Introductory Remarks of Steven Corliss
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Update on Global Strategic Priorities (EC/66/SC/CRP.18)
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

My role now is to introduce Conference Room Paper 18, which provides an update on UNHCR's Global Strategic Priorities – or "GSPs" as we call them. Our main focus for the session will be on the GSP results for 2014, but let me begin by situating the Global Strategic Priorities within UNHCR.

The operational Global Strategic Priorities cover important areas were UNHCR seeks to improve protection and the quality of life and seek solutions for refugees and other people of concern. They focus on such fundamental concerns as building a favourable protection environment, giving access to fair protection processes and documentation, ensuring security from violence and exploitation, meeting basic needs and providing essential services, empowering communities and strengthening self-reliance and securing durable solutions.

Within these broad areas, the High Commissioner has established eight Global Strategic Priorities. They focus on more targeted issues and include, for example, preventing and reducing statelessness, reducing specific protection risks related to sexual and gender-based violence or faced by children, reducing death, illness and malnutrition.

Each of these Global Strategic Priorities is linked to an impact indicator drawn from UNHCR's Results-Based Management Framework. We selected these indicators – twenty for the 2014—2015 biennium – because they provide the best overall "barometer" of how UNHCR is performing and the overall situation of the refugees and others we serve. We have adopted the Global Engagements approach to GSP reporting, meaning that we track progress and report on every UNHCR operation that has incorporated a GSP impact indicator into its planning.

The operational Global Strategic Priorities inform every aspect of programme management in UNHCR. The High Commissioner sets the Global Strategic Priorities for UNHCR at the beginning of each biennium. The GSPs for the 2016—2017 biennium accompanied the global planning instructions issued in February.

The High Commissioner made very few changes for the coming biennium, in the interest of continuity and bearing in mind that field reporting for 2014 – the first year of the current biennium – had not yet been received or analysed. UNHCR has retained the same eight Global Strategic Priorities but has introduced new or revised indicators to measure better our progress with the I Belong campaign to end statelessness and measure our work on solutions in a qualitative way.

The Global Strategic Priorities focus the development of operational strategies and plans in the field level. They guide participatory planning process with host governments and partners. At Headquarters, the Global Strategic Priorities provide an essential "lens for review" when plans

submitted by the field are vetted by the Regional Bureaux, analysed by technical specialists and approved through the Annual Programme Review process.

UNHCR's focus on the Global Strategic priorities is continuous. Each operation reviews its GSP commitments during detailed planning process in October and November, in consultation with partners, and ensure that the GSPs are integrated into implementation planning. During the year, UNHCR Representatives in the field and their teams, together with partners, track progress and make adjustments.

UNHCR teams in the field may reinforce efforts where the prospects for progress are good and deprioritise other areas. Unexpected developments, such as a major new influx or displacement emergency can force hard decisions to reallocate resources away from the GSP areas and toward more critical needs. This can impact on our ability to demonstrate progress. The GSP focal points at Headquarters – who are specifically-designated technical specialists in the GSP areas – follow these developments closely throughout the year.

My focus has been on how UNHCR uses the operational Global Strategic Priorities to strengthen the coherence and effectiveness and achieve results in the field. Let me also note that the operational GSPs are complemented by separate support and management GSPs that represent commitments to improving UNHCR's organisational effectiveness in key areas ranging from protection and results-based management to financial accountability, emergency response, interagency coordination and the use of information technology.

We are now well into the second half of the 2014—2015 biennium. The Conference Room Paper and accompanying annexes provide an overview of the results that we achieved with the operational and support and management Global Strategic Priorities last year. The reporting format will be familiar to the Standing Committee.

Earlier this week, we also released the *2014 Global Strategic Priorities Progress Report*. This report complements the standard reporting in the Conference Room Paper and responds to the Committee's call for a more vivid and accessible presentation of the GSP results. The new report provides greater detail on all twenty GSP impact indicators.

The report includes highlights from the field that illustrate progress and make better use of the rich reporting that we receive. The narrative also analyses the key challenges and obstacles to improvement and describes how our work in the GSP area links up to UNHCR's global strategies and regional initiatives and processes.

The report also provides a simple "criticality view" for impact indicators. Many of the GSP indicators measure whether the situation is improving, remaining the same or, by implication, deteriorating. In other words, we are measuring the trends and directions. The criticality view, in contrast, provides an assessment of whether the current situation is satisfactory, needs improvement or is unsatisfactory in relation to objective thresholds and the global standards that UNHCR advocates.

Let me now give the floor to Mr. Nordentoft, who will provide an overview of the 2014 GSP results and some further insights into the trends we see.

CHANGE OF SPEAKER

Good afternoon, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I will speak briefly to the progress achieved by our field operations against the operational GSPs – as also reported in Annex 1 to the Conference Room Paper before you and further developed in the separate Progress Report.

Overall, the analysis shows that operations have been able to continue to make good progress across the GSP areas thanks to focused efforts and the collaboration and engagement of governments, partner agencies with the support of donor countries.

For the GSP focusing on favourable protection environment, operations reported very active engagement in advocating for and supporting legislative processes in over 60 countries. This is a very important aspect of UNHCR's protection work as legislation constitutes the foundation for the protection and treatment of refugees and asylum seekers, IDPs and stateless persons. Operations provided legal advice and opinions on international law and standards, they engaged in national consultations and supported the drafting process. These efforts resulted in the adoption of positive legislative changes in many countries in 2014 – and further progress is expected in 2015 given that legislative review processes are still on-going in many countries.

Turning to GSPs that focus on other broader important protection areas, UNHCR has reinforced its efforts to strengthen the response and enhance the prevention of sexual and gender based violence across its operations. Over 40 operations have developed multi-year country strategies to ensure that survivors of such violence are given prompt access to medical, legal and psychosocial services. Efforts have also been directed to reach out to communities, including young boys and men, to mobilize their engagement in prevention and assisting survivors. In spite of these efforts, a number of operations report that there is room for improvement as also illustrated by the criticality views on page 12 in the GSP Progress Report that shows that support levels and the communities' engagement in about 40 percent of the situations need further improvement to reach satisfactory levels. Main areas for improvement is related to access to effective and sensitive judicial systems and strengthening the quality of psycho-social support, but also removing the stigmatization around SGBV in certain communities including particularly stigma surrounding male survivors which may prevent them from coming forward for obtaining help and support.

In a related priority area it is positive to note that operations have achieved progress in promoting female leadership in community structures. Almost 80 percent of our operations reporting that they have achieved a reasonably satisfactory level with more than 35 percent female represented in leadership positions – but it is an area where continuous engagement is required in order to ensure broad acceptance of the importance of equal representation of men and women in community structures.

Both SGBV prevention and female leadership were new areas of emphasis introduced in the 2014-2015 set of GSPs after consultations with the Standing Committee. Another new area was the GSP on peaceful co-existence between displaced persons and host communities. Operations have worked to bring communities together in joint activities in order to foster a better understanding of each other's situation, norms and customs, including through organizing cultural and sports activities. Communities have also met to discuss their priority needs, and where possible they have worked together to establish joint services and facilities accessible by both displaced as well as resident population. Another new GSP area was the emphasis on enhancing self-reliance among displaced communities. Efforts have focused on advocating for securing the right and access to work in operations where this is an obstacle to self-reliance. Guided by the 5-year Global Strategy for Livelihoods, a number of operations are now developing and implementing more focused strategies that builds on marked- based assessments to identify self-reliance opportunities and seeks to

provide the necessary business and skills training as well as financial support to assist individuals and families attain improved level of self-reliance. Efforts are also directed at integrating refugees into national poverty reduction strategies.

Turning now to GSP areas that specifically address the protection situation of children, positive progress continues to be achieved in promoting the systematic issuance of birth certificates to newborn children. This is an area requiring ongoing advocacy with competent authorities, developing mechanisms and support to facilitate the process, but also working with communities in order to impress on them the importance of registering the birth of their children. UNHCR is also encouraged to see regional ministerial meetings in Asia and Africa making inclusive civil registration a high priority for the coming years.

Securing the non-discriminatory access to national child protection and social services was also a new GSP priority for 2014 – 2015 and operations have strengthened their collaboration with national child authorities to promote their full inclusion and discuss the particular challenges confronting displaced children. This has led to positive joint initiatives in a number of countries. There is a global consensus fostered by the Convention on the Rights of the Child for the importance of ensuring non-discriminatory access, and where difficulties are encountered, it is often due to national resource constraints or the scarcity and geographic location of services from where refugees are located.

Operations continue to have strong emphasis on ensuring access to primary education for refugee children, either through advocacy for integration into national education systems where possible or through the provision of education programs. While the majority of operations reported progress, almost a third indicated that enrolment rates had dropped over the year – and the criticality view in the Progress Report also shows that over a quarter of UNHCR's operations report an unsatisfactory level with less than 60 percent of children attending primary education. Among the main reasons cited are challenges related to expansion of educational facilities to meet the growing influx of refugee children, but also increasing drop-out of children linked to families relocating, as well as economic hardship causing families to direct their children to assist in providing for the family income.

Operations have also continued to strengthen Best Interest Determination processes for unaccompanied or separate children by reinforcing staffing resources, including among partners, dedicated to this area and further developing their capacities.

Turning now to GSPs focusing on basic needs, the levels of Under-five mortality was maintained within UNHCR standards in almost 95 percent of all the camps and settlements which UNHCR monitors through *twine*, the Health Information System. This result was achieved given close real-time surveillance of health indicators and prompt health interventions to reduce and prevent morbidity and mortality including vaccination campaigns. In the camps where standards could not yet be attained, it was due to the poor nutritional status and high morbidity from communicable diseases among new arrivals.

In the area of nutrition, while standards were met in 34 surveyed camps and settlements, particular attention and strengthened efforts are focused on those camps with high levels of malnutrition with deployment of nutritional experts and strengthened infant feeding programs. Pre-existing chronic malnutrition levels and cultural practices with a reliance on low nutritional quality of foods are some of the core challenges to reach satisfactory nutrition levels.

Many operations reported improvements in the areas of provision of adequate shelter through the development and implementation of comprehensive country-level strategies and rapid deployment

of technical experts. However, the overall situation with regard to shelter, is clearly unsatisfactory with over 2/3 of the situations reporting that 20 percent or more of the populations they support do not have adequate shelter. This overarching challenge is directly linked to the financial resources required to provide shelter solutions – not only for new arrivals, but also for replacement of shelters worn-out by wear and tear in harsh climatic conditions – in urban areas, and the challenge to ensure an upgrade of emergency shelter to more transitional shelter solutions over time.

Finally, in the area of solutions, while UNHCR operations were able to assist almost all those refugees who came forward to request support with their voluntary repatriation, only 126,000 refugees opted for voluntary repatriation in 2014 - the lowest number of refugee returns over the past 25 years.

With regard to resettlement, the number of submissions increased by 10 percent to reach some 102,000 while the number of resettlement departures also increased to reach almost 74,000. However these numbers must be seen against the background of the Global Resettlement Needs which in 2014 were estimated at almost 700,000 refugees.

Within the area of local integration – UNHCR operations continue to work closely with host governments to create conditions that enable refugees to attain a growing degree of self-reliance and enable them to contribute to the community where they live - and many operations reported to have made further progress in this area although the criticality view clearly shows that many challenges remain.

More details and highlights on the respective GSPs are available in the Progress Report.

CHANGE OF SPEAKER

Thank you, Henrik.

Together with Mr. Nordentoft and Ms. Law from the Division of International Protection, I would look forward to hearing the Committee's views and responding to any questions that you may have.

Thank you.