

**Introductory Remarks of Andrew Harper  
Director of the Division of Programme Support & Management**

**Global Strategic Priorities (EC/69/SC/CRP.12)  
72<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee  
20 June 2018**

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'm pleased to introduce Conference Room Paper 12, which provides an update on progress UNHCR made against UNHCR's Global Strategic Priorities in the second year of the 2016/2017 biennium. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the team and the offices around the world who have made progress towards - and reported against - the targets, and made this report possible.

Within UNHCR's work, the Global Strategic Priorities – or GSPs for short – represent areas where UNHCR makes specific, targeted efforts to improve protection and find solutions for refugees and its other persons of concern. The GSPs inform the development of operational strategies and plans at the field level, and guide the participatory planning process with host governments and partners.

The management of the Global Strategic Priorities is a dynamic process. It is worth noting that the level of progress achieved in the GSP the previous year may not be secured the following year. We cannot take any of the indicators or results for granted in this fast-paced and changing environment. Most of the GSP areas require constant attention and investment to even maintain previous year's levels. UNHCR operations may reallocate resources to seize emerging opportunities for progress, or shift them away from other areas to more immediate and critical needs.

This was also the case in 2017. By year-end, more than 30 operations were responding to 13 large scale emergencies, including six new emergencies. Many re-prioritize resources accordingly to address the urgent needs. In some other operations, a resurgence of unrest and insecurity in areas hosting displaced populations limited progress towards the targets. In some cases, the simple lack of adequate funds called for rather severe prioritization in operations.

This being said, I can report that progress was made towards majority of the targets. The Conference room paper and its two annexes provide a brief narrative of the overall steady progress made, as well as on areas where we sustained setbacks. The paper is complemented by the 2017 Progress Report on the Global Strategic Priorities, which contains more detailed information on operational highlights, as well as on the challenges encountered in seeking advances on the GSPs. This report was published on the Global Focus website and a hardcopy has been made available to all delegations this morning.

Ladies and gentlemen,

If we take a closer look at the progress made, we see improvements across many GSP areas that are critical to the protection and well-being of refugees and other persons of concern. But

the overall picture is, as I mentioned, mixed, with some important areas of continuing concern. I'll note here only few developments to keep my remarks short, but encourage you to take a look at the Progress Report which provides an overview of the progress made in each area.

UNHCR continued to work with governments advocating for accession to international or regional instruments on refugees, IDPs and stateless, and for adoption of national legislation and policies consistent with international standards. Altogether 27 countries made positive legislative changes that enhance the protection of asylum-seekers and refugees. This improvement against 2016 contrasts with 13 countries seeking to narrow the scope and content of refugee legislation.

In terms of statelessness, UNHCR produced a number of tools and publications to advocate for reforms to eradicate statelessness and to support States in making such reforms. Some 56,500 persons that were stateless or whose nationality was undetermined, acquired or had their nationality confirmed in 2017. This marks a similar trend as in 2016.

Registration at birth and the issuance of birth certificates is essential in preventing statelessness. UNHCR and UNICEF collaborated in over 25 countries to implement joint strategies to improve birth registration. Despite numerous challenges, including the fact that the capacity of local structures often is unable to cope with the increase in numbers, the target to advocate for and assist in increasing the systematic issuance of birth certificates to newborn children was met in 22 situations.

As we know, children below 18 constitute about half of the world's refugee population. Ensuring that they have an opportunity to access education is a priority objective. Globally, the enrolment rates of primary school-aged refugee children improved, rising from 50 to 61 per cent in 2017. UNHCR and partners facilitated this improvement through the recruitment and training of teachers, the construction and rehabilitation of school rooms, and the payment of school fees.

I am also pleased to report that the intensive work of UNHCR, partners and governments towards economic inclusion of persons of concern is bearing fruit. 2017 saw an increase of 16 per cent out of 38 operations reporting an increase in numbers of persons who started a business or catered for their needs through self-employment. This is a key priority for UNHCR. UNHCR itself provided lifesaving assistance in the form of core relief items to 1.2 million displaced persons, and in cash to some 8 million people in 94 countries.

Distinguished delegates,

With the levels of displacement steadily increasing, solutions that allow refugees and IDPs to rebuild their lives and live in dignity have become all the more pressing. In 2017, resettlement continued to play a critical role as a tool for protection for some of the world's most vulnerable refugees. Unfortunately the resettlement opportunities nonetheless declined, resulting in UNHCR submitting 75,200 refugees for resettlement, a 54 per cent decrease compared to 2016. In cooperation with IOM, UNHCR assisted some 65,000 refugees to depart to a resettlement country. Again, this is a significant drop against last year.

Faced with simultaneous new and protracted emergencies, UNHCR intensified its resource mobilization efforts. UNHCR's donors responded generously and the support received reached over USD 3.9 billion. The level of funds raised from the private sector grew to USD 400 Million, which represents a 12 per cent increase over previous year. I'm also pleased to report that the Executive Committee grew from 98 to 101 Members in 2017, reflecting the increased global interest and support of the work of UNHCR.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me stop here on the 2017 results and quickly update you on the Global Strategic Priorities for the 2018-2019 biennium.

As discussed last year, continuity over time is essential to track progress made in the areas of the GSPs. The overall validity and continued relevance of the GSPs established for the past biennium was confirmed in 2017. UNHCR operations thereby continue in 2018/2019 to measure progress made against eight operational GSPs with 22 related indicators in the next biennium.

A number of changes have been introduced however to the Support and Management GSPs in order to better reflect the way in which Headquarters, including the Regional Bureaux, is taking forward the vision set out in the High Commissioner's Strategic Directions. These GSPs have also been expanded from 8 to 10 in number. The 2018/2019 Support and Management GSPs also align with UNHCR's commitments under the Grand Bargain, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the World Humanitarian Summit commitments, to better respond to these reporting needs.

Madam Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

On this note, I thank you for your attention.

*END*