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EVALUATION OF THE UNHCR REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE TO THE VENEZUELA SITUATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
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Executive summary

1. The external evaluation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) regional response to the Venezuela Situation (VenSit) follows the declaration of the L2 emergency, effective 2018, and covers the first two years of the response. It is undertaken in accord with UNHCR's revised Evaluation Policy approved by the High Commissioner on 16 October 2016. The purpose of the external evaluation is to analyse the extent to which UNHCR is providing a timely and effective response to the needs of refugees and migrants affected by VenSit, including to better understand the enabling and constraining factors in this context. The evaluation will also draw lessons that could be used to reinforce the organization's global approaches to emergency responses.
2. The evaluation focuses on UNHCR's response in four selected countries: Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, and includes an inception phase, two phases of data collection, and a validation phase. Due to challenges and restrictions posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the second round of data collection was more limited than originally planned. The evaluation is focused exclusively on UNHCR's response, and in agreement with terms established with the Evaluation Service, it does not assess the UNHCR–IOM-led Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform.

Context and background

3. Forced by an internal political and economic crisis, the Venezuelan exodus began as early as 2012 and has since become the world's second largest refugee and migration crisis, and the largest in Latin America.¹ As of 9 November 2020, about 5.4 million Venezuelan refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers are reported by host countries, of whom 4.6 million are in Latin American and Caribbean countries.²
4. The flow of refugees and migrants from Venezuela has evolved over time and so, too, has UNHCR's response. As the situation worsened and people left Venezuela in greater numbers, UNHCR scaled up its operational response to help governments meet their protection responsibilities and to provide assistance to persons of concern to UNHCR. In March 2018, UNHCR issued the *Guidance note on the outflow of Venezuelans*,³ which underlined the refugee dimension of the flow, noting that a significant proportion needed international protection. A month later, on 12 April 2018, the UN Secretary-General asked UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to co-lead and coordinate a joint response at the regional level, formally acknowledging the Venezuelan egress as a mixed refugee and migrant situation. This resulted in the formation of the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform, which coordinates the implementation of the regional refugee and migrant response plan (RMRP). UNHCR's response to VenSit seeks to ensure that:

¹ UNHCR (2020) *Figures at a glance*, 12 June 2020, <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html> [accessed October 2020]

² R4V Latin America and the Caribbean, Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the region – November 2020, <https://r4v.info/en/documents/details/82846> [accessed 25 November 2020]

³ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2018) *Guidance note on the outflow of Venezuelans*, March 2018, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5a9ff3cc4.html> [accessed 15 April 2020]

- (i) refugees and migrants from Venezuela⁴ who are in need of international protection can gain access into the countries to which they are seeking entry and to asylum or protection-oriented arrangements;
 - (ii) refugees and migrants, and especially those with specific needs and vulnerabilities, receive protection and support to access basic rights and services without discrimination, ideally through a community-based approach; and
 - (iii) efforts increasingly work towards the attainment of solutions.
5. Since the issue of the March 2018 Guidance Note, UNHCR has significantly expanded its operational presence and capacity in Latin American and Caribbean countries to respond to international protection and other needs of people on the move from Venezuela. On 9 April 2018, UNHCR declared a Level 2 (L2)⁵ emergency for Aruba, Colombia, Curaçao, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago, expanding this declaration in July 2018 to Brazil, and in August 2018 to Ecuador. Considering this unique context and experience, the UNHCR Evaluation Service and UNHCR Bureau for the Americas, (herein titled the Bureau), commissioned the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI) and Brigham and Women's Physicians Organization (BWPO) to conduct an evaluation, herein titled, *Evaluation of the UNHCR regional refugee response to the Venezuela situation (VenSit)*.

Scope, purpose and methodology of the evaluation

6. Based on the terms of reference (TOR),⁶ the evaluation was structured around three areas of inquiry (AOI):
- **AOI 1 – Assistance and protection response:** What have been the results of UNHCR's regional and country-level assistance and protection responses for refugees and migrants in VenSit?
 - **AOI 2 – Socioeconomic inclusion and mid/long-term perspectives:** To what extent has UNHCR been successful in advocating for and developing government capacity to ensure socioeconomic inclusion of refugees and migrants, and in incorporating mid/long-term protection perspectives into the design and delivery of the operational response?
 - **AOI 3 – Internal and external factors:** What factors (internal and external) constrained or enabled UNHCR's operational delivery of assistance and protection? To what extent were those influenced by the mixed-flow character of VenSit?
7. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic over the course of this evaluation, the evaluation team added a related question as a cross-cutting theme to give preliminary insights into how COVID-19 has affected UNHCR's response and what measures UNHCR has taken to address early challenges related to the pandemic. The evaluation did not aim to

⁴ The people of concern to UNHCR also include Colombian returnees, as well as other nationals who are refugees or migrants coming from Venezuela, regardless of nationality.

⁵ UNHCR has three emergency levels. According to UNHCR's Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response, an emergency level 1 (L1) is proactive preparedness; L2 is stepped-up bureau support; and L3 is whole-of-UNHCR response. See: <https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/124201/policy-on-emergency-preparedness-and-response> [accessed 25 November 2020]

⁶ The TOR were prepared by the Evaluation Service and provided the evaluation with its overall purpose, focus and deliverables.

answer these questions authoritatively but, rather, to document preliminary insights for future efforts.

- **COVID-19 response:** How has COVID-19 impacted UNHCR's response? What measures has UNHCR taken to address challenges related to the virus?
8. The evaluation used a mixed-methods longitudinal approach consisting of two phases of data collection, with Phase 1 occurring from November 2019 to February 2020 and Phase 2 in September 2020. Data collection modalities included: (1) 257 key informant interviews with UNHCR staff and partners, government officials and persons of concern to UNHCR; (2) 87 focus groups with refugees and migrants, including returnees and indigenous populations, and host communities; and (3) online surveys with UNHCR staff in VenSit countries as well as UNHCR regional staff based in Panama whose work was related to VenSit, with a total of 186 completed surveys. Data collection also included surveys with 940 persons of concern to UNHCR in Colombia through respondent-driven sampling (RDS).

Summary findings

9. Considering UNHCR's assistance and protection response (AOI 1), this evaluation finds that the emergency assistance provided by UNHCR is relevant to the needs of refugees and migrants. The strategic decision to employ a needs-based approach improved the relevance of the VenSit response, and interventions were quickly adapted to deliver emergency assistance. However, the provision of life-saving goods and services is insufficient to cover the full extent of needs of the population. The scale of the VenSit population's needs exceeded available resources and capacity of UNHCR and humanitarian actors. In general, the specific needs of persons at risk are taken into account in UNHCR strategies and operations, but coverage is still lacking for certain groups, and mental health needs are not sufficiently addressed.
10. In coordination with governments and partners, UNHCR has established robust assistance structures to address the most pressing needs at formal border points. However, monitoring irregular entries and providing assistance at informal crossings remain a challenge. The border assistance response provides information and orientation, emergency assistance and emergency shelter for those most in need.
11. With the support of UNHCR, governments are providing access to territory, asylum, regularization processes and documentation to different extents across the four countries, depending on national policies. UNHCR has helped to improve asylum systems and procedures to different degrees depending in large part on the asylum system infrastructure already in place prior to VenSit. However, most refugees and migrants did not feel that their rights were respected in host countries (except in Brazil), citing experiences of labour exploitation, poor/no access to health services, discrimination and xenophobia.
12. In response, community-based protection (CBP) has been central to UNHCR's protection strategy, but duplications and gaps in assistance between UNHCR and other actors remain a concern. At the same time, mechanisms for refugees and migrants to share feedback and/or complaints are not widely known or accessible. Furthermore, the

coverage, quality and results of efforts to promote rights awareness remain uneven. UNHCR's information campaigns and websites are widely recognized and virtual aspects have expanded in the context of COVID-19, but improvements are still needed to ensure better coverage and understanding from refugees and migrants, including a dedicated evaluation.

13. UNHCR has developed and implemented multiple strategies to assess emergency assistance and protection needs, with improvements over time. However, these tools do not always reflect field realities or allow for adaptation to local contexts, and gaps may exist concerning certain populations and types of violations. The assessments are not rapid or regular enough to fully understand trends of people in transit and they lack harmonization. Importantly, response to cases and referrals is insufficiently supported.
14. Considering socioeconomic inclusion and mid/long-term perspectives (AOI 2), this evaluation finds that UNHCR has undertaken a multi-pronged approach to promote both social and economic inclusion throughout the region, mainly via advocacy and capacity-building, and to a lesser extent, via implementation. However, UNHCR's focus on the emergency response has taken priority over socioeconomic inclusion activities. Socioeconomic inclusion activities are perceived to be small-scale, opportune, lacking monitoring, and limited to a place, population and/or partner, while the regional strategy has not translated into cohesive national socioeconomic strategies. UNHCR further lacks data and technical staff dedicated exclusively to socioeconomic inclusion, especially at the field level.
15. Despite these findings, UNHCR's advocacy efforts towards social inclusion have been largely successful, but advocacy efforts towards economic inclusion are scattered, with little uniformity across countries. UNHCR has provided capacity-building and technical support to the government and partners on multiple fronts, but frequent turnover of government actors and administrations requires equally frequent efforts to maintain institutional capacity and knowledge.
16. In terms of socioeconomic inclusion, UNHCR has served in a supportive and complementary role to governments and partners, prioritizing advocacy and capacity-building over direct implementation of projects. UNHCR's implementation of social inclusion activities, including projects to counter xenophobia and promote coexistence and solidarity among communities, was widely recognized and perceived as effective, though insufficient to address the magnitude and complexity of the issue of inclusion.
17. UNHCR's design and delivery of mid/long-term protective perspectives is uneven across countries. Stakeholders, especially in Colombia and Brazil, emphasized that while border areas were still overwhelmingly focused on the short term, offices farther from the border or located in larger cities had greater potential to implement more forward-looking protection perspectives. Nevertheless, the link between UNHCR's strategies for humanitarian assistance and permanent solutions is not clearly developed. As such, the VenSit response may have been effective for humanitarian assistance, but less so for permanent solutions, where there is room for improvement. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted progress towards implementing long-term strategies for durable solutions as UNHCR had to shift priorities back to emergency assistance.

18. Considering factors that constrained or enabled UNHCR's operational delivery of assistance and protection (AOI 3), this evaluation finds that offices in all four countries have achieved notable successes in a short time frame. UNHCR's emergency mechanisms have enabled the organization's response, and its human capital is a major internal asset. However, UNHCR's one-year funding cycles, along with the late and/or sporadic arrival of funding and resources limited the response, especially in terms of long-term planning. Varying levels of rootedness and limited operational experience in delivering emergency responses presented challenges at the onset of VenSit, as all offices had to transition, adapt and scale to respond to the Venezuelan influx. The fast growth of the operation presented new challenges for human resource management, especially at the onset of VenSit. Specifically, UNHCR hiring mechanisms tend to favour staff within UNHCR and do not encourage local hires such as host-country nationals or those of Venezuelan nationality, who have relevant contextual knowledge and experience. Of note, UNHCR staff's mental health and well-being are not adequately addressed.
19. Within countries, UNHCR's vertical (national–field) and horizontal (field–field) communication and information exchange did not always flow smoothly. However, this increased and improved due to COVID-19, as digital communication and the need to coordinate remotely enabled more frequent and targeted exchanges. Nevertheless, UNHCR communication was non-uniform and largely informal in nature and lacked a regional approach.
20. Separately, resources remain insufficient to cover the extent of needs of the emergency – despite increased visibility of VenSit and the COVID-19 pandemic, both of which enabled access to funding. For 2019, only 52 per cent of the refugee and migrant response plan (RMRP) appeal (\$384 million)⁷ was raised for VenSit. As of November 2020, 45 per cent of the COVID-19 adjusted RMRP appeal (\$628 million) has been covered, making this the year with highest funding levels since the VenSit emergency began. Yet, 55 per cent of the funding needed to fulfil the appeal request remains unfunded. Governments in the region have adopted a migrant narrative over a refugee one, which has constrained UNHCR's response. At times, UNHCR has faced challenges in working with governments and their institutions, an issue worsened by political and social instability and unrest, while economic challenges, such as high rates of informal employment and unemployment, have constrained the response. In addition, border sites present few livelihood and integration opportunities. Xenophobia and tensions with the host communities are on the rise, leading to discrimination in hiring, labour abuse and exploitation.
21. The mixed-flow character of VenSit has not influenced UNHCR's delivery of emergency assistance and protection, in part because of UNHCR's needs-based approach. In fact the mixed population flow may have enhanced UNHCR's mixed strategies for long-term solutions.

⁷ R4V Platform. *RMRP Funding Update 31 December 2019*, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/73413> [accessed November 2020]

Recommendations

22. Considering the findings outlined in the report, the evaluation team proposes the following recommendations summarized here and detailed in the full report. The evaluation recommends three key areas for strategic realignment considerations:

i. Build cohesive strategies and frameworks for socioeconomic integration

At the regional level, UNHCR must continue to pursue concerted efforts for socioeconomic integration, and to monitor and build on progress towards the *2020 Stepped up livelihoods strategy for the Americas*, as it pertains to VenSit. UNHCR must define more precisely its role in relation to the role of government and partner agencies to ensure that it provides a complementary approach. This includes reinforcing guidelines, training, technical support and resources to articulate the regional socioeconomic strategy into national plans and frameworks. UNHCR operations should develop and/or refine a national framework and guidelines specifically geared towards socioeconomic inclusion in order to give coherence to what the field offices are doing and to promote communication and cross-site learning. Additionally, successful pilots and projects undertaken in 2019 and 2020 should be leveraged and consolidated into more holistic national strategies to give coherence to what field offices are doing, and support the socioeconomic inclusion of indigenous populations.

ii. Continue to develop new funding mechanisms and cycles that support long-term programme planning.

At headquarters, UNHCR is in the process of developing additional funding strategies to enable longer funding cycles that provide more opportunity for mid/long-term planning and efficient operations. This reform will be important for helping UNHCR to work on longer-term protection solutions. It will also be beneficial to implementing partners, providing more visibility and commitment for their multi-year planning and fundraising requirements.

iii. Engage in alternative strategies to address issues related to irregular entries.

UNHCR presence at informal crossings is limited due to a variety of factors. UNHCR's network of partner and community contacts along borders provides a net of protection for refugees and migrants in those areas. Thus, efforts should be made to bolster CBP activities and to continue building and maintaining communication channels within CBP networks to provide insights into new routes and trends in movements, and to amplify the protection response, especially where UNHCR presence is limited. Wherever possible, UNHCR should also consider investing in the establishment of unmanned information points along known crossing points, such as billboards with key information and contacts (for example, telephone helplines, local partners, safe spaces in transit, websites) to direct refugees and migrants towards assistance and resources.

In addition, the evaluation team recommends 11 key areas for improvement and strengthening:

iv. Strengthen mid- and long-term strategies and the link between humanitarian assistance and development programming.

At headquarters, regional and national levels, UNHCR must continue to build strong partnerships and coordinate governments, development actors, financial institutions and the private sector. This includes both strengthening existing relationships and bringing in new actors to support national and local efforts where appropriate. To achieve the latter, UNHCR should encourage national governments and international donors to advocate for more development actors and resources. UNHCR should also draw from its own pool of development practitioners worldwide to bring in more staff with development expertise and experience to the VenSit operation, which would enable UNHCR to develop a smoother transition between humanitarian and development programming.

v. Strengthen mental health support for both UNHCR staff and Venezuelan refugees and migrants.

At the national level, UNHCR should strengthen mental health support for Venezuelan refugees and migrants by conducting a review of current detection and monitoring mechanisms as well as a specific assessment of mental health needs, with refugees' and migrants' participation across different sites to identify gaps and opportunities for intervention. Collaboration with national governments and field partners is critical in conducting an assessment of mental health needs, developing actions and proper referral networks to address them, and effectively integrating these actions into protection and livelihood strategies. A concerted effort should be made to invest in the capacity of the government, whose responsibility it is to ensure the highest attainable standard of mental health well-being, and to target actors who focus on mental health (and consider bringing in specialized actors/experts if country actors are absent).

At headquarters (HQ), regional and national levels, UNHCR should institutionalize and implement mental health support to UNHCR staff. Regional- and country-level management should provide guidelines and ensure the enforcement of existing policies, which are necessary during crises including the COVID-19 pandemic. In the latter context, support from HQ, including the provision of guidelines in terms of teleworking and telecommuting, security measures, and so on, needs to be timelier and continually emphasized and monitored, including hardship classifications by the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS). Resources should be allocated to ensure counsellors/psychologists are available in staff's local language for one-on-one sessions, either in person or remotely.

vi. Improve internal communication both across and within countries, as well as vertically and horizontally.

At the regional level, UNHCR should facilitate opportunities for more fluid and regular cross-country exchanges and meetings. Moreover, the Bureau should structure and standardize cross-country communication flows, providing guidelines about the purposes of each communication channel (such as WhatsApp, email and calls). The Bureau should support the establishment of formal and regular binational

meetings between UNHCR staff in mirror offices and, if appropriate, provide authorization for transborder in-person meetings and monitoring activities to aid in understanding and responding to flows. Finally, the Bureau should facilitate more communication and information from Venezuela to host countries in the region, including more emphasis on scenario-building.

At the national and regional levels, vertical and horizontal UNHCR communication should be improved. UNHCR would benefit from further systematizing communication through increased collaborative work culture and reporting structures to support upward, downward and lateral information-sharing to ensure that messages effectively reach all involved parties. This would require careful consideration of (and safeguards against) potential breaks in the communication chain (for instance, regional messages successfully reach country operations but then are not communicated to field offices; or field messages successfully reach country operations but then are not communicated to the Bureau). To achieve this, UNHCR should institutionalize new (good) practices in terms of digital communication beyond the social isolation period to continue improving upon regularity of multidirectional communication.

vii. Evaluate communication and awareness-raising efforts with refugees and migrants as well as public anti-xenophobia campaigns with host communities.

At the regional level, UNHCR should increase efforts to evaluate the top communication and awareness campaigns in the region, notably *Somos Panas* in Colombia, the Chatbot in Ecuador, and *VenInformado* in Peru. Evaluations should measure the effectiveness, reach and coverage of the campaigns, as well as barriers to refugees' and migrants' access to, and comprehension and retention of the information. Building on the findings of the R4V 2019 communication and information needs assessment, UNHCR should also take into account the information needs and gaps that exist both among refugees and migrants and within host communities, and how they can be better addressed.

At the regional level, anti-xenophobia campaigns and peaceful coexistence initiatives should be evaluated, notably *Histórias em Movimento* in Brazil, *Somos Panas* in Colombia, *Abrazos que Unen* in Ecuador and *Tu Causa es Mi Causa* in Peru. UNHCR should assess current anti-xenophobia strategies from large-scale public campaigns to smaller-scale initiatives targeting subgroups of the population (such as incentivizing local landlords for refugee housing placements) to inform future efforts, especially in areas with higher density of refugees and migrants. Ongoing work to counter xenophobia and promote solidarity should consider: (1) monitoring media and official statements to dispel xenophobic messages; (2) ensuring host communities benefit from projects and initiatives (such as including a percentage of spots in training programmes/workshops for host community members); and (3) promoting local inclusion activities (through sports, arts and so on), and local organizations that support migrants and refugees.

viii. Evaluate the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform

At the headquarter level, conduct an evaluation specifically focused on the inter-agency coordination dimension of UNHCR's response and take inter-agency dynamics fully into account for all future evaluations. A major limitation of this evaluation is the exclusive focus on UNHCR's response, which in agreement with terms established with the Evaluation Service, did not assess the UNHCR–IOM-led Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform. UNHCR's inter-agency work has an important multiplier effect on operability since coordination allows for better geographical, sectoral and population-specific reach and coverage, and thus, future evaluations should take on an inter-agency approach.

- ix. Review hiring mechanisms to consider qualified local staff and those of Venezuelan origin.

At headquarters, UNHCR should continue to review and update the hiring mechanisms (as much as possible) and ease the requirements to allow qualified local staff to be hired in more permanent positions where appropriate. In addition, UNHCR may explore contracting more staff of Venezuelan origin and/or expanding UN volunteer posts for Venezuelan refugees and migrants, since Venezuelan volunteers may be particularly adept at reinforcing community-based protection mechanisms and assistance, information and orientation provision, and empowerment activities. They may also be able to liaise with trusted Venezuelan associations, which play a strategic role in providing information and orientation on legal issues and social services in host communities. The inclusion of Venezuelan refugees and migrants as staff and/or volunteers should be carefully considered on an individual basis to protect both Venezuelans themselves and UNHCR. Finally, it is critical to ensure that cross-cultural communication competencies and cultural awareness skills are incorporated as hiring requirements, especially for international staff, and that appropriate training is provided, especially for posts involving communication with communities (CwC), CBP or inter-agency work.

- x. Invest in developing faster and more frequently implemented assessment tools, and leverage field staff input to ensure feasibility, efficiency and appropriateness of tools, given field realities.

At the regional level, UNHCR should invest more in the development of improved assessment tools. These tools should be: (1) faster to implement; (2) implemented more frequently; and (3) standardized within and potentially across countries, while still allowing for certain adaptations to local context. Field staff should be involved in the development of regional tools and consulted on their experiences of delivering the protection monitoring tool (PMT) and participatory diagnostics to increase feasibility, efficiency and appropriateness of tools, given field realities. Similarly, the input of Information Management officers at all levels should be taken into account in planning the design of the tool to support the systemization, processing and analysis of data. Upon implementation, the Bureau must share and clearly communicate guidelines at all levels, provide training and technical support, and commit to ongoing monitoring of implementation and evaluation of its effectiveness.

- xi. Invest in building the evidence base to inform strategies and advocacy efforts.

At the regional level, UNHCR should invest in building the evidence base on irregular movements, including the use of innovative tools and data collection methods to improve estimates on the numbers and patterns of irregular movements throughout the region. UNHCR staff suggested that it would be beneficial to systematize binational border monitoring through rapid profiling exercises as this information is key for advocacy with governments as well as for informing UNHCR's own strategies moving forward. Further discussion and analysis of regional policy options are needed to address this sensitive and delicate issue. In the short term, and especially in light of the rise of irregular movements during COVID-19, UNHCR should prioritize the adaptation of strategies related to UNHCR's presence at the border and assistance to refugees and migrants entering irregularly. Strategies should include contingency plans for changes in quarantine measures and border openings, include plans for protecting and addressing the needs of groups with pendular movements, and be accompanied with clear guidelines and technical support for staff on the ground.

Also at the regional level, investments should be made in building the evidence base on socioeconomic inclusion. The Bureau should continue to conduct and support more research to inform socioeconomic inclusion efforts, including market assessments, studies on the socioeconomic profiles of refugees and migrants, and research on income-generating initiatives (for example, innovative financing, social impact bonds, seed capital initiatives, microcredit opportunities, entrepreneurial activities and cooperatives). Additional research could inform regional, national and local socioeconomic strategies, highlight opportunities for engagement, and provide leverage for advocacy efforts. While the latter two points could be done through partnerships with universities and/or be contracted out, UNHCR still needs more technical staff dedicated exclusively to socioeconomic inclusion and livelihoods throughout the region to ensure complementarity and cohesive implementation of strategies. The Bureau should also conduct rigorous evaluation of existing socioeconomic inclusion activities to determine effectiveness and provide inputs for scaling and replication.

xii. Improve documentation and sharing of action-oriented good practices throughout the region.

At the regional level, UNHCR should lead the documentation and dissemination of good practices and lessons learned across countries and field sites to lessen the burden on country teams that do not have the time and/or resources to do so. Documenting, consolidating and giving more visibility to implementation-oriented good practices can enhance donor relations, inform the scaling up or scaling out of initiatives, and promote cross-learning, among other benefits. Thus, the Bureau should explore creative avenues to both capture and communicate good practices and lessons learned. For example, it was suggested that hiring an external consultancy team, paired with UNHCR regional staff, could be a good solution. An initial selection of good practices is provided in Annex 5.

xiii. Assess the impact of capacity-building efforts with government institutions, authorities and partners to inform future investment in additional human and financial resources for training and technical support.

At the national level, UNHCR should assess the impact of its capacity-building work with governments and rule of law entities, such as ombudspersons, public defenders and authorities involved in refugee status determination systems and labour control, as well as those who work at border and transit points. This exercise should aim to understand whether UNHCR's sensitization trainings for these actors support and strengthen the quality of information provided to the population about their rights and whether appropriate referrals for assistance and protection are made. The same is also true for capacity-building work with assistance-providing partners, to ensure they have protection knowledge and response capacity, and with the private sector (in particular banks and employers) to inform them about the rights afforded to refugees (such as the right to work), and to ensure that forms of documentation are recognized. Since staff rotation is common among these actors, UNHCR should explore how best to maintain institutional knowledge (such as new staff training, refresher training). UNHCR should also explore new pedagogical strategies for virtual training based on the lessons learned in the pandemic, including ongoing training on virtual platforms and virtual communication channels for technical support.

xiv. Improve UNHCR's detecting and addressing of rights and protection violation.

Country operations should evaluate UNHCR's assessment tools' ability to detect violations, referral mechanisms and staff training. They should consider investing in the expansion of a robust referral network of specialized partners and institutions and regularly revisit referral lists for accuracy. UNHCR should follow up selected cases for quality assurance and monitoring. In addition, UNHCR's CwC and CBP activities should include the provision of information and, where appropriate, training for host communities specifically tailored towards detecting violations among the refugee and migrant population, and referring cases to the proper channels. UNHCR must further continue to ensure that refugees and migrants know their rights and options for protection, that they are informed about and have access to pathways to denounce any violation, and that they get proper attention and assistance.