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Summary

This paper summarizes the progress achieved in the implementation of the five-year global strategies for public health, education, settlement and shelter, livelihoods, and safe access to fuel and energy, all of which will set the direction for global programmes in these areas this year. It reports on ongoing efforts to develop new and enhanced data information management and related systems and delves into the new ways UNHCR works with governments, partners and refugees to find alternatives to camps and undertake cash-based interventions.

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I. Introduction

1. UNHCR's global programmes, which are managed from headquarters, support country-level operations in close collaboration with partners. The Office aims to strengthen its capacity to respond to emergencies by improving the technical quality, capacity and impact of its interventions, including through technical networks that consist of experts from both UNHCR and standby partners. This paper reviews UNHCR's efforts to promote technical integrity; introduce good practices and innovative approaches; and strengthen global programmes in the following sectors: public health; HIV and reproductive health; nutrition and food security; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); education; settlement and shelter; registration and biometrics; information management; energy and environment; and livelihoods and self-reliance. It also provides an update on UNHCR's *Policy on Alternatives to Camps*¹ and the use of cash-based interventions.

II. Updates on technical sectors

A. Public health

2. UNHCR's *Global Strategy for Public Health 2014-2018*² encompasses the four related sectors of public health; HIV and reproductive health; nutrition and food security; and WASH. The Strategy aims to ensure that refugees have access to health care, prevention and treatment programmes, and other forms of life-saving assistance and essential services, including through national health care systems.

3. The Public Health Strategy focuses on increasing refugee access to quality primary health care; enhancing access to specialist care; strengthening the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases; and improving child health and survival rates. Progress on the implementation of the Public Health Strategy is being monitored through *Twine*.³

4. UNHCR developed a regional health care strategy for Syrian refugees, devised new country-level strategies for mainstreaming refugees into national health care in six countries, and provided a rapid response to disease outbreaks in three countries. In addition, UNHCR also supported the Ebola response in West Africa.

5. In 2015, the Office will strengthen its response to public health needs in new emergencies and disease outbreaks. UNHCR's Health Access and Utilization Survey will be further developed to help address the problems refugees face in accessing health care in non-camp settings. Based on existing World Health Organization (WHO) guidance, WHO and UNHCR jointly developed the "mhGAP Humanitarian Intervention Guide" on clinical management of mental, neurological and substance use conditions in humanitarian emergencies, where mental health needs are high, while the regular systems for care and support are negatively affected and often overwhelmed.

HIV and reproductive health

6. In line with the Public Health Strategy, UNHCR supports low-cost, high-impact reproductive health interventions and promotes refugee access to national programmes, such as human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines for girls and cervical cancer screening. UNHCR will remain focused on ensuring access and adherence to antiretroviral therapy (ART) with the support of newly released guidelines on ART for people living with HIV. Based upon the review of newborn health outcomes in Chad, Jordan and Tanzania (the United Republic of), UNHCR recently launched the *Operational Guidelines on Improving*

¹ Available from www.unhcr.org/5422b8f09.html.

² Available from www.unhcr.org/530f12d26.pdf.

³ See UNHCR's Health Information System, <http://twine.unhcr.org>.

Newborn Health in Refugee Operations,⁴ which provide practical guidance for reducing neonatal mortality.

Nutrition and food security

7. The Public Health Strategy prioritizes infant and young children feeding that enhances their chances of survival and promotes healthy growth and development. In 2014, rates of mortality and morbidity among refugees were maintained within acceptable standards, with UNHCR's interventions focused on maternal and child health. In 2015, UNHCR will roll out the new operational guidance on breast milk substitutes and, together with Save the Children, the new infant and young children feeding framework. Last year, UNHCR also explored targeted approaches to food assistance in Chad and Mozambique and will review food targeting methodologies in additional countries this year.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

8. The Public Health Strategy also encompasses WASH, which focuses on rapid emergency response to improve the impact and cost-efficiency of interventions. The WASH monitoring system has now been introduced in 66 camps globally, and the indicator data for most of these locations will be readily accessible through *Twine*. UNHCR will release an updated WASH manual for refugee situations by mid-2015.

9. With the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, UNHCR is reviewing the cost effectiveness of sanitation options for the operations in Ethiopia and Uganda. In 2015, UNHCR and its partners also will respond to the recommendations of recent research projects to improve safe and culturally acceptable hygiene and sanitation practices in Ethiopia and Jordan.

B. Education

10. This year, UNHCR's *Education Strategy 2012-2016*⁵ will be expanded to 25 priority countries, focusing on evidence-based programming and the inclusion of refugees within national education systems. Through the Education Strategy, UNHCR will promote innovative approaches that aim to strengthen teacher quality and access to reading material, language learning and distance education. Tools and guidance on specialized topics in refugee education – including curriculum development, teacher training, accelerated education, and programming for out-of-school children – will be developed. UNHCR will continue efforts to integrate education in the earliest stages of emergency response in tandem with child protection activities.

11. In 2014, 266,000 out-of-school children were enrolled into primary school in 12 countries. In line with the Education Strategy, targeted support will be provided to adolescents and youth to address gaps in education, including in the areas of secondary education, accelerated education and youth programming. UNHCR also will support tertiary education through scholarships and advocacy for distance learning, as well as expand access to tertiary education through new partnerships and initiatives.

C. Settlement and shelter

12. UNHCR is implementing its *Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter 2014-2018*⁶ to ensure that all refugees are able to satisfy their settlement and shelter needs in a safe, dignified and sustainable manner wherever they are living. Implementation is proceeding through comprehensive country strategies that promote sustainable settlement and shelter options, with a specific focus on 16 operations that are set to expend more than US\$ 1 million for such activities. A foundation stone of the Settlement and Shelter

⁴ Available from www.unhcr.org/54bd0dc49.pdf.

⁵ Available from www.unhcr.org/5149ba349.pdf.

⁶ Available from www.unhcr.org/530f13aa9.pdf.

Strategy is the “master plan” approach, which links settlements with surrounding communities in a more holistic and sustainable way. In 2015, UNHCR will continue to test related concepts and tools with partners from academia and the private sector.

13. Ensuring effective emergency response and skilled technical support to field operations is a key component of the Settlement and Shelter Strategy. In 2014, UNHCR deployed 32 experts and dispatched 20 field missions to assist with emergency responses and provide technical advice and training, drawing upon the support of partners such as the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). In 2015, a new e-learning programme on alternative shelter and settlement solutions will be launched, and a site planning training workshop will be held, following last year’s successful edition.

14. The Settlement and Shelter Strategy promotes innovative research and development for shelter solutions. UNHCR, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have developed a new self-standing family tent that will undergo final field testing in both hot and cold climates. UNHCR and the Refugee Housing Unit AB of Sweden have completed testing of the new Refugee Housing Unit. Initial production of the unit is now underway, and it will be available for deployment in 2015.

15. UNHCR, together with IFRC, co-leads the Global Shelter Cluster and leads shelter clusters in 11 countries. In 2015, emphasis also will be placed on maintaining surge capacity for emergency response, providing support to country-level clusters and effectively managing newly activated national clusters.

D. Registration and biometrics

16. UNHCR moved forward with the development of new and enhanced data and information management systems that allow operations to improve identification and case management for populations of concern. The new version of *proGres* – UNHCR’s refugee registration system – was successfully tested in Malawi in August 2014. The software was released and will be piloted during the first half of 2015, with field deployment proceeding in tandem with the continued development of new functionality. UNHCR’s Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS) passed the final stages of testing in Thailand in January and February 2015, and deployment to field operations will begin in Chad in March. *ProGres* and BIMS systems work in an integrated and complementary way to secure the identity of refugees, ensure protection and facilitate durable solutions.

E. Information management

17. Through the implementation of the *Information and Data Management Strategy 2012-2014*, UNHCR has built a solid foundation for information management within the organization. Today, the Office has a strong internal network of information management professionals serving in all major refugee emergency operations and IDP situations where UNHCR has cluster leadership responsibilities. Information management also is supported by the newly updated Emergency Information Management Toolkit⁷ and operational web portals⁸ that now cover 29 country operations and major emergencies. They deliver information management as a service to our partners and help tailor aid to the needs of the populations that we serve.

18. In 2015, UNHCR will consolidate the achievements made under the Strategy, with a focus on priority areas where further strengthening and capacity enhancements are needed. This will include protection information management, vulnerability identification, targeting, and population data management.

⁷ See <http://data.unhcr.org/imtoolkit/>.

⁸ See <http://data.unhcr.org>.

F. Energy and environment

19. UNHCR's *Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE) 2014-2018*⁹ seeks to ensure that all refugees are able to meet their energy needs for cooking and lighting in a safe and sustainable manner. Transforming this ambitious vision into a reality requires a progressive approach. In 2014, UNHCR developed context specific energy strategies in five countries, which were supported by expert staff, the ProAct Network and the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves. The strategies incorporate innovative technology, such as bio-gas production and solar-powered cooking stoves, closely linking energy interventions to protection, education and livelihoods. Four additional operations also will develop energy strategies in 2015.

20. The SAFE Strategy will enable UNHCR to offer refugees a wider range of energy alternatives, building upon the findings of the large-scale baseline assessment of fuel sources and energy consumption. The assessment was conducted in 2014 and funded under the Light Years Ahead initiative. IKEA's Brighter Lives for Refugees campaign funded the distribution of solar lanterns and solar street lights and supported other renewable energy interventions in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Jordan and Sudan in 2014. These activities will continue over the course of the year, with UNHCR bolstering its community environmental management efforts, particularly through the establishment of woodlots that supply fuel.

G. Livelihoods and self-reliance

21. UNHCR's *Global Strategy for Livelihoods 2014-2018*¹⁰ aims to ensure that refugees and other people of concern are able to make a safe and sustainable living that meets their basic needs. Fifteen country operations are implementing the Livelihoods Strategy through specific, multi-year plans using market-based approaches that seek to achieve sustainable impact. Implementation is supported by a Livelihoods Advisory Board composed of experts from BRAC University, the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP), the Ford Foundation, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the Rockefeller Foundation, the SEEP Network and the University of Illinois.

22. UNHCR has developed new minimum criteria for livelihoods programming based upon an analysis of survey results from 33 country operations to support planning for the 2016-2017 biennium. The minimum criteria set benchmarks in areas such as assessment, strategic planning, technical staffing and partnerships, guiding operations toward more effective, sustainable and results-based programming.

23. Through the Livelihoods Strategy, UNHCR is pursuing innovative ways of connecting refugees with employment opportunities, such as data-outsourcing and microwork, (i.e. small tasks completed by individuals over the internet). UNHCR has launched an online platform called "UNHCR Exchange",¹¹ which gives refugees access to learning and supports employment and entrepreneurship. Together with the BRAC Development Institute and the non-governmental organization Trickle Up, UNHCR will pilot the "graduation approach"¹² for sustainable refugee livelihoods in a rural setting, building on the success of urban pilots in Costa Rica, Ecuador and Egypt. In 2015, UNHCR also will support new academic research to deepen its understanding of the economic impact refugees have on the local, national and regional economy.

⁹ Available from www.unhcr.org/530f11ee6.pdf.

¹⁰ Available from www.unhcr.org/530f107b6.pdf.

¹¹ See www.unhcr-exchange.org.

¹² Pioneered by BRAC and piloted by the World Bank's Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP), and the Ford Foundation, the graduation approach seeks to "graduate" people in rural or urban areas out of poverty through a sequenced combination of livelihoods provisioning, capacity building and microfinance.

III. Other initiatives

A. Alternatives to camps

24. The High Commissioner's *Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, which was launched in July 2014, underpins global programmes. Building on UNHCR's 2009 *Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas*,¹³ the new Policy moves away from traditional camp-based operational response to create opportunities for refugees to live lawfully, peacefully and independently in their communities. It aims to fundamentally change the way UNHCR works with governments, partners and refugees and other people of concern.

25. UNHCR is promoting sustainable operational approaches that build upon the resources and capacities of refugees and enhance synergies with national and local development, infrastructure and service delivery systems. A new Diagnostic Tool on Alternatives to Camps will assist the Office's operations in assessing the opportunities and challenges of implementing the policy during the 2016-2017 biennium planning exercise.

B. Cash-based interventions

26. The High Commissioner has made the expanded and systematic use of cash-based interventions an institutional priority. Cash programming, particularly multi-purpose cash grants, are having a significant impact on humanitarian operations, as demonstrated by the response to the Syria crisis. More than US\$ 170 million reached refugees and other people of concern through cash and cash alternatives in over 60 countries. The new Cash-Based Interventions Section in UNHCR's Division of Programme Support and Management (DPSM) provides strategic direction, coordination and guidance, as well as support to the field, including through the new *Operational Guidelines for Cash-Based Interventions in Displacement Settings*.

27. To provide an overall framework for these efforts, UNHCR will develop a global strategy for strengthened institutional capacity to deliver cash programming that is effective, efficient and sound from the perspective of financial accountability. UNHCR is working closely with the World Food Programme (WFP), the NRC, Oxfam, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) and other organizations. WFP is UNHCR's most important strategic partner in this area, and collaboration between the two agencies is guided by joint plans of action on the use of cash and cash alternatives to achieve food security among refugees and other people of concern. These efforts also are supported by the EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department's (ECHO) enhanced response capacity grant to build collective capacity for cash-based interventions within the humanitarian community.

¹³ Available from www.refworld.org/docid/4ab8e7f72.html.