

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

24 September 2015  
English  
Original: English and French

**Sixty-sixth session**  
Geneva, 5-9 October 2015

---

**Update on global programmes****A. Introduction**

UNHCR's global programmes are guided by specific five-year global strategies for public health,<sup>1</sup> settlement and shelter,<sup>2</sup> livelihoods,<sup>3</sup> and safe access to fuel and energy (SAFE),<sup>4</sup> all of which have entered their second year of implementation; as well as by the education strategy,<sup>5</sup> which was launched in 2012. The 2009 "UNHCR policy on refugee protection and solutions in urban areas"<sup>6</sup> and the 2014 "UNHCR policy on alternatives to camps"<sup>7</sup> also inform the development and implementation of global programmes.

In addition to setting strategic direction for UNHCR, the Office's global programmes also facilitate rapid and effective responses to emergencies in technical areas, including public health; nutrition; water; sanitation and hygiene (WASH); shelter; and education. Global programmes are implemented in close collaboration with a broad range of United Nations and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners, academic institutions and the private sector, and support UNHCR's engagement as co-lead of the Global Shelter Cluster and the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster.

**B. Update on technical sectors***Public health, HIV and reproductive health*

UNHCR's "Global strategy for public health 2012-2018" provides a comprehensive approach to address challenges facing refugees in the areas of public health, HIV and reproductive health, nutrition and food security, and WASH. In 2015, the implementation of the strategy has focused on strengthening quality, cost-effectiveness and evidence-based programming.

In 2015, UNHCR continued to advocate for the inclusion of refugees into national health care systems, while also strengthening responses to public health needs in emergency situations. Technical experts were deployed to six countries facing refugee influxes to support host governments and assist in establishing coordination and response strategies. In the refugee camps in Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania, mortality rates were contained within applicable emergency standards.

---

<sup>1</sup> Available from: <http://www.unhcr.org/530f12d26.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Available from: <http://www.unhcr.org/530f13aa9.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Available from: <http://www.unhcr.org/530f107b6.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Available from: <http://www.unhcr.org/530f11ee6.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Available from: <http://www.unhcr.org/5149ba349.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Available from: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4ab8e7f72.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Available from: <http://www.unhcr.org/5422b8f09.html>.

UNHCR has responded rapidly to new disease outbreaks among refugee populations, including by bringing a significant cholera outbreak under control in the United Republic of Tanzania in June 2015. Through rapid procurement of medicines and supplies, and enhanced WASH interventions in Nyarugusu camp, UNHCR and its government and NGO partners were able to bring the infection rate down, provide treatment and avoid the spread of the disease within the refugee community. The intervention was followed by a cholera vaccination campaign covering both the camp and surrounding communities.

The year 2014 saw the lowest mortality rate among refugee children under 5 since 2010, as reflected in field reporting through “Twine”, UNHCR’s health information system. While the mortality rate for children under 5 remained low in 2015, neonatal deaths accounted for a significant portion – 9 per cent. To address this challenge, UNHCR released new “Operational guidelines on improving newborn health in refugee operations”,<sup>8</sup> which provide practical and concrete measures that can be implemented in all operational settings to save lives.

UNHCR continued to reinforce reproductive health services as an integral part of public health programmes. In the first six months of 2015, the number of refugee women who delivered at health facilities under the care of a skilled birth attendant was maintained at 88 per cent.

### *Water, sanitation and hygiene*

UNHCR continued to address the WASH needs of persons of concern in emergency situations. For example, during the reporting period, UNHCR and partners addressed the emergency WASH needs of Burundian refugees, meeting applicable emergency standards in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, while working to achieve them in the United Republic of Tanzania. Globally, UNHCR met the minimum criteria for provision of potable water<sup>9</sup> in protracted situations, although latrine access<sup>10</sup> for persons of concern still fell short of UNHCR standards.

UNHCR is mapping existing water systems in camps and refugee-hosting areas in order to determine the most effective way to manage water and sanitation services. UNHCR’s “cost of water” project will seek to improve short- and longer-term planning and budgeting with respect to water infrastructure assets, and to enhance UNHCR’s ability to ensure adequate and sustainable water and sanitation services for refugees.

### *Nutrition and food security*

UNHCR operations reported that there was acceptable nutrition status in 59 per cent of sites surveyed in 2015.<sup>11</sup> Malnutrition levels decreased in 32 per cent of camps, while they remained persistently high in 18 per cent of sites. The anaemia levels among children aged 6 to 59 months met applicable targets in only 8 per cent of surveyed sites in 2015. However, efforts to combat high levels of anaemia resulted in decreases in the more severe and dangerous forms of anaemia in 63 per cent of sites, where trend data was available.

---

<sup>8</sup> Available from: <http://www.unhcr.org/54bd0dc49.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Twenty litres of water per person, per day.

<sup>10</sup> Sphere emergency standards provide access for 50 persons per latrine, while UNHCR standards in protracted situations provide one latrine for 20 persons.

<sup>11</sup> The surveys were conducted in emergency situations (32 per cent), post-emergency situations (20 per cent) and protracted situations (48 per cent).

In July 2015, UNHCR published “Standard operating procedures for the handling of breastmilk substitutes (BMS) in refugee situations for children 0-23 months”.<sup>12</sup> These new procedures assist operations to use such products safely, in tandem with breastfeeding and other feeding programmes aimed at preventing and reducing malnutrition.

#### *Shelter and settlement*

UNHCR’s “Global strategy for settlement and shelter 2014-2018” provides a holistic approach to settlement planning. In the first half of 2015, UNHCR undertook strategy development in 4 operations, developed emergency shelter responses in 12 operations, and deployed 21 shelter experts and physical site planners to 18 countries, including Cameroon, Iraq, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and Ukraine.

By September 2015, some 4,850 refugee housing units<sup>13</sup> (RHU), developed in collaboration with Better Shelter SA and with support from the IKEA Foundation, were being deployed to Djibouti, Greece, Hungary, Iraq and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. UNHCR has operationalized this new shelter solution through the development of comprehensive training materials and by organizing “training of trainers” workshops for teams who are assembling the RHU. UNHCR’s work on the new self-standing family tent, developed in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), progressed, with testing for hot climate conditions completed in Burkina Faso.

Development of a new physical site planner (PSP) toolkit is strengthening UNHCR’s technical capacity and ensuring greater harmonization in site planning and design. The PSP toolkit includes a laptop pre-loaded with computer-assisted design software, global positioning system (GPS) equipment and good practice information. The PSP toolkit also incorporates a new shelter catalogue that provides UNHCR technical specialists with detailed information on different types of shelter designs and solutions that have been used in diverse contexts to meet emergency to transitional shelter needs. The PSP toolkits have been deployed to nine field locations to date. An e-learning programme on settlement and shelter has also been made available.

As co-lead of the Global Shelter Cluster, UNHCR leads 11 country-level shelter clusters in conflict-related displacement situations. Together with Global Shelter Cluster partners, UNHCR has provided direct support to clusters in the Central African Republic, Iraq, the Syrian Arabic Republic and Ukraine. On behalf of the Global Shelter Cluster, UNHCR recently concluded an agreement with European Union Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) to support shelter coordination worldwide in 2015 and 2016.

#### *Livelihoods and self-reliance*

The “Global strategy for livelihoods 2014-2018” aims to ensure that refugees have access to a safe and sustainable income to meet their basic needs. Technically-sound and evidence-based livelihoods programming has now been undertaken in 21 priority country operations.

---

<sup>12</sup> Available from: <http://www.unhcr.org/55c474859.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> See: [http://www.ikeafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/rhu\\_info\\_sheet20140612.pdf](http://www.ikeafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/rhu_info_sheet20140612.pdf).

In 2015, UNHCR introduced “Operational guidelines on the minimum criteria for livelihood programming”.<sup>14</sup> These guidelines set out requirements for effective livelihoods interventions, including baseline assessments, market and value chain assessments, context-specific strategic plans, qualified partners, and technical expertise required within UNHCR teams. Compliance with the guidelines is mandatory and all UNHCR operations implementing livelihoods programmes will be assessed against them each year.

UNHCR expanded the “graduation approach”<sup>15</sup> to developing sustainable livelihoods to rural sites in Burkina Faso and Zambia in 2015. The urban pilots of the graduation approach in Costa Rica, Ecuador and Egypt have enabled some 1,980 people to secure wage-earning employment or to start their own business. These positive results for refugees and nationals participating in the programme have led the Government of Costa Rica to adopt the graduation approach as part of its national poverty reduction strategy.

UNHCR collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP) on self-reliance activities for refugees in Chad and Uganda has continued to progress. Together UNHCR and WFP have introduced targeting methodologies in Chad to determine food assistance levels based on socio-economic criteria; while refugees in two settlements in Uganda will receive support with post-harvest handling and storage. These two factors have resulted in the loss of some 30 percent of the annual production.

### *Energy and environment*

UNHCR’s “Global strategy for safe access to fuel and energy (SAFE) 2014-2018” seeks to enable all refugees to satisfy their energy needs for cooking and lighting in a safe and sustainable manner. In 2015, implementation of the strategy was expanded to Djibouti, Nepal, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. A revision of UNHCR’s impact indicators for energy will be finalized by end of 2015. To support implementation of the strategy, UNHCR has established an Energy Advisory Board with members drawn from government agencies, NGO partners, private sector enterprises and academia. The Board will provide UNHCR with greater access to expertise and partnerships in this area.

UNHCR’s efforts to introduce renewable energy technology included the development of a “solar farm” that will meet the lighting and low-power energy needs<sup>16</sup> of 20,000 refugees currently living in Azraq camp in Jordan, with plans to expand the system as the camp population grows. Excess energy will be fed into the national power grid. In Bangladesh, biogas technology is converting human waste into cooking fuel in one camp, while UNHCR is working with Engineers Without Borders in Nepal to develop “mini grids” as a viable and cost-effective means of electrification in locations where the population is too remote or sparse to justify connection to the national power grid.

UNHCR worked with partners to study and test the use of renewable energy technologies in different operational settings, such as the use of hybrid power generation for the delivery of water. If these efforts are successful and can be taken to scale and replicated, UNHCR sees the potential to reduce both its carbon “footprint” and fuel consumption substantially, leading to significant cost savings.

---

<sup>14</sup> Available from: <http://www.unhcr.org/54fd6cbe9.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> The graduation approach seeks to “graduate” people in rural or urban areas out of poverty through a combination of livelihoods provisioning, capacity building and microfinancing.

<sup>16</sup> One KiloWatt Hour per day, per family.

UNHCR advocated for the inclusion of refugees and other populations of concern in the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) initiative and was engaged in the Moving Energy Initiative (MEI), which is funded by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland's Department for International Development (DFID). The MEI seeks to meet the energy needs of refugees and internally displaced persons in ways that reduce costs and benefit host communities.

### *Education*

By 2015, 25 priority countries were implementing multi-year education strategies, pursuant to the "Education strategy 2012-2016". The inclusion of refugee children into national school systems was an important objective of the strategy and a key part of the "UNHCR policy on alternatives to camps". Notable progress included agreements with ministries of education in Congo, Rwanda and Uganda to enrol refugee students in national schools, and an official shift from parallel education systems to the inclusion of refugees in local schools in Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Refugee children also have access to national schools, in practice, in several other countries, such as Cameroon and Iraq.

In 2015, UNHCR provided technical support to field operations with respect to education through six expert deployments, 14 country missions, six country workshops and two regional workshops. Efforts to ensure education in emergencies continued, including through the development of regional response strategies for the situations in the Central African Republic, South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as two joint missions and a workshop conducted together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

UNHCR has concluded agreements with three higher education partners that have enabled over 4,000 students in refugee camps to access and follow accredited degree and diploma programmes. UNHCR is pursuing new partnerships to expand access to technology and design new educational programmes. These range from connected learning projects through the Vodafone Foundation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania; to a partnership with UNICEF and DFID to support innovative education programmes in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, as well as some countries in the Middle East and North Africa region. UNHCR strengthened monitoring efforts, including through 12 desk reviews of UNHCR's work with partners to implement the "Education strategy", and three field research missions conducted in partnership with Harvard University.

Expansion of global partnerships and advocacy resulted in the inclusion of a commitment to refugee education in Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Focused and targeted efforts since 2012 have resulted in the enrolment of an additional 400,000 out-of-school children in 12 countries. UNHCR also established an inter-agency group with UNICEF, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and selected NGOs to standardize accelerated education programming for over-aged refugee children who have missed out on school.

### *Information management*

UNHCR worked to consolidate and ensure the sustainability of achievements under the "Information and data management strategy 2012-2014". The UNHCR operational web portals<sup>17</sup> continued to serve as an important platform for coordination and information sharing with partners, as well as for communication with external stakeholders and the public. New web portals were launched for the Burundi and Yemen situations and, most

---

<sup>17</sup> Available from: <http://data.unhcr.org>.

recently, the Special Mediterranean Initiative. Protection information management was another key focus area in 2015 and, together with the Danish Refugee Council, UNHCR is mapping existing policies, practices and knowledge in this area to support field-based protection data gathering, analysis and sharing between humanitarian agencies.

UNHCR has made important progress in strengthening geographic information systems (GIS) and mapping capacity. The UNHCR Map Portal,<sup>18</sup> launched in September 2015, provides a central repository for sharing and disseminating maps created by the Visual Information Mapping Team at headquarters and by field operations. The new portal also makes UNHCR's geo-database available to staff and partners worldwide. A series of regional training workshops for UNHCR staff in October 2015 will introduce new tools and build mapping and data visualization skills at the field level.

UNHCR is pursuing an "open source" approach to population statistics, making all historical population data from 1951 onward available through a new web portal.<sup>19</sup> Following a joint presentation with the Government of Norway to the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2015, UNHCR is organizing the first international conference on refugee statistics, together with the Government of Turkey, the National Statistical Office of Norway, EuroStat and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), to provide an opportunity for national authorities to compare methods and challenges in gathering and maintaining statistics on forcibly displaced populations.

### *Registration and identity management*

UNHCR has moved forward with the introduction of "proGres in Partnership" and the UNHCR Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS) in 2015. The updated version of proGres was implemented in Malawi and the second full deployment is currently underway in Zimbabwe. Development of further functionalities and necessary upgrades to proGres in Partnership continued, which will allow for systematic management of the full range of protection and assistance processes within a unified system. BIMS is also now operational and deployment has been completed or is ongoing in Chad, Congo, India, Pakistan and Thailand. Nearly 400,000 refugees have been enrolled in UNHCR's global biometrics database. The new tool, which gathers both iris and fingerprint biometric data, has been easily accepted by refugee populations.

### *Cash-based interventions*

UNHCR continued to pursue the expanded and systematic use of cash-based interventions in its global programmes. UNHCR's strategic plan for institutionalization of the use of cash and cash alternatives such as vouchers, is under development. Demands from UNHCR field operations for technical support continued to grow, and cash experts were deployed to 11 country operations, with support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Twelve training events further enhanced the capacity of field operations to implement CBIs. UNHCR also progressed with the piloting of the "Common Facility for Cash" in Jordan.

UNHCR has developed a strong partnership network for collaboration on CBIs that includes WFP, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNICEF and major NGOs and consortia, such as the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP). These efforts have been facilitated by an ECHO Enhanced Response Capacity (ERC) grant and, more recently, by DFID support for emergency preparedness work in this area.

---

<sup>18</sup> Available from: <http://maps.unhcr.org>.

<sup>19</sup> Available from: <http://popstats.unhcr.org>.

Together with its partners, UNHCR has deployed experts to improve multi-agency cash-based interventions programming and has developed new tools for the provision of multi-purpose cash grants, including in relation to assessment, targeting and data privacy.

*Alternatives to camps*

The “UNHCR policy on alternatives to camps” aims to create opportunities for refugees to live lawfully, peacefully and independently in host communities. Several objectives of the policy, such as the inclusion of refugees within national service delivery systems for health care and education, are also important parts of the global strategies in these areas. UNHCR’s growing collaboration with the World Bank to encourage resilience and self reliance among refugee populations and their host communities has also been strongly influenced by the policy.

The “UNHCR diagnostic tool for alternatives to camps”, introduced earlier in 2015, has been completed by 92 field operations supporting some 11 million refugees. This self-assessment exercise<sup>20</sup> contributed to planning for the 2016-2017 biennium by assisting operations managers to determine the key priority actions needed to take forward the implementation of the policy. The diagnostic tool results highlighted the good practices already adopted by many operations in such areas as the mainstreaming of service delivery and community outreach. Analysis of the results underlined the need for reinforced action on contingency planning and preparedness, advocacy and engagement in relation to national development planning, and partnerships with development actors, as well as more focused efforts in the area of self-reliance, during the forthcoming 2016-2017 biennium.

---

---

<sup>20</sup> Full global results of the diagnostic tool exercise are available from:  
<http://www.unhcr.org/5548c33b6.html>.