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**Executive Committee of the  
High Commissioner's Programme**

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**Standing Committee**

Eighty-fourth meeting  
28-30 June 2022

Held at the International Conference Centre Geneva (CICG), Geneva

**Summary record\*, Thursday, 30 June 22, at 10 a.m.**

*Chairperson: Ms. Kos.....(Croatia)*

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*The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m.*

## **Programme budgets and funding**

### **a. Update on budgets and funding (EC/73/SC/CRP.17)**

1. **Ms. Shroff** (Director of the Division of Strategic Planning and Results, UNHCR) said that the budget for 2021 had initially stood at \$8.6 billion but had later increased, with the final figure reaching \$9.2 billion. The increase had come thanks to the issuance of supplementary budgets for COVID-19 and for new emergencies in Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). There had been, however, a slight decrease in the total funds available, which had dropped from \$5.4 billion in 2020 to \$5.2 billion in 2021. The overall funding gap as a result had grown to 44 per cent in 2021, compared with 41 per cent in 2020. The funding gap was concerning to UNHCR. It could mean that the Office would be unable to carry out key operations in a number of locations and would need to make tough choices on who benefited from cash-based interventions, material assistance and services. Despite having fewer funds available, 2021 had seen UNHCR achieve its highest level of expenditure ever, with the final figure reaching \$4.9 billion – an increase of 2 per cent compared with 2020. The implementation rate against funds available had been 95 per cent, compared with 90 per cent in 2020, which was a record high. Indeed, UNHCR had been rapidly catching up after activities had been postponed during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

2. She drew attention to the main drivers of the 2021 expenditure increases. West and Central Africa had seen a 9 per cent increase, primarily in Cameroon, Chad and Côte d'Ivoire, where there had been an expansion of activities, partly driven by emergencies. In the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region, expenditure had increased by 15 per cent, largely due to the emergency in Ethiopia. Much of the additional expenditure had gone into expanded return and reintegration programmes in Burundi, Sudan and Uganda. Southern Africa had been subject to a 6 per cent increase, which had mostly affected the Congo (Republic of) and Mozambique. As regards the Middle East and North Africa, expenditure had decreased slightly in Lebanon and Libya, but increased in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Yemen. The decrease in Lebanon had been partially due to a currency devaluation, which had allowed UNHCR to provide the same level of assistance at a lower cost. An increase of \$100 million had been observed in the Asia-Pacific region, mainly attributable to Afghanistan. Europe had experienced a decrease of 30 per cent after the Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation programme had been transferred to the Government of Greece. It would, however, see expenditure increase significantly in 2022 because of the crisis in Ukraine. In the Americas, expenditure had increased by 8 per cent, largely in Colombia, where work had been expanded through the temporary protection status programme. El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico had also benefited.

3. UNHCR had decreased its expenditure for global programmes by being able to budget better on certain actions, such as global licences, and because the emergency stockpiles required for COVID-19 had been reduced. It had, however, increased by 15 per cent the expenditure at headquarters, mostly due to investment in information and communications technology and business transformation.

4. The breakdown by pillar showed that there had been a slight decrease in expenditure for pillars 1 and 2, while expenditure for pillars 3 and 4 had increased significantly. The decrease for the former two pillars had been driven by currency fluctuations, while the increase for the latter two pillars was due to the crises in countries such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia and El Salvador. Pillar 4 was where UNHCR had scaled up cluster coordination, protection services and solutions for internally displaced persons.

5. The original budget for 2022 had stood at just under \$9 billion, but had thus far been increased to \$10.5 billion. It was a year with an unprecedented number of emergencies and historic levels of displacement. The Ukraine emergency alone had generated 14.5 million internally displaced people and refugees. Other situations of concern included Afghanistan, Cameroon, Chad and Ethiopia. UNHCR wished to be in a strong position to respond to all the above emergencies while continuing its ongoing programme. It therefore needed more support. The Office had maintained a significant footprint in Afghanistan because it already had a good proportion of the resources needed. There, it had been able to support over 300,000 people, many of whom had benefited from cash assistance, shelter and protection services. However, in other countries, such as Uganda, the resources available

were not commensurate with the needs. UNHCR was doing everything it could to support displaced people in Uganda, including providing shelter, food, health and protection services, but could do much more with more resources.

6. **Ms. Hyde** (Director of the Division of External Relations, UNHCR) said that UNHCR had started the current year with a budget of \$8.99 billion, but had seen it rise to \$10.5 billion after supplementary budgets had been launched for the situations in Afghanistan, Chad, Cameroon and Ukraine. However, as at June 2022, contributions represented only 35 per cent of the total needs.

7. On diversification, several of the larger donors had significantly increased their contributions in 2021, including Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Norway. Those contributions had helped to offset decreased funding from other large donors and reduce reliance on the top five donors.

8. The share of funding coming from private donors continued to grow, reaching 22 per cent so far in 2022. UNHCR had managed to increase private-sector funding from \$111 million in 2011 to \$625 million in 2021 and was now on its way to achieving the historic amount of \$1 billion by end of 2022. The growth in private sector funding was largely due to UNHCR's long-term commitment to increase investment in private sector partnerships. There had been a shift in its strategy, increasing investment in digital fundraising and philanthropy, which had paid off. The number of individual donors had increased, with 3.6 million people worldwide now donating money on a monthly basis. Emergency response had also accelerated growth, attracting more than 75,000 new donors and more than 400 new private partnerships. To sustain the above level of private-sector funding, UNHCR needed to retain, convert and develop its donors and partners going forward.

9. The majority of private-sector income was fully unearmarked or broadly earmarked, which was very important since it allowed for greater flexibility. By contrast, however, most of the funding received from the private sector in 2022 had been reserved solely for Ukraine, at the expense of other situations. Indeed, the overall budget for 2022, not counting the funds for Ukraine, was so far 33 per cent lower than in 2021. There was therefore an urgent need for government donors to increase their donations so that people affected by crises beyond Ukraine did not suffer. Otherwise, UNHCR would be forced to make real slashes to many of its commitments, with incalculable consequences for human lives. For example, in Colombia, underfunding would mean that fewer refugees and stateless people would be registered, limiting their access to Government asylum procedures. In Jordan, two thirds of refugees in desperate need of cash assistance would not receive it, forcing them to resort to desperate coping mechanisms. In Yemen, almost half of all refugees would not have even the minimum standard of water supply. In Chad, two thirds of refugee children of primary school age and half of all refugee children of secondary school age would not be enrolled.

10. Overall, without an additional \$1 billion on top of what had been received in 2021, UNHCR would be forced to reduce its protection and assistance delivery by about 17 per cent, or even by 25 per cent if additional costs and inflation were taken into account. The social consequences of those reductions for refugees and their hosts would be devastating. Many of the most vulnerable might resort to dangerous journeys across borders. Host countries could come under pressure to limit access to asylum. Those already displaced might also be forced to move again.

11. **Ms. Marrazza** (United States of America) said that the budget update was a poignant reminder of the immense challenges that UNHCR and its partners faced in addressing growing humanitarian needs around the world. In that context, she applauded UNHCR's increased expenditure relative to 2020, despite the reduction in funds available. UNHCR should continue that trend of efficiency and agility into 2022.

12. UNHCR's budget for 2022 surpassed even the historic budgets of 2020 and 2021, which reflected the huge impact that the war in Ukraine had had throughout the world, adding to existing crises in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Myanmar, the Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Yemen and elsewhere. She strongly encouraged all donors to provide additional support to UNHCR so that it could address urgent needs around the world. While responding to the Ukraine crisis was a priority, it was essential that it did not result in the diversion of assistance from other humanitarian crises, especially at a time when rising operational costs meant every dollar had significantly less buying power than it had had the previous year. Many large refugee-hosting countries were also the ones hardest hit by food insecurity, rising energy prices and rising inflation as a result of the war against Ukraine. The international community had a shared responsibility to do more.

13. **Mr. Ishida** (Japan) said that it was worrying that UNHCR's financial needs were likely to remain unmet. If an additional billion dollars was not added on top of current budget estimates for 2022, there could be catastrophic repercussions for refugees and host countries. For its part, Japan had already made contributions in 2022, from both Government and private donors, that had exceeded its full-year contributions in previous years. Japan wished to continue to strengthen its cooperation with UNHCR to ensure that the interest shown by a wide cross section of society in the refugee issue was sustained and led to long-term support for refugees from both the public and private sectors.

14. **Mr. Driessen** (Netherlands) said that his Government was extremely concerned by the bleak outlook presented by UNHCR. While funding gaps were a growing trend across the humanitarian sector, he noted that a particular issue for UNHCR was heavily earmarked funding, which tended to result in overfunding for new crises and underfunding for protracted ones. As a result, the Netherlands had focused on unearmarked funding. The Netherlands also focused on funding through the European Union humanitarian–development nexus to maximize contributions to refugees and host communities. He called on all donors to increase the flexibility and predictability of their contributions to UNHCR and called on those States that were able to contribute more to do so.

15. **Mr. Lacroix** (France) said that, for France, it was essential that the budget be robust, streamlined and flexible, enabling UNHCR to fulfil its mandate and contribute effectively to the application of the recommendations in the Global Compact on Refugees. In that connection, he noted that France had significantly increased its financial contributions to UNHCR in 2021. France enthusiastically welcomed UNHCR's partnerships with the private sector and development actors in accordance with commitments made in connection with the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.

16. **Ms. Rasmussen** (Denmark) said that Denmark was a long-standing donor to UNHCR and had recently signed a new partnership committing to donating over the coming five years. Denmark provided unearmarked funding to give UNHCR the flexibility it needed to respond quickly to new crises and to allocate funding to so-called forgotten crises, for which earmarked funding was particularly scarce. With the concerning outlook for 2022, unearmarked funding was more needed than ever, and she called on all donors, traditional and non-traditional, to provide more such funding to UNHCR.

17. **Ms. Jahren** (Norway) said that UNHCR would have to make substantial cuts in its programmes owing to the funding gap. Norway was committed to providing flexible, unearmarked humanitarian financing, including to UNHCR, and had transferred funds early in the year to ensure good liquidity. Norway strongly supported humanitarian pooled funds, which helped to ensure that responses were effective, principled and coherent. Norway intended to increase its multi-year financing to UNHCR. Regarding development aid, Norway prioritized States and regions affected by conflict and fragility and was working to increase the flexibility and risk tolerance of its long-term development efforts. It was also working to align humanitarian, development and peace financing more closely through the dedicated nexus. Better financing across that nexus could create incentives for partners to move beyond institutional silos and deliver results together. Norway continued to urge States to increase the flexibility and predictability of their contributions and urged UNHCR to continue its efforts to broaden its donor base.

18. **Ms. Fazio** (Canada) said that her Government acknowledged the need for better funding for international protection and noted the continued increase in UNHCR's budget in response to the rapidly increasing needs and numbers of forcibly displaced persons. However, her Government encouraged UNHCR to ensure the sound use of evidence and data throughout its budgeting process to prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable. Canada was proud to be a timely donor to UNHCR and a provider of multi-year, unearmarked and softly earmarked funding. Her Government encouraged other donors to provide flexible funding for UNHCR to enable more effective and efficient responses for refugees and other persons of concern.

19. **Ms. Chandra** (Australia) said that Australia continued to be a significant donor to UNHCR's work globally, as well as in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar and, as a long-standing resettlement country, supported new initiatives for complementary pathways to expand opportunities for refugees. With needs increasing and funding scarce, she encouraged UNHCR to continue to communicate clearly with donors on how prioritization would affect operations, particularly in contexts where UNHCR played a strong coordination role. She also encouraged the

international community to retain its focus on crises, including in Asia and the Pacific, where already significant needs continued to grow.

20. **Ms. Temu** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that her Government acknowledged that, with record numbers of refugees and displaced persons, UNHCR's task of facilitating asylum had never been more challenging. Guided by its respect for voluntary repatriation as a lasting solution to the plight of refugees, her Government continued to encourage refugees to return to their countries of origin and remained committed to cooperating with UNHCR and other humanitarian actors in ensuring that return was conducted in safety and dignity. However, the ongoing voluntary repatriation operation of Burundian refugees was facing significant setbacks, owing to the low retention capacity of Burundi due to limited resources and infrastructure. Her Government therefore continued to appeal to humanitarian agencies to invest more in reintegration programmes facilitating the sustainable return of refugees. She asked why UNHCR had not advanced the operation to the next stage of promotion, despite evidence showing that Burundian refugees hosted in her country faced no security threats should they decide to return home. In order to continue to meet its obligations as a host State, her Government was determined to protect the asylum space from being abused by social and economic migrants at the expense of persons needing international protection. In her Government's opinion, continuing to provide international support to the majority of Burundian refugees constituted an abuse of the asylum space. Expressing appreciation to the international community and United Nations agencies for their continued cooperation in supporting the Tanzanian refugee programme, she assured stakeholders of her Government's support and cooperation in the joint quest for refugee solutions.

21. **Mr. Mayr** (Germany) said that, in the light of the growing funding gap, it should be in the common interest of all donors, large and small, to provide UNHCR with additional funding to mitigate the impact of the situation in Ukraine while ensuring that the Office's capacity to respond to pre-existing crises elsewhere in the world was not compromised. In that context, he recalled the principle held by the international community of burden- and responsibility-sharing. In acknowledgement of the importance of flexible funding in ensuring efficient and timely responses to humanitarian crises, Germany had provided 90 per cent of its 2021 funding to UNHCR as either unearmarked or softly earmarked funds; it encouraged other donors to follow its example. Noting with appreciation the increase in private donor contributions to UNHCR, he encouraged UNHCR to continue its efforts to retain new donors to render those contributions sustainable and also to explore opportunities to raise further private funds.

22. **Mr. Chemakh** (Algeria) said that the continued budget deficit was concerning. He encouraged UNHCR to further strengthen its resource mobilization strategy and expand its donor base and, in turn, encouraged donors to provide UNHCR with the resources that would allow the Organization to meet its goals. In that context, he recalled the importance of unearmarked financial contributions, which afforded UNHCR flexibility and predictability in its responses to humanitarian emergencies and protracted situations alike. He called for the strengthening of international solidarity with refugee host countries through the swift application of the principle of burden- and responsibility-sharing. Algeria continued to honour its obligations under the 1951 Convention, concentrating its efforts on guaranteeing Sahrawi refugees the assistance that they required by facilitating dedicated humanitarian programmes. He thanked UNHCR, its partners on the ground and donors for their collective efforts, which had resulted in a significant level of financing for UNHCR operations in Algeria in 2021. He encouraged UNHCR to continue efforts to maintain, or even increase, that momentum and invited the Office to adapt its financing needs to the real number of Sahrawi refugees, which, according to various publications, exceeded 90,000, but in reality was much higher. Algeria was confident that, by recognizing the figure published in the dedicated report entitled "Sahrawi refugees in Tindouf, Algeria: total population of the camps", UNHCR would not only be able to respond appropriately to the needs of those refugees, but would also counter any accusations of a lack of transparency and integrity in its operations in Algeria.

23. **Ms. Nordlund** (Sweden) said that support for the people of Ukraine must not be at the expense of other crises. The impact of the Russian aggression in Ukraine went far beyond its borders, and funding for other crises in the world must be sustained. She commended UNHCR for clearly communicating the importance of reducing earmarking of funds. While flexible funding would not solve the problem of funding gaps, it would significantly aid prioritization and ensure that funding was allocated to where it was needed most. In that spirit, 70 per cent of Sweden's contributions to UNHCR for 2022 as part of a multi-year agreement were unearmarked.

24. **Mr. Taha** (Sudan) said that, while UNHCR's efforts to meet its responsibilities towards the new influx of refugees in Sudan were commendable, the funds allocated to refugees were insufficient to meet their very basic needs. In the light of the hike in global food prices, it would not be possible to provide refugees with full food rations. Sudan remained committed to upholding its humanitarian refugee programmes but, given its poor economic and financial situation, it would require additional financial support. He called on UNHCR, donor countries and international financial institutions to increase their support.

25. **Mr. Karhu** (Finland) said that, while the humanitarian situation in Ukraine clearly required resources and attention, they should not be provided at the expense of other pre-existing crises, to which aid must continue to be dedicated. In that connection, he emphasized the importance of flexible funding for UNHCR. A high percentage of Denmark's funds were either softly earmarked or unearmarked and were made at the beginning of the year on the basis of a multi-year agreement, affording UNHCR flexibility. In the context of broadening UNHCR's donor base, he encouraged countries to join and expressed the hope that many of the new private-sector donors would remain committed to UNHCR in years to come.

26. **Ms. Arango Blanco** (Colombia) said that Colombia, as a country directly affected by a migration crisis, shared the concerns highlighted in the update and was grateful for UNHCR's support in welcoming refugees from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Her Government would continue to strive to meet its obligations and commitments to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable people, as all Member States must for UNHCR to continue to fulfil its mandate in the current circumstances.

27. **Ms. Briggs** (Kenya) expressed her delegation's concern, in the light of the funding gap, at the prospects for UNHCR being able to assist and provide protection to the persons of concern whom it was mandated to serve. She expressed her appreciation to donors for their contributions to that year's budget and aligned her country with UNHCR's plea for the unearmarked resources that it needed to fulfil its mandate effectively.

28. **Ms. Hyde** (Director, Division of External Relations), drawing attention to UNHCR's newly released report on the use of flexible funding, thanked the donors that had heeded the Organization's call for contributions. The governments of Germany and the United States had given the largest amount of softly earmarked funds. The top ten donors of critically important unearmarked funding had been, in descending order: private donors in Spain, the Government of Sweden (whose multi-year funds were particularly appreciated), Norway, private donors in Japan and the Republic of Korea, and the governments of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany and Japan.

29. Further to the point made by the representative of Norway on the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), she appealed donors to contribute as much as they could to the fund, as it was an invaluable tool that needed to be adequately resourced to provide UNHCR country offices with the increased amounts of CERF funding that they were being asked to request in the face of the increasing needs.

30. On the question of broadening the donor base, the Office was already doing its utmost in terms of private sector fundraising, while continuing to press governments to increase annual spending on overseas development assistance to 0.7 per cent of gross national income and push for support from multilateral development banks and the World Bank. With overseas development assistance stagnating and the level of underfunding for priority needs a source of serious concern in the light of the enormous inequities in the world, it would continue to seek to broaden the base, as recommended. It was hard to see what more could be done in that regard, however, and the focus must remain on a bargain between governments, UNHCR and private individuals.

31. As to solutions, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, had managed to resolve some of the long-term refugee issues in that country and the pace of progress in finding solutions to internal displacement situations was gradually increasing. The ultimate solution to find, however, was peace, for the outlook for the world as a whole at present was deeply worrying.

32. **Ms. Shroff** (Director, Division of Strategic Planning and Results), responding to the comments on prioritization, said that UNHCR had always faced difficult choices on account of the funding gap, such as having to decide how many vulnerable refugee households in desperate need of cash assistance would receive it, for instance, and whether to deliver smaller amounts to a larger

number when it would leave families unable to afford their children's education or to pay the rent. That had been so not only in underfunded crises, such as in Lebanon, but also in situations where funding levels were high, such as the recent Ukraine crisis. Prioritizing needs in the budget was hard when virtually every single one really was a genuine need. Some had been met thanks to bilateral support from governments or other donors, and that was much appreciated, but 2022 had been a particularly challenging year; and in the countries now experiencing rampant inflation, it was no longer even possible to prioritize: fuel prices, increases in salaries and cash assistance to keep up with inflation and basic monitoring and management, among other things, were all unaffordable.

33. On the question of efficiency, UNHCR did its utmost to optimize its income and, with lower indirect support costs and headquarters expenditures than most United Nations agencies, it remained one of those that devoted the bulk of its income to the provision of protection, assistance and solutions to those that it served. The Office would continue to strive for efficiency in the face of the major challenges.

34. **Mr. Cansizoglu** (Deputy Director, Division of Strategic Planning and Results), expressing appreciation to the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania for the decades of generous hospitality that her country had provided in welcoming refugees from Burundi, drew attention to the high-level dialogue held in Dar es Salaam in March 2022, where great progress had been made in finding solutions for their protection, supporting their host communities and fostering more extensive partnerships across a diverse range organizations. The United Republic of Tanzania had hosted nearly half of the 63,573 people who had returned to Burundi in 2021, and UNHCR remained committed to continuing to work in cooperation with other United Nations entities, non-governmental organizations and national partners to uphold the right of return of all Burundian refugees and further support their effective socioeconomic reintegration and access to services, in dignity and without discrimination. The basic concepts were working and UNHCR was focused on providing continued protection support to the areas of return, with a view to ensuring that the returns remained sustainable in the years to come.

35. **The Chairperson** took it that the Standing Committee wished to adopt the draft decision on budgets and funding for 2021 and 2022, as set out in annex VIII of document EC/73/SC/CRP.17.

36. *It was so decided.*

#### **b. Global Report 2021 (including the global strategic priorities)**

37. **The Chairperson**, recalling that the English version of UNHCR's Global Report 2021 had been posted on the UNHCR website, informed the Committee that the French version would be published in due course. The report would be distributed to Member States in hard copy in August.

38. **Ms. Hyde** (Director, Division of External Relations) said that the report provided a comprehensive account of the impacts of UNHCR's work, the challenges that it had encountered and the ways in which it had sought to make smarter use of the resources available to UNHCR in 2021.

39. The year 2021 had been the eleventh successive year of increasing forced displacement globally, with more than 5 million people returning to their place of origin but an even greater number becoming newly displaced. The High Commissioner had issued 40 emergency declarations on major displacement situations in Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Myanmar, among others, and UNHCR had reacted rapidly as new displacement events occurred, stepping up emergency deployments to strengthen the response. With the number of internally displaced persons continuing to rise, adding a further 2.7 million to the previous year's annual tally, UNHCR had managed to maintain the level of response and support and persisted in the face of frequent difficulties with efforts to reach those persons. In spite of highly constrained access to northern Ethiopia, for instance, UNHCR had managed to deliver protection services, shelter and core relief items to over 1.7 million persons; and when the Taliban had taken power in Afghanistan, UNHCR had stayed to assist 1.1 million internally displaced persons with core relief items, emergency shelter, hygiene and dignity kits, cash assistance and winterization support.

40. **Ms. Shroff** (Director, Division of Strategic Planning and Results) said that, as reflected in the current edition of the Global Report, the COVID-19 pandemic had continued to account for a significant share of the attention devoted to UNHCR's response activities in a number of countries in 2021, and COVID-19 response had been mainstreamed into the Office's health, education and

protection programmes, among others. Some 20 million people in 148 countries had had access to protection services and 162 countries had extended their national COVID-19 response programmes to include refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons and others supported by UNHCR in their vaccination programmes and provide access to preventive health care and other basic services; UNHCR had remained on track with vaccinations, in spite of a shortage of doses in a number of countries. The socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic, however, while mitigated in part through an innovative use of cash assistance and community-based protection, had remained a major challenge and the inflationary pressures had continued through to the present day.

41. Key results in the areas of law and policy development had included the introduction of 26 new laws or legislative changes, largely in response to UNHCR's advocacy to improve legal protections for refugees and other persons of concern. On resettlement, more than 63,000 cases had been submitted to 23 countries – a 60 per cent increase compared with 2020 – and the number of departures had risen by 72 per cent from the previous year's dip caused in part by mobility restrictions. On statelessness, the number of stateless persons gaining access to a nationality had increased by 28 per cent, which was less than satisfactory but promising. Great progress had been made in registration activities, on the other hand, as well as on the five-year action plan on digital identity. Regarding the former, UNHCR's Population Registration and Identity Management EcoSystem database now contained close to 22 million individual records, significantly more than at the end of 2020; the progress in that regard had been reported to and scrutinized in New York.

42. In education, which was considered crucial both to building better futures and to protection, enrolment had improved at every level, particularly primary, and while COVID-19 restrictions had continued to hinder the opening of schools for in-person teaching, some 1 million children had benefited from distance or home-based learning.

43. On cash assistance, \$670 million had been distributed to 9.3 million people in 2021; and the figures for 2022 were expected to be still higher on account of the Ukraine situation in particular. Most of the cash had been delivered by means of digital payments, which were considered safer and more transparent – one quarter of recipients had mobile money or bank accounts, which was a sign of financial inclusion.

44. In terms of supply, UNHCR's had dispatched \$47.6 million's worth of core relief items, serving 132 requests, which was significantly more than in the emergency response activities of 2020.

45. The Office had continued to lead and coordinate the humanitarian responses of the three Inter-Agency Standing Committee clusters for internal displacement situations, and to play its role in refugee response plan management at the global and operational levels.

46. Regarding partnerships, UNHCR had transferred one quarter of its programme expenditures – \$1.4 billion – to more than 1,000 local and national responders, thus meeting its global bargain commitment to do so for the third year running. Efforts to reform, streamline and simplify partnership management processes and tools to improve efficiency had continued, with the further deployment of technology-based alternatives to offer partners greater flexibility. That work was set to continue through to 2023.

47. **Ms. Hyde** (Director, Division of External Relations) said that momentum behind the principles of the Global Compact on Refugees had been maintained, with fresh impetus provided by the High-Level Officials Meeting marking the midway point between the first and second sessions of the Global Refugee Forum, and the first Global Compact on Refugees indicator report, published in November 2021, highlighting the progress made and what more was required. Landmark manifestations of solidarity had included the granting by Colombia of temporary protection status to 1.8 million Venezuelans and the West African host country consensus on a strategy for the cessation of refugee status for Ivorians.

48. Regarding donor support, overall contributions to UNHCR had slipped from the previous year's record levels and the funding gap had widened. Private sector contributions had increased by 15 per cent, exceeding the \$510 million target by \$115.3 million, however, with solid growth recorded in in-kind contributions, and UNHCR's appeal for more flexible funding had garnered a greater share of unearmarked or softly earmarked funds. Nevertheless, the impacts of underfunding were visible throughout the Global Report. Many of the most pressing needs had been unmet or underserved, such as water shortages for refugees in Uganda, insufficient emergency shelter in



Mozambique and inadequate protection services for vulnerable children in Central America; the need to implement the plan to build sanitary facilities in the Rohingya refugee camps of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh; and for UNHCR to introduce protection monitoring, as planned, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Office would continue to strive to find new sources of support to narrow the gaps.

49. UNHCR deeply appreciated the financial support of the donors and commitment of the host countries that had enabled it to continue its work in assisting millions of vulnerable people. The full version of its Global Report 2021, with region-specific summaries and access to further, constantly updated, information via links to the Global Focus operational reporting platform, was available on the UNHCR website.

50. Ms. Hyde stated that UNHCR was delighted to present an overview of its 2021 Global Report, which aimed to provide a comprehensive account of UNHCR's work, the challenges encountered and how UNHCR sought to work smarter with its available resources. 2021 marked the eleventh year in a row for increasing global forced displacement. Although more than 5 million people had returned to their places of origin, even greater numbers were being newly displaced. During the year, the High Commissioner had issued 40 emergency declarations covering, inter alia, major displacement situations in Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Myanmar; UNHCR had acted swiftly in response to new displacement events, with emergency deployments stepped up to bolster the responses. More than half of the people of concern to UNHCR were displaced within their own country and, in 2021, the number of internally displaced persons had risen by 2.7 million. UNHCR had maintained its stepped-up response to support them in 2021. Although access to internally displaced persons was often particularly difficult, UNHCR had persisted. In northern Ethiopia, where access was extremely constrained, UNHCR had reached over 1.7 million people with protection services, shelter and core relief items. When the Taliban had taken over in Afghanistan, UNHCR had stayed to assist 1.1 million internally displaced persons, providing them with core relief items, emergency shelter, hygiene and dignity kits, cash assistance and winterization support.

51. **Ms. Shroff** (Director, Division of Strategic Planning and Results) indicated that UNHCR's global strategic priorities covered three broad areas: safeguarding fundamental rights, providing life-saving support and assistance and building better futures; those areas were aligned with the High Commissioner's strategic directions to protect, empower, solve, include and respond. In 2021, in particular, COVID-19 had formed much of UNHCR's responsive activities in a number of countries, and UNHCR had mainstreamed that activity as part of its ongoing work on health, education and protection. Approximately 20 million people in 148 countries had accessed protection services and she welcomed the fact that 162 countries had included refugees, internally displaced persons, stateless persons and others in their national COVID-19 response, including preventive health care and other services.

52. The greatest challenge, however, continued to be the socioeconomic impact. UNHCR could have addressed the issue through cash assistance, community programmes and other innovations but, due to the lingering effects of the pandemic and rising inflation, it had not been possible. Vaccination had been kept on track, although efforts had been somewhat hampered by the shortage of doses in a number of countries.

53. As to key results, there had been 26 new laws or regulatory changes in 2021, in response to the work of UNHCR to advocate for legal protection for refugees and other persons of concern. Resettlement cases had reached a new high of nearly 64,000 in 23 countries, representing a 60 per cent increase in submissions and 72 per cent rise in departures compared with 2020, when there had been a dip in part due to restrictions on mobility. There had also been a 28 per cent increase in stateless persons gaining a nationality and, although it was insufficient, it was still promising.

54. On registration, there were now 22 million individual records, which represented a significant jump from 2020 and was in line with UNHCR's five-year action plan on digital identity. On education, a critical part of building better futures and protection, enrolment had risen at all levels, with the largest numbers at primary level; 1 million children had benefited from home-based learning in 2021. On cash assistance, 9.3 million people had received cash assistance, amounting to some \$670 million, and UNHCR continued to see increases in cash assistance, which it estimated would grow, with most payments delivered digitally, which was a safer, securer and more transparent way of transferring cash. In that regard, some 25 per cent of recipients had mobile money or a bank account, which was a good indicator of financial inclusion. On supply, UNHCR had increased its supply of core relief items, more so than in 2020.

55. On coordination, UNHCR had continued to lead on coordinated humanitarian responses through the three clusters for internally displaced situations and had played its role in refugee response plan management at global and operational level. UNHCR's partnerships were vital, and she was pleased to say that a quarter of UNHCR's operational programme expenditures had gone to local and national responders, which meant that its Grand Bargain commitments had been met for the third year in a row. That expenditure item continued to be UNHCR's biggest, at \$1.4 billion per year with over 1,000 partners. In 2022 and 2023, UNHCR would continue to reform its partner engagement approaches and tools to streamline and simplify and further deploy technology-based alternatives for greater efficiency gains and more flexibility for its partners. Over the course of 2022 and 2023, UNHCR would continue to make strides in improving its business processes and systems to make it more efficient.

56. **Ms. Hyde** (Director, Division of External Relations) stated that in 2021 there had been a renewed and sustained momentum behind the principle of the Global Compact on Refugees, with the High-Level Officials Meeting marking the midpoint between Global Refugee Forums. The first ever Global Compact on Refugees indicative report had showed how much progress had been made, but also how much more remained to be done. There had been landmarks of solidarity during the year, including Colombia's granting of temporary protection status to 1.8 million Venezuelans and the West African consensus on a strategy for refugees from Côte d'Ivoire, which had paved the way for the cessation of refugee status later in 2022. After a record year of funding in 2020, contributions to UNHCR had slipped in 2021 and the funding gap had widened. However, private-sector contributions had grown by 15 per cent and had far exceeded the target of \$510 million, with very strong growth in contributions in kind. UNHCR's appeal for more flexible funding had also been successful, with a welcome increase in the share of contributions that were unearmarked or softly earmarked. The impact of underfunding was visible throughout the Global Report, with many of the most pressing needs remaining unmet or underserved: water had been in short supply for refugees in Uganda; too little shelter had been provided in Mozambique; UNHCR had been unable to fulfil its plans for protection monitoring in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; in Central America, there had been reduced capacity to provide protection services for vulnerable children; and sanitary facilities had not been built as planned in the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar. UNHCR would continue to strive to broaden its donor base and gain more support to ensure that those gaps were narrowed as far as possible.

57. She hoped that all those present would find the Global Report useful and readable. The full report was only available online and had much more content than the print version. UNHCR deeply appreciated all those present, the Members and the observers of the Executive Committees, and wished to thank all of the hosting governments for their commitments and financial support and all that had enabled UNHCR to make an impact and improve the lives of millions of people.

58. **Ms. Clifford** (on behalf of the European Union Member States) thanked UNHCR for its Global Report, which outlined global trends and progress made in 2021, and welcomed UNHCR's adaptability, also as regards implementing partners, to meet new operational challenges. The European Union regretted that needs and operational challenges kept increasing to record levels and was very concerned with overall trends and the fact that there were over 100 million forcibly displaced people, partly as a result of the war in Ukraine, disasters and the adverse effects of climate change. She noted that new displacements due to violence and disasters around the world were considerably outpacing solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons and, with a steady upturn in the number of internally displaced persons worldwide, the effects of the war in Ukraine were having global repercussions, including on food security. The European Union reiterated its continued full commitment and support to the plight and needs of refugees the world over.

59. She was grateful to those governments and host communities which had shown solidarity and taken in forcibly displaced persons and appreciated UNHCR's advocacy in favour of protection and repeated calls for a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.

60. In view of increasing forced displacement and resulting needs, a strong collective response was more necessary than ever, with different stakeholders contributing in line with their core strengths and comparative advantage, as that would help address both the short- and longer-term needs of the forcibly displaced, including a humanitarian–development–peace nexus approach. The European Union therefore encouraged UNHCR to build a solid partnership approach, working as "One United Nations" and in close cooperation with other partners, including national and local authorities, displaced persons, host communities, academia and the private sector.

61. The European Union welcomed the update on UNHCR's global strategic priorities, which prioritized concrete actions on protection, response, inclusion, empowerment and solutions for all persons of concern, and invited UNHCR to further roll out its field focus, being an agile protection and assistance organization with robust emergency response capacity to address new or increasing needs. The European Union encouraged UNHCR to ensure solid oversight and transparent communication with donors, asserting itself as a reliable partner in a complex environment.

62. The European Union and its Member States welcomed UNHCR's continuous efforts as a guardian and promoter of the 1951 Refugee Convention and related protocols, principles and values, and also appreciated UNHCR's renewed engagement in raising awareness for the protection of internally displaced persons and stateless persons. The country-level steering groups on internal displacement solutions would be an important coordination mechanism in which UNHCR's active engagement and leadership would be crucial.

63. The European Union and its Member States continued to provide protection to persons fleeing war, conflicts and persecution worldwide and were committed to contribute to greater international burden and responsibility-sharing for refugees globally, as well as addressing the root causes of forced displacement. The European Union reiterated its commitment to preserve the right to seek and enjoy asylum and the principle of non-refoulement as enshrined in the 1951 Refugee Convention and the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights.

64. For decades, UNHCR had been a key actor in the United Nations system, placing the centrality of protection at its core. As part of its global strategic priorities, the European Union encouraged UNHCR to continue being a robust advocate and promoter of inter-agency coordination, collaboration and synergies.

65. **Ms. Metsandi** (Estonia) stated that her country aligned itself with the statement by the European Union and greatly appreciated the 2021 Global Report, which outlined the overall trends and progress made. Estonia commended UNHCR for fulfilling its mandate as lead in providing international protection to refugees and forcibly displaced persons in an increasingly complex humanitarian context, and appreciated UNHCR's staff and partners who were active on the ground alleviating dire humanitarian needs, often in very difficult circumstances. Estonia also recognized and commended UNHCR for its excellent work in mobilizing private-sector funds at a very difficult time.

66. Estonia wished to express its deep concern at the worrying global trends which meant that more than 100 million people around the world had been forced to leave their homes and the continuing crises in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. In such challenging times, she welcomed UNHCR's focus on long-term, durable solutions that enabled humanitarian development and peace actors to work closer together: working apart was no longer an option. Protection of the most vulnerable, including women and children, was of the utmost importance and had been an Estonian humanitarian aid priority over the years. Following Estonia's global refugee forum pledges, it had placed special importance on the education of internally displaced and refugee children and children in armed conflict to avoid the loss of an entire generation.

67. Estonia was witnessing extreme human suffering and a fast-growing refugee crisis on its own doorstep in Europe, caused by the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine in blatant violation of international and humanitarian law. The grave and devastating consequences of that aggression, not only felt in Europe but also globally, could not be overstated. The rise in food insecurity and rising food prices were a real and direct consequence of that aggression, which adversely affected millions of already vulnerable people around the world. The international community had to do its utmost to help the Ukrainian people. It was heartbreaking and entirely unacceptable to see the heavy casualties and loss of innocent lives resulting from an unjustified attack. Estonia's support for Ukraine and its people would continue in all areas, whether financial, political, economic, humanitarian or security-related.

68. The answer to many humanitarian crises and refugee situations around the world was clear and simple: stop the war. Unfortunately, the security situation was rapidly escalating and making it increasingly difficult for humanitarian aid operations to continue and gain access to those in need. Therefore, it had become even more important to find ways to protect civilians, respect international humanitarian law, help refugees to flee senseless wars and secure unhindered access for humanitarian assistance. Estonia commended all concerned, including UNHCR and its partners, for

their unceasing work in and around Ukraine in alleviating human suffering. Donors and humanitarian actors needed to be even more flexible and innovative in the current global context and with the growing needs. Estonia was doing its best to ensure that it adhered to the principles and guidelines of good humanitarian donorship, as well as the Grand Bargain initiative, and was committed to burden- and responsibility-sharing. For instance, to date, Estonia had welcomed 40,000 Ukrainian refugees (equivalent to 3 per cent of Estonia's population) and was committed to being a flexible donor. UNHCR could count on Estonia's support in the future.

69. **Mr. Mayr** (Germany) highlighted the invaluable role of UNHCR and its staff in the protection of stateless and displaced persons worldwide, as demonstrated in the Global Report. Faced with the challenges of climate change, poverty, food insecurity, conflict and displacement, Germany encouraged UNHCR to make use of anticipatory tools and to further increase the robustness of its operations. Protection of beneficiaries and support for host communities should be at the heart of climate change-related efforts, including the principle of "do no harm" and the use of sustainable and fair supply chains for UNHCR operations. Germany stressed its commitment to burden- and responsibility-sharing, as emphasized at the High-Level Officials Meeting in 2021; looked forward to continuing its work with UNHCR and its partners in the preparation of the 2023 Global Refugee Forum; and encouraged UNHCR to issue strong guidance for focused, efficient and meaningful matching of pledges.

70. Germany supported the gathering of data for evidence-based policymaking, particularly as related to new challenges such as climate change-related impacts on displacement. To enable a clearer picture, Germany called on UNHCR and all actors to harmonize their data and avoid duplication. As it was improbable that the funding gap would be completely closed in the coming years, Germany supported UNHCR's efforts to work with other United Nations agencies and partners to address needs and find solutions. In order to uphold the respective mandates of all actors, greater coordination and collaboration were needed, including along the triple nexus, needed to make operations more efficient and sustainable to the benefit of displaced populations and their host communities.

71. Protection of the most vulnerable was also a top priority for Germany; accordingly, it supported UNHCR's efforts in preventing and combating sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse in line with the 2020 policy on a victim-centred approach. Making humanitarian assistance available to the most vulnerable among displaced populations was a core responsibility and therefore it encouraged UNHCR to strengthen its efforts to address the specific needs of particularly vulnerable persons, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex people, women, children and those with disabilities. Germany also believed that inclusion did not stop with UNHCR operations, but also belonged in UNHCR's way of working. Public information needed to be available for persons with disabilities. The gruesome estimate that one in five forcibly displaced women were subject to sexual violence further highlighted the need for a robust response and for risk management to combat sexual and gender-based violence. As such violence remained a top priority for Germany's humanitarian policy, it commended the deployment of specific experts to operations work. Germany applauded UNHCR's continued role as a champion of fundamental rights and believed that there was no crisis and no situation that should make the world forget that the right to apply for international protection should be granted free of any discrimination. Germany was a strong advocate for international protection and would continue to be a close partner of UNHCR and its role to uphold fundamental rights worldwide.

72. **Ms. Moussa** (Egypt) drew attention to two sections of the Global Report, on UNHCR's operations relating to climate-induced displacement and on water, sanitation and hygiene, respectively, and asked for more information about UNHCR's activities at the policy and legal levels, particularly through engagement with ongoing global processes such as the 2023 Conference for the Midterm Comprehensive Review of Implementation of the United Nations Decade for Action on Water and Sanitation (2018-2028), scheduled to take place in New York in March 2023. She asked further about the global processes related to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the climate change process, and asked what more could be done to increase coherence and break the silos that had arisen between those different processes.

73. **Ms. Nordlund** (Sweden) welcomed the inclusion of data on earmarking to show how funds had been allocated between regions and operations, which represented an important step towards increased transparency in the use of core funding. She strongly welcomed continued action in that direction. She also welcomed the emphasis in the Global Report on preventing and responding to

sexual and gender-based violence. However, noting that such violence remained a key feature of conflicts and a driver of displacement and that funding to address such violence had not been fully allocated, she stressed the need to ensure adequate funding to effectively prevent, mitigate and respond to issues relating to sexual and gender-based violence. She also noted the worrying trend in refugee food security outlined in the Global Report. Efforts to enhance impacts and prioritization, broaden UNHCR's donor base and increase the share of flexible funding must continue.

74. **Ms. Shroff** (Director, Division of Strategic Planning and Results), replying to the representative of Sweden, stated that the global strategic priorities would be combined, as they had been in 2022, with the Global Report along the lines of the Global Results Framework, to provide Member States with a more full and complete picture of the Office's results and achievements. She drew attention to the incorporation into the Global Report of annual reporting on UNHCR's global strategic priorities, and said that the intention was to give Member States a more comprehensive picture of the previous year's performance and achievements in a single document. The Global Report 2022 would include similar reporting on the Global Results Framework. The priorities of safeguarding fundamental rights, providing life-saving support and assistance and building better futures were directly aligned with the core elements of the recently issued UNHCR Strategic Directions 2022–2026: protect, respond, include, empower and solve.

75. In reply to a comment from Germany on anticipatory tools, she stated that UNHCR undertook a variety of activities to develop scenarios and models for future years: more detail would be provided on request. Contingency planning was obviously a large part of UNHCR's annual and ongoing planning, but other efforts were also being made. On meeting the specific needs of vulnerable people, UNHCR had a policy on age, gender and diversity mainstreaming, which meant that, whenever a plan was updated or developed, UNHCR's operations undertook a thorough assessment of needs. That assessment was, in a sense, disaggregated by gender and diversity considerations, including disability. UNHCR also included in its budgeting process a marker for disability, as well as one for climate change-related efforts, which enabled the Office to understand the activities and budgets associated with those efforts. As regards sexual and gender-based violence, the High Commissioner's strategic directions in 2022 had identified eight focus areas in which he and his leadership felt that UNHCR should make additional targeted efforts to ensure that it was on track with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals; one of those areas was gender-based violence. UNHCR felt strongly that it was one of the areas where greater progress should be made, and there was an overall strategic plan to strengthen mitigation and response to gender-based violence, including the deployment of staff.

76. On the questions raised by the delegation of Egypt, she stated that UNHCR had recruited a climate change expert, Mr. Andrew Harper, to advise on disaster risk reduction and climate change efforts. UNHCR was now developing more detailed action plans at the regional level to ensure that it was able to anticipate and respond, in an appropriate way, to situations in which natural disasters or other climate events resulted in forced displacement. Those action plans were driven by a bottom-up approach and represented a significant portion of UNHCR's efforts towards that goal, at both the global and local levels. The High Commissioner's strategic plan also included action on legal and policy level engagement at many different levels. Although it was currently a work in progress, the High Commissioner would update Member States on it in due course.

77. **Mr. Boukhris** (Morocco), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, rejected the politically motivated statement by the representative of Algeria. The humanitarian situation in the Tindouf camps in Algeria was inhumane and growing worse, with humanitarian assistance failing to reach its intended recipients. He called upon UNHCR and concerned donors to proceed immediately with refugee registration in the camps, in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, which would also reduce fraud and misappropriation of humanitarian assistance. Adequate funds should be set aside within the existing budget for the registration process, which was one of the core features of UNHCR's work.

78. **Mr. Chemakh (Algeria)**, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said Morocco had no legitimacy in speaking about that situation, being neither host nor destination country. Morocco was responsible for the humanitarian crisis because of its aggression, annexation and illegal occupation of Western Sahara. He condemned the actions of the Moroccan delegation, which had sought to exploit the Standing Committee's debate. An intersectoral working group under the authority of UNHCR, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme had produced a comprehensive report on the Tindouf camps, whose population, said to number 172,000, was in need

of education and health care. An investigation of the humanitarian situation in the camps was essential, and the situation should be resolved in line with the United Nations regulation plan for the Western Sahara, including a referendum with full participation by the people living in the camps.

### **Governance**

79. The Chairperson invited members to submit any suggestions for issues to be included in the High Commissioner's opening statement at the forthcoming seventy-third plenary session of the Executive Committee. Suggestions should be made in writing to the Secretariat.

### **Any other business**

80. **The Chairperson** noted that a procedural report of the meeting, listing the decisions taken, would be made available by mid-July, allowing two weeks for written corrections to be submitted to the Secretariat. An updated version would be adopted using the silence procedure. The Secretariat would also make available summary records of the discussion, together with all documentation and presentations from the meeting, on the Standing Committee page of the UNHCR website.

### **Closing of the meeting**

81. Following an exchange of courtesies, the Chair declared closed the eighty-fourth meeting of the Standing Committee.

*The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.*