

Talking points on EC/74/SC/CRP.6 UNHCR's programme in the United Nations: proposed framework for 2024

Thank you, Chair.

Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to present to the Committee a brief statement on EC/74/SC/CRP.6, UNHCR's programme in the United Nations: proposed framework for 2024.

Article 20 of UNHCR Statute

As you know, based on Article 20 of the UNHCR Statute, the Programme Budget of the United Nations contributes a portion of the funding for UNHCR costs at Geneva HQ. These are management and support costs incurred in respect to staff discharging functions such as executive direction and management, governance and oversight, including key management functions related to information technology management, Human Resources, external relations, and Finance and Administration. The UNRB funding also finances a small portion of HQ non-staff costs such as HQ security and the rental of premises. Compared to UNHCR's overall budget, the UNRB's contribution is relatively small but it is vitally important.

These resources from the UN Regular Programme Budget are received via the overall processes led by the UN Secretary General's office in New York. UNHCR prepares specific programme budget proposals in line with that process and approach. The conference room paper before you is an advance copy of the programmatic part of our submission for the 2024 UN Regular Programme Budget.

Parallel planning processes for 2024

As a reminder, the cycles for submission for the UN Regular Programme Budget, led by the UN Secretariat in NY, and the High Commissioner's Annual programme budget, led here in Geneva and culminating in ExCom's approval, run in parallel but are not aligned:

- The preparation of the UN Regular Programme Budget for 2024 started at the end of 2022 and is being completed now. The programme content will be reviewed by the United Nation's Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) in April, and by the 5th Committee of the General Assembly in December.
- In parallel, UNHCR operations are preparing their plans to the proposed Annual programme budget of UNHCR for 2024 and beyond. The document will be released in July, and it will be reviewed by Standing Committee thereafter, and approved by the Executive Committee in October.

In other words, the conference room paper precedes our planning process. While this is a little inconvenient, as such it does not pose a major problem. Why is that? Primarily because the most pertinent content in the UNHCR submission to the UNRB related to our

management and administration. Through the decades, the overall architecture of UNHCR has been a constant. The offices of the High Commissioner and the Deputy High Commissioner, the overall management and administrative functions—these have remained largely constant over the past years. Therefore, while the full programmatic aspects reflected in EC/74/SC/CRP.6 will be further elaborated in UNHCR’s Annual Programme budget for 2024 that you will review from July, the portion that is funded by the UNRB is unlikely to be any different.

Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

Paper highlights

The paper before you focuses on the programme performance for 2022 and UNHCR’s Proposed programme plan for 2024, and we will cover some of these issues in greater detail in Agenda Item 8, with the update on budgets and funding. But allow me to provide few highlights.

- a) **On the planning process for 2024, we are in the midst of our planning cycle, there are some broad continuities:**

We will continue to plan and programme **for diverse needs**

We will continue to enhance organizational effectiveness and modernize ways of working to meet current and future challenges, seize the opportunities offered by the Global Compact on Refugees, and ensure that we are leveraging the resources we are entrusted, to maximize impact for the people we serve.

In planning our work, we will continue to consider the age and gender perspective to ensure that the diverse needs of the people we serve are addressed. We will focus on furthering gender equality, preventing, mitigating, and responding to gender-based violence, ensuring that survivors have access to health care, psychosocial support, safe shelter, and legal aid. We will also continue to advance the 2020–2024 action plan for disability inclusion.

We will continue to work with a broad range of partners

In implementing the Programme, we will continue to work closely with national and local authorities, partners in the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations, academia, and displaced and stateless people. We will leverage the Resident Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordinators to ensure that overarching protection and solution strategies are considered. Relationships with international financial institutions, development banks, public and private organizations, and civil society remain critical to mobilizing effective responses and pursuing solutions, so these will be strengthened.

We anticipate growing needs, and, in light of that, the criticality of increased support for the work of the Office.

The plan for 2024 outlined in the document before you is based on a number of assumptions, a few being key: firstly, it is essential that States and the international community at large remain committed to contributing to and supporting the programme of work in line with the Global Compact on Refugees. Secondly, it is also critical that the significant gaps in voluntary funding, preferably as unearmarked contributions, which are compounded by inflationary pressures, be reduced, so that the assistance and protection to the people we serve will not be hampered.

And finally, we remain concerned about the level of UNRB funding

Before I conclude, allow me to emphasise that it is essential that the UN Regular Budget contribution to UNHCR be aligned to UNGA resolution 59/276, whereby the Assembly had recommended a level of UNRB funding of 50.8 per cent of UNHCR's management and administrative (MA) costs. Since long, the UNRB funding has dropped and is now below half of the level recommended by the UNGA (around 23 per cent). While our M&A functions have remained largely consistent over time, the level of effort needed has grown commensurate with the growth in the agency. And at a time of mounting crises and record levels of forced displacement and statelessness, the work of UNHCR is ever the more critical and with that, stepped up funding through the UNRB is vital in this regard.

Note to Director: Management and administrative costs for 2022 are not ready, requiring closing actions to be completed. Colleagues are trying to find a workaround. If not, the last expenditure on record is 2021 and shows MA of \$197 million being 4% of total expenditure. It was 4% also in 2020.

Conclusion

Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

I thank you for your attention. My colleagues and I stand ready to address any question that you may have on this agenda item.