

**Introductory Remarks of Steven Corliss
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Update on the Global Programmes (EC/67/SC/CRP.3)**

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Thank you, Mr Chairman,

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to introduce the update on UNHCR's Global Programmes. Within the Division of Programme Support and Management (DPSM) and the Division of International Protection (DIP), we look forward to this session as an opportunity to engage with the Standing Committee, to inform you about our progress and our challenges and to seek your advice and guidance.

The Global Programmes aim at improving the quality of life for refugees and other people of concern across a broad spectrum of UNHCR's operational activities. They are managed from Headquarters, but have a direct impact in the field. Last year, DPSM supported UNHCR operations with expert missions focusing on emergency response, technical support and capacity-building for a total of 4,589 days. This is equivalent of seventeen and a half working years and represents a 23 percent increase over last year.

Let me begin with a focus on emergencies. For more than five years now, UNHCR has faced a continually unfolding series of major refugee emergencies. Throughout these challenging times, we have maintained our capacity for rapid, agile and effective emergency response, while also advancing strategic initiatives aimed at making UNHCR fit for the future. Striking this balance, however, has never been more difficult than today.

Last year – for the first time in more than twenty years – Europe faced massive refugee movements. UNHCR was called upon to support national governments and European institutions in responding to critical protection needs. In a very dynamic situation, UNHCR's Global Programmes reinforced operations in Greece and along the Western Balkans route with technical expertise in such areas as information management, camp coordination and camp management, WASH and shelter. We also continued to support emergency response with technical expertise in operations across Africa, from Nigeria to Ethiopia, south to Burundi and in Cameroon and the Central African Republic.

Looking beyond the emergency phase, we see encouraging momentum toward strengthening the elusive humanitarian-development nexus. We see a growing commitment to working together and working differently among humanitarian and development agencies, international financial institutions, bilateral and multilateral donors and, most importantly, governments in countries hosting refugees.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls upon us to “leave no one behind.” The Secretary-General's report to the World Humanitarian Summit – *One Humanity: Shared Responsibility* – asks us to “transcend the humanitarian-development divide” and change people's lives by moving from delivering aid to ending need. From this foundation, UNHCR makes its own call for governments to see refugees not as a humanitarian “burden” but rather as a development opportunity – as people who can contribute to the communities where they live, to economic growth and to achieving development objectives. This also builds the foundation for solutions, whatever form they take.

UNHCR is carrying this message to the many important events taking place this year, which are framed by World Humanitarian Summit in May and the UN refugee and migrant summit in New York in September. We look forward, of course, to going beyond dialogue, moving to the country level through mechanisms such as the Solutions Alliance, and making difference for refugees and the communities that host them.

The World Bank's growing engagement with forced displacement has been a real “game changer” for UNHCR. The Bank increasingly recognises that its twin goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity cannot be achieved without taking into account the world's 60 million forcibly displaced people. We are now

benefitting from the Bank's analytical capacity, which will allow us to complement our rights-based protection advocacy with hard economic evidence on the impacts and outcomes of different policy options available to governments hosting refugees.

Making the humanitarian-development nexus a reality is essential to many of the UNHCR's strategic initiatives. Our 2014 *Policy on Alternatives to Camps* – which incorporates the 2009 *Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas* – as well as important elements of UNHCR's global strategies promote more inclusive, sustainable and development-oriented approaches to programming for refugees in protracted displacement.

We launched the global strategies for public health, settlement and shelter, livelihoods and safe access to fuel and energy – or SAFE – before this Committee two years ago. As I recalled last year, the Committee welcomed the global strategies but asked me to demonstrate that they are having an impact in the lives of refugees.

Today, we are sharing with you the *2015 Global Strategy Implementation Report*, which presents the results we achieved last year, the key challenges and highlights from the field. While we still have a long way to go to achieve the full ambitions of these five-year strategies, UNHCR can report on more than interesting pilot projects and isolated successes. We can highlight achievements that show the way forward in taking these strategic directions and innovative approaches to scale across UNHCR's operations and making them sustainable.

UNHCR's global strategy for public health aims to ensure that refugees have access to health care, prevention and treatment programmes and other forms of life-saving assistance and essential services. We saw a marked improvement in key health indicators in 2015, as critical emergency situations stabilised. Mortality rates among children under 5 years old – a “bellwether” indicator for the health of the broader refugee population – was at acceptable levels in 98 percent of all operations. Globally, refugees had access to 20 litres of water per day on average – the UNHCR standard – and sanitation conditions also improved significantly.

At the same time, we cannot be complacent. The rates of global acute malnutrition (GAM), anaemia and stunting among refugee children remain stubbornly high. Data from Rwanda, however, provides a bright spot. UNHCR and its partners have reduced anaemia levels among Congolese refugee children by nearly 30 percent and stunting by 25 percent. The answer lies in a robust and sustained response to anaemia and micronutrient deficiencies and reinforced Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), combined with coordinated health, nutrition, WASH, environmental and malaria reduction efforts. We need to replicate this model.

UNHCR's ability to improve the health and nutrition of refugee children depends fundamentally upon steady and predictable food assistance from WFP. Shortfalls in food assistance distort UNHCR's programming as we compensate by shifting resources into enhanced nutritional support and cut back elsewhere. We are working closely with WFP to develop strategies and approaches for targeting limited food assistance and strengthen the self-reliance of refugees. Nevertheless, WFP food assistance – and the strong donor support that makes it possible – remains an essential lifeline for refugees. Recent improvements in WFP funding must be sustained.

Mainstreaming refugees in national service delivery systems is a key strategic direction of the global strategy and UNHCR's *Policy on Alternatives to Camps*. In 2015, we concluded an agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran to include 1 million Afghan and Iraqi refugees in the government health insurance scheme. We also have roadmaps in place for integrating refugees in national healthcare systems in five countries. Mainstreaming takes time as it challenges vested interests and tests our willingness to adapt to national standards.

The global strategy for settlement and shelter seeks to ensure that all refugees are able to satisfy their settlement and shelter needs in a safe, dignified and sustainable manner wherever they are living. UNHCR has moved the strategy to the field level in practical ways through the development of context-specific strategies in 17 of the 25 operations having shelter budgets exceeding USD 1 million.

Through the global strategy and the *Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, UNHCR has promoted the “master plan” approach to settlement planning. Together with the Government of Kenya and the World Bank, UNHCR is working to anchor the new Kalobeyi site in the Kakuma camp complex within regional development planning.

We have also deployed technical experts to Mozambique and Zimbabwe to explore how the “master plan” approach and concepts can help to transform existing camps into more sustainable settlements to contribute to regional economic development.

UNHCR’s global strategy for livelihoods has the vision of ensuring that refugees and other people of concern are able to make a safe and sustainable living that meets their basic needs. We have now successfully piloted the Graduation Approach to sustainable livelihoods for urban refugees and host communities in Egypt, Costa Rica and Ecuador. Nearly 20,000 people have secured wage earning employment or have started businesses through these pilots. The Government of Costa Rica has included the Graduation Approach in the National Development Plan for 2015 to 2018, ensuring the sustainability of the project.

We have also introduced the Graduation Approach in rural settings in Zambia and Burkina Faso, where 2,800 Malian refugees have been integrated in the national milk production value chain. We are also working with 1,000 refugee artisans in Burkina Faso to strengthen their business skills, improve their products and overcome the obstacles they face in accessing tools, materials and international markets for their much appreciated handicrafts.

Last year, UNHCR established minimum criteria for livelihoods programming. These criteria require livelihoods activities to be grounded on baseline socio-economic and market assessments, supported and monitored by qualified experts and implemented by partners with appropriate expertise. At the end of 2015, 97 UNHCR operations had plans in place for achieving compliance with the minimum criteria, and several were obliged to suspend or terminate livelihoods programming this year. The minimum criteria are a powerful tool for ensuring that the global strategy for livelihoods has roots at the field level.

UNHCR’s global strategy for safe access to fuel and energy focuses on enabling refugees to meet their energy needs for cooking and lighting in a safe and sustainable manner. All ten UNHCR operations prioritised for implementation of the SAFE strategy have developed context-specific national strategies. We are also increasingly able to measure and demonstrate impact. In Rwanda, for example, refugees using fuel-efficient stoves exchanged or sold their food rations for fuel 47 percent less often than households using the traditional three-stone fire. They also made 32 percent fewer trips to forage for firewood, skipped fewer meals and spent less of their limited income on firewood.

In Kenya, UNHCR has piloted the use of ethanol to replace kerosene for cooking. We are also testing cooking with liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in the same country, biogas production in Bangladesh and solar cooking technology in Burkina Faso. On a larger scale, UNHCR is developing a solar farm to supply electricity to the Azraq camp in Jordan, with support from the IKEA “Brighter Lives for Refugees” campaign and the KfW Development Bank. This project has the potential to reduce expenditures on electricity by millions of dollars and to reduce carbon emissions by thousands of tonnes.

Through the SAFE strategy, UNHCR has recognised that energy – for cooking, for lighting and for other uses – is a basic need for refugees. Our efforts however remain very dependent upon special funding and private sector support. UNHCR also needs technical expertise to realise the vision of the SAFE strategy. With this in mind, we formed a SAFE Advisory Board last year to guide implementation. We have also joined the DFID-supported Moving Energy Initiative (MEI), which is bringing greater attention to the sustainable energy needs of refugees and displaced people.

The Sustainable Development Goals are a very powerful platform for UNHCR’s advocacy for refugees. SDG 4 – Quality Education – incorporates a global commitment to education for refugees and the internally displaced. We are now working to make this a reality in national education planning. In Pakistan, for example, UNHCR is a member of the SDG 4 cell in the Ministry of Education. In Chad, the government has secured targeted funding to support the education of Nigerian refugees in the country.

Including refugee children within national education systems is a key objective of UNHCR’s Education Strategy and the *Policy on Alternatives to Camps*. We are making progress. Refugee children are attending public schools in 15 countries that have large refugee populations. Access to secondary education, however, remains problematic for many young refugees, who cannot afford to pay the fees.

UNHCR is focusing increased attention on education for refugee adolescents and youth, responding to the sad reality that many miss out on schooling when they become displaced. We have established a working group with UNICEF, USAID and several NGO partners to strengthen accelerated education programmes, which enable young people who are not in school to access certified educational opportunities. Almost 5,000 refugees in 42 countries are also enrolled in higher education programmes through scholarships and connected/e-learning initiatives. The number of Syrian refugees participating in these programmes has doubled between 2014 and 2015.

Let me now turn to some other important areas of engagement. UNHCR continues to strengthen the systems, tools and capacities for information management. We now have a solid worldwide network of 138 UNHCR staff and affiliated workforce specialising in information management and operational data management. We are also progressing well with development of a framework for Protection Information Management, together with the Danish Refugee Council and a range of partners.

A priority for the future will be to strengthen our capacity for statistical analysis, in order to engage effectively with the SDG process and also to support improved programming in the field, including the targeting of assistance. This is a focus of our growing collaboration with the World Bank. During last week's UN Statistical Commission session in New York, we advocated for the creation of an expert group to develop guidance for statistics on refugees and IDPs, as well as for the disaggregation of the SDGs to distinguish refugees from migrants..

UNHCR is accelerating the introduction of *proGres in Partnership*, the next generation of UNHCR's registration and case management platform, and the UNHCR Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS), our biometrics solution worldwide. The new *proGres* system is now in use in Southern Africa, with more deployments to follow during 2016. BIMS is now operational in ten countries, including Thailand, Chad, the Republic of Congo and Malaysia. More than 650,000 refugees have been enrolled in UNHCR's global biometric database, and planning is underway for further major deployments this year.

We have a dedicated team based in UNHCR's Global Service Centre in Copenhagen to take forward deployment of *proGres* and BIMS. The move to Copenhagen has also allowed us to establish a new Identity Management and Registration Section (IMRS), which will focus on strengthening the framework for identity management in UNHCR and realising the full potential of these new systems.

Finally, I would like to touch upon our efforts to promote the expanded and systematic use of cash-based interventions. UNHCR is not seeking to become a "cash agency" but we are convinced of the protection benefits of cash – which gives refugees the dignity of choice. We also see the potential for realising cost-efficiencies, as well as the need for UNHCR to prepare for the transformative impact that cash will have on humanitarian action. Over the past few years, UNHCR has built a strong network among WFP and other operational agencies using cash aimed at developing common approaches to assessment, targeting, monitoring, coordination and delivery of cash-based interventions.

Internally, we have embarked on the less glamorous but equally necessary five-year process of institutionalising cash-based interventions within UNHCR. Our basic objective is to ensure that UNHCR operations are able to consider cash on par with in-kind assistance. To achieve this, we need capacity and expertise at the country level, backed up by adapted processes and systems at the global level and the right commercial, operational and implementation partnerships.

I will conclude here, Mr. Chairman. As always, I look forward to hearing the Committee's views and answering any questions that you may have.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.