

## **Item 5**

Standing Committee

March 2017

*Remarks by Rossella Pagliuchi-Lor, Director a.i., Division of External Relations*

Strategic partnerships, including coordination

Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

On account of both operational delivery and advocacy, strengthening and diversifying our partnerships is more important than ever to effectively respond to the needs of the people we serve – and this is in fact one of the key approaches identified by UNHCR’s Strategic Directions for 2017-2021.

In the interest of time, I will limit myself to summarizing a few key initiatives that contributed to establishing and reinforcing synergies with traditional and non-traditional partners in 2016.

*[UN summit for refugees and migrants]*

The 2016 New York declaration contains an extensive set of commitments to enhance the rights and well-being of both refugees and migrants. With respect to refugees, UNHCR was notably called upon to articulate a comprehensive response framework built around a set of diverse partnerships. These partnerships go beyond the usual alliance of humanitarian agencies to engage with untraditional partners such as development and even private sector actors alongside host government, host communities and donors.

The New York declaration underscores the importance of inclusion as central to the attainment of protection solutions. We are committed to strengthening partnerships that are supportive of strong and inclusive national systems. In this sense, we can build on the collaboration between humanitarian and development actors facilitated by the Solutions Alliance, and the deepening partnership with the World Bank, which is increasingly engaging in projects supporting refugee-hosting countries.

Another very concrete partnership that speaks to livelihoods and solutions is the partnership with ILO whose Governing Board has in 2016 adopted *Guiding Principles on Access of Refugees and other Forcibly Displaced Persons to the Labour Market*. The principles were drafted with UNHCR's assistance as part of the secretariat and will now be advanced at global, regional and field levels in close collaboration with UNHCR as part of a joint action plan.

Similarly, we have engaged with OECD to further the inclusion of refugees in development programs and seek complementary pathways for refugees and others in need of protection.

We are also working with a number of private sector actors on ways innovation and entrepreneurship can benefit refugees and displaced persons. Alongside our well known partnership with IKEA, we are working with major tech and communication companies on issues such as connectivity and access to telephone communications, education, training, employment creation, energy, etc.

These are concrete examples of a new way of working, where synergies with development actors and private sector can pave the way to longer-term interventions and solutions for refugee populations.

*[World Humanitarian Summit]*

The other major event of 2016 was the World Humanitarian Summit. The Summit resulted in an “Agenda for Humanity” built around five core responsibilities and a suite of individual commitments. Underpinning the agenda and the Commitment to Action is a requirement for all to work in a manner that is more inclusive, coordinated, and geared at reducing and meeting needs through a more joined up approach and innovative strategic partnerships.

In this sense, the New Ways of Working outlined in the Commitment to Action are essentially a commitment to leverage the diversity of mandates, expertise, and moda operandi and turn them from a reason for fragmentation to one of complementarity and strength.

For UNHCR there is an obvious link between this concept and the CRRF with its call to comprehensiveness, inclusion, and multi-annual commitment.

*[Partnership with non-governmental organizations]*

I will now move to partnerships in the field. Working with partners remained the backbone of UNHCR’s operations - in 2016, of the US\$ 1.4 billion in funds disbursed to partners, nearly US\$ 1.1 billion went to 673 national or international NGOs. NNGOs received \$443 mio or 31% of monies channeled through partners. As you know, increasing the flow of resources to national partners is one of our Grand Bargain commitments, and relates to the importance of supporting local response capacity and benefitting from local knowledge and expertise. In this sense, the volume of funding is a useful indicator, but it does not reveal the growing quality of the partnerships and the value that diverse partners bring to the operations.

Pursuant to our grand bargain commitments, we continue to engage with partners in the development of the common UN partner portal, simplified reporting, and the launch of a joint initiative with WFP and UNICEF to harmonize partnership agreements<sup>1</sup>.

Beyond the many partnerships at local level, we hold Annual NGO Consultations. In 2016, the consultation focused on **youth**. It was attended by 310 national and international NGOs, as well as a number of other UN and intergovernmental partners. This year's theme will be the **CRRF**.

*[Partnership within UN system and other international organizations]*

Coming to partnerships within the UN system, we have in Unicef, WFP, and IOM the most “natural” partners.

Aside from well-established collaboration at operational level around child protection and WASH, in December we launched the UNHCR-UNICEF-led Coalition to End Childhood statelessness. This Coalition aims to develop, expand and strengthen international co-operation to raise awareness and promote the right of every child to acquire a nationality.

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<sup>1</sup> Shared Partner Portal: still work in progress since a new application will have to be created that can be used by HCR-WFP-UNICEF.

Common agreement templates: all three agencies have simplified emergency agreement but they are not totally the same. Next step will be to harmonize budget categories which will make it easier for NGOs to negotiate budgets with us.

Simplifying reporting: the current model in discussion is the 10+3 reporting format developed by GPPi, and which the GB work stream on simplification of reporting is currently piloting in a few country contexts.

We have also coordinated closely with WFP and UNICEF on cash-based assistance to ensure predictable and efficient arrangements. We are concluding an addendum on cash assistance to the existing MOU with WFP, and are working on joint vulnerability assessments to better target the beneficiary populations, as well as monitor arrangements for cash-based interventions.

Our collaboration with IOM has also strengthened, capitalizing on the close coordination in situations where refugee and migrant populations are mixed.

Finally, UNHCR participates in the system wide discussion initiated by the new Secretary General based on his strategic vision of reinforcing the UN as a cornerstone of effective multilateralism, and an instrument well adapted to confront global challenges. In particular, UNHCR is actively contributing to efforts to make the Chief Executive Board a more strategic policy space and key driver of system wide coherence.

*[Refugee response coordination]*

UNHCR is mandated by the General Assembly to coordinate international action in favor of refugees, and does so in all its operations.

Specific coordination capacity is however required in particularly complex situations, such as in the Greece, Burundi and South Sudan emergencies, where further technical guidance and capacity building was developed for staff, partners and host governments working under the Refugee Coordination Model.

In 2016 we had regional refugee coordinators for 7 situations<sup>2</sup>. In 2017, five RRP are in place, covering 19 countries and involving over 340 partners.

We continue to work with OCHA under the framework of the Joint UNHCR-OCHA note on mixed situations; and inter-agency missions with IOM, OCHA, UNFPA and UNICEF were undertaken to Cameroon and Sudan.

*[IASC and Clusters]*

Finally, we remain an active partner within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. In particular the Global Protection Cluster finalized the IASC protection policy, a process involving all stakeholders, including UN agencies, NGOs such as InterAction, ICVA, NRC, the IFRC and ICRC. The implementation of this protection policy will be closely monitored by the GPC reporting to the IASC. The Protection Policy, which was adopted by the IASC Principals in December 2016 commits the humanitarian system and all clusters to placing protection at the centre of any response.

We are also pleased by the increased involvement from partners in the protection information management (PIM) project, which aims to simplify the complex data system of protection information.

And of course we continued to work closely with the IFRC which co-leads the global shelter cluster and IOM which co-leads the CCCM cluster.

These are only examples of a web of rich relationships. But there is clearly no way forward without strong and functioning partnerships, and UNHCR is committed, at the

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<sup>2</sup> Burundi, Central African Republic, Nigeria, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen and Europe situations

highest level, to be a good and inclusive partners with all those who can contribute to the protection and welfare of refugees and persons of concern.