2. These programmes covered the following areas: (i) livelihoods and economic inclusion; (ii) cash-based interventions; (iii) education; (iv) food security and nutrition; (v) public health (including mental health and psychosocial support); (vi) shelter and settlements; (vii) water, sanitation and hygiene; and (viii) energy and environment. UNHCR continued to co-lead the global shelter cluster and the global camp coordination and camp management cluster. This paper provides an update on the progress achieved through UNHCR global programmes in 2022, which are carried out in a manner that is supportive of the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees.

II. Updates on technical sectors

A. Livelihoods and economic inclusion

3. Improving the livelihoods of displaced populations remains a priority for UNHCR. In partnership with the World Bank, UNHCR initiated insect farming to expand innovative, low-cost, green approaches to improve food security, employment opportunities and income generation for refugees and host communities in three locations in Africa.

4. With the aim of advancing economic inclusion, UNHCR has been continuing its work to support refugee's access to financial services. In Uganda, UNHCR, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Grameen Credit Agricole foundation have joined forces to promote access to credit for refugee and host communities through a blended finance facility, which was established with a combination of private and public funds to support the inclusion of refugees in such services. Additionally, the Poverty Alleviation Coalition is helping over 74,000 refugee and host community households in 22 countries to emerge from extreme poverty. Together with the International Finance Corporation, UNHCR has identified opportunities to increase access to a broad range of financial services for displaced populations, notably in Latin America and in the context of the Ukraine situation.

5. Promoting self-reliance is central to UNHCR programmes. To this end, UNHCR and Impact Hub launched the Global Roadmap for Refugee Entrepreneurship,¹ which addresses best practices in entrepreneurship and inclusion based on research in 21 countries. Under the Partnership for Improving Prospects for Forcibly Displaced Persons and Host Communities, also known as the PROSPECTS Partnership, UNHCR and the International Labour Organization (ILO) undertook a study of market-based approaches in forced displacement contexts to assess their effectiveness, sustainability and impact.

6. In 2022, to ensure stronger security of its database and improved performance, UNHCR updated its Livelihoods Information System together with the United Nations International Computing Centre and the non-governmental organization specialized in information management Cart'ONG. The system is now better aligned with COMPASS, the results-based management approach for strategic planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting in UNHCR.

7. MADE51, the UNHCR initiative which promotes refugee-made products, now operates in 23 countries with 35 social enterprise partners, employing approximately 3,500. MADE51 provided technical, marketing and design guidance as well as seed funding

¹ See <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/brochures/63565bc94/global-roadmap-refugee-entrepreneurship.html>.

to social enterprise partners to sustainably increase their engagement with refugee artisan groups and capacity for income-generation.

B. Cash-based interventions

8. In 2022, UNHCR delivered \$977 million in cash assistance to some 10 million people in 100 countries. Preliminary analysis of the 2022 data and surveys highlights that some 90 per cent of cash recipients felt that cash improved their living conditions and well-being, and that cash assistance was their preferred modality. Yet, 74 per cent reported that the assistance provided only met half or less of their basic needs and 72 per cent indicated that they had engaged in negative coping mechanisms.

9. UNHCR launched a new policy on cash-based assistance for 2022-2026, outlining the key priorities in this area for the next five years. The policy commits the organization to leverage cash-based interventions to reinforce the goal of “leaving no one behind” through refugee inclusion in national systems, services and protections.

10. To further financial inclusion, some 80 per cent of beneficiaries received cash through digital means in 2022, including some 32 per cent through their own bank and mobile money accounts. Refugees and other persons of concern also used cash to access national services. In this regard, UNHCR documented good practices² in water, sanitation and hygiene; education; livelihoods and economic inclusion; and healthcare, with positive examples in Burkina Faso, Chad, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Iraq, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, Peru and Türkiye.

11. In 2022, UNHCR was designated accountable for the coordination of cash assistance in refugee settings and, together with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, co-led the Global Cash Advisory Group. Forty country operations have developed coordination transition plans to move towards the new cash coordination model. Common cash approaches have been implemented in 30 countries.

12. Going forward, UNHCR will continue to leverage cash as a vehicle for financial inclusion and protection, while more effectively responding to emergencies through this type of assistance.

C. Education

13. Last year marked the thirtieth anniversary of the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) scholarship programme. UNHCR opened new DAFI country programmes in Colombia, Djibouti, Kyrgyzstan and Slovakia, and over 8,300 refugee and returnee students were enrolled worldwide.

14. UNHCR provided a series of global refugee youth leadership and advocacy trainings benefiting 80 youth, and a series of regional trainings under the PROSPECTS Partnership in East Africa, benefiting over 100 youth. UNHCR also enabled more than 40 refugee students and youth leaders to participate in high-level global events to bring their perspectives into important policy discussions. At the Transforming Education Summit, a report prepared by several organizations, including the ILO on skills and labour market transitions for refugees and cost communities was presented.³ A workshop was organized by UNHCR to share lessons learned and best practices from the Educate A Child Programme, which was attended by 40 regional and national education, protection and programme experts.

15. The Instant Network Schools programme, funded by the Vodafone Foundation, was expanded to 84 centres covering six countries. Since its inception, the programme has reached more than 224,700 children and 4,000 teachers. Moreover, the connected education programme, sponsored by ProFuturo, was expanded to two more countries, Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

² See: <https://www.unhcr.org/631854e14>.

³ See: <https://www.skillsforemployment.org/skpEng/knowledge-product-detail/5194>.

16. Throughout the year, UNHCR worked closely with partners in host countries to ensure that refugee children from Ukraine were able to quickly resume learning, including to avoid compounding learning gaps resulting from the pandemic.

17. UNHCR reinforced the ability of its regional bureaux and country operations to strengthen the availability of data and evidence on refugee education and ensure the development of high-quality programmes in this area.

D. Food security and nutrition

18. Collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP) on food security, self-reliance and inclusion expanded in 2022, including through the Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub. The hub facilitates the operationalization and collaboration of UNHCR-WFP frameworks at country, regional and global levels to better understand and meet the basic needs of refugees and promote their inclusion in national systems. Since 2020, the hub has supported 13 operations.⁴

19. In Mauritania, with support from the hub, common vulnerability targeting has been designed and adopted for both UNHCR and WFP humanitarian assistance and national social protection programmes. This helps ensure that the basic needs of refugees are met and that the most vulnerable individuals are included in national systems. UNHCR and WFP joint assessments in 10 countries have resulted in improved quality and use of data to inform programmatic decisions and aid to affected people. In Uganda, with support of the hub, UNHCR and WFP ensured robust community engagement prior to the prioritization of food assistance to identify potential risks and mitigation strategies, as well as preferred channels for communications.

20. In 2022, UNHCR reinforced programmes to treat and prevent undernutrition. This included community-based management of acute malnutrition (over 200,000 children were admitted for treatment in 2022 in 14 countries); infant and young child feeding programmes; nutritional assessments; counselling; and assistance for identified vulnerable groups, including pregnant and lactating women, and people living with chronic diseases such as the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Standardized expanded nutrition surveys were implemented in 10 countries, allowing UNHCR to monitor the nutritional situation and evaluate the various programmes.

21. UNHCR coordinated with United Nations partners to advance efforts under the Global Action Plan on Child Wasting. Efforts concentrated on global and national high-level political advocacy with the aim of increasing financial commitments; preventing malnutrition; expanding treatment; developing timely and appropriate policy and guidelines; and ensuring the availability of cost-effective supplies for the management of wasting.

E. Public health (including mental health and psychosocial support)

22. In 2022, over 5.5 million consultations were reported in 18 countries where the UNHCR health information system was deployed. The top five causes of morbidities for acute health conditions were upper respiratory tract infections (24 per cent), malaria (13 per cent), lower respiratory tract infections (8 per cent), skin disease (6 per cent) and watery diarrhoea (6 per cent).

23. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, advocacy for inclusion in the roll-out of national COVID-19 vaccinations resulted in refugees being vaccinated in 153 countries. According to reports received from 72 countries, a total of 10.7 million vaccine doses were administered to approximately 6.2 million persons of concern to UNHCR by the end of 2022.

24. Technical documents were developed to guide the response by UNHCR during communicable disease outbreaks, such as Ebola and monkeypox. UNHCR facilitated the public health response in the context of the Ukraine situation through the inter-agency

⁴ The following operations are supported by the Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub: Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Jordan, Mauritania, Mozambique, the Niger, Rwanda, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

regional health extension in Kraków, Poland, with specialists in public and mental health assessing gaps in health services, providing technical guidance and conducting support missions to neighbouring countries.

25. UNHCR collaborated with the United Nations Foundation to monitor the inclusion of refugees in applications to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Significant progress has been achieved with the number of proposals including specific activities for refugees in the 2020-2022 funding cycle related to: malaria (81 per cent of proposals, up from 36 per cent in 2017-2019), HIV (60 per cent from 15 per cent) and tuberculosis (69 per cent from 50 per cent).

26. UNHCR collaborated with the World Bank and academic partners to expand the evidence base on challenges and good practices related to public health in displacement settings. This resulted in the publication of a report entitled, “The big questions in forced displacement and health”.⁵ UNHCR also collaborated with the World Health Organization on the “World report on the health of refugees and migrants”.⁶

27. UNHCR pursued capacity-building initiatives for improved care for persons with non-communicable diseases from refugee and host communities. UNHCR and the World Diabetes Foundation entered into a new partnership with the objective of bolstering health systems to enhance care for non-communicable diseases in Burundi, the Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania.

28. A minimum services package for mental health and psychosocial support,⁷ which describes the priority actions within and across sectors, was finalized by four United Nations entities, including UNHCR, and endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. UNHCR engaged in operational research on scalable psychological interventions. This included contributing to the finalization of a report on a 5-year project funded by the European Commission that showed the effectiveness of brief psychological interventions implemented by Syrian refugees. UNHCR released a review on the mental health and psychosocial well-being of refugees from and internally displaced persons in South Sudan, to guide humanitarian staff working with these populations.⁸

29. UNHCR engages with women and men to ensure that particular health needs are addressed in an appropriate manner. Currently, UNHCR and partners are working with close to 9,200 community health workers, of which 52 per cent are women. It developed operational guidance on community health in refugee settings to strengthen community engagement, in line with the UNHCR global public health strategy 2021-2025.

30. In 2022, a three-year project to advance adolescent health and well-being was concluded. The project operationalized the organization’s adolescent sexual and reproductive health toolkit, including in Rwanda and Uganda.

G. Settlement planning; shelter and housing; water, sanitation and hygiene; and energy

31. In line with its operational strategy for climate resilience and environmental sustainability, UNHCR has increasingly enhanced the technical integrity of humanitarian responses in the areas of settlement planning; shelter and housing; water, sanitation and hygiene; and energy. The goal is to mitigate the devastating impacts of climate change, including flooding, landslides and water scarcity in displacement settlements which are most at risk. At the same time UNHCR aims at limiting the environmental impact of humanitarian operations, building resilience and finding durable solutions.

⁵ See <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099001106212246276/p1669090e0c4010b0adfa050973837275a>.

⁶ See <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240054462>.

⁷ See <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-reference-group-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-emergency-settings/iasc-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-minimum-service-package>.

⁸ The reviews referenced in this paragraph can be found at <https://www.unhcr.org/mental-health-psychosocial-support.html>.

32. In collaboration with the United Nations Satellite Centre, UNHCR facilitated the geospatial and hydrological analysis of 30 existing settlements in the 15 countries most affected by climate-related shocks.

33. In the area of housing, UNHCR improved the recycling of emergency and transitional shelter materials by promoting the use of local sustainable approaches and components. In partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross and International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, UNHCR continued to support the research and development project that was launched in 2021 to finalize the design of new tarpaulins with a lower environmental impact.

34. While UNHCR has thus far provided around 46 per cent of its nearly 500 water pumps with solar panels, hundreds of large water systems still run on diesel power. A new green initiative called “Project Flow” has been launched by UNHCR, using innovative financing mechanisms to accelerate solarization. Field-based feasibility studies for the implementation of 40 water systems have begun in six countries (Ethiopia, Mauritania, Rwanda, South Sudan, the Sudan and Zambia), with the use of solar power to commence in 2023.

35. UNHCR developed an action plan and technical procurement guidelines for solar lanterns to improve electronic waste management in humanitarian settings. In this regard, recycling and repair pilot projects commenced in two countries (Bangladesh and Uganda).

Global shelter cluster

36. In 2022, UNHCR led 20 out of 32 shelter clusters and coordination mechanisms. Throughout the year, the global shelter cluster mobilized collective efforts towards greener and climate-smart approaches to humanitarian shelter and settlement programmes. The shelter cluster was significantly strengthened in Ukraine as part of the system-wide emergency operation. The cluster immediately deployed a coordination team to the country with continuous backing from the global team. The cluster has also been activated in El Salvador and scaled up in Somalia⁹.

Global camp coordination and camp management cluster

37. In 2022, two new camp coordination and camp management clusters were activated in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ukraine, led by UNHCR. With this, the cluster is currently active in 24 countries. In those countries, UNHCR leads 15 clusters and four working groups in operations involving some 14 million internally displaced persons living in formal and informal sites.

38. Between September 2020 and June 2022, UNHCR increased its staffing for the global and local clusters, with 46 staff members recruited. With this additional capacity, the camp coordination and camp management and global shelter clusters were able to enhance efforts towards addressing gender-based violence in displacement settings. The camp coordination and camp management operational training material was revised in August 2022 to integrate programming for the prevention of gender-based violence and risk mitigation.

39. The camp coordination and camp management case study collection initiative is now in its seventh year, with more than 70 case studies gathered across a wide spectrum of cluster topics.¹⁰ This year's themes included assistance for people with disabilities, environmental degradation measures and environmentally friendly practices in camps and camp like settings¹¹.

⁹ For more information on the work of UNHCR in the global shelter cluster and coordination with partners, please see Strategic partnership, including coordination EC/74/SC/CRP.7.

¹⁰ See <https://ccccluster.org/resources>

¹¹ For more information on the work of UNHCR in the global camp coordination and camp management cluster and coordination with partners, please see Strategic partnership, including coordination EC/74/SC/CRP.7.