

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

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Summary record,* Thursday, 9 March 2023, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Katharina Stasch..... (Germany)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

4. Programme/protection policy

1. The **Director of the Division of Strategic Planning and Results** (UNHCR), introducing the report on the Office's programme in the United Nations proposed framework for 2024 (EC/74/SC/CRP.6), recalled that under article 20 of the Statute of UNHCR, the United Nations regular programme budget contributed some funding for UNHCR costs borne at Geneva headquarters. They included management and support costs incurred in respect to discharging functions such as executive direction and management, governance and oversight, and other key management functions such as human resources, finance and administration and information technology management, as well as staff costs and a small portion of headquarters-based non-staff costs borne in Geneva.

2. Almost all of the Office's overall budget was funded by voluntary contributions, so the regular budget contribution was small but significant. Those resources were received via the overall processes led by the Office of the Secretary-General in New York. The cycles of submission differed slightly for the regular budget, led by the Secretariat, and the High Commissioner's annual programme budget, which would be presented to the Standing Committee and then to the Executive Committee later in 2023.

3. That inconvenient slight disparity in content did not pose a major problem, since the most pertinent aspect of the UNHCR submission to the regular budget related to management and administration, which through the decades and the overall architecture of UNHCR had been fairly consistent. The Offices of the High Commissioner and the Deputy High Commissioner and the overall management and administrative functions had not changed. While the full programmatic aspects would be further elaborated in the programme budget, the portion funded by the regular budget was unlikely to be different from previous years.

4. The planning process for 2024 was under way, and there were also some broad continuities from previous years that were reflected in the report. For example, UNHCR would continue to plan and programme while taking into consideration age, gender and other diverse needs of the people that it served. The focus would be on furthering gender equality, on preventing, mitigating and responding to any discrimination and violence and on ensuring that all people had access to health care, psychosocial support, shelter and legal aid. The plan for disability inclusion would also advance. UNHCR would continue to work with a broad range of partners, including national and local authorities, partners in the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia, as well as those that it served, leveraging the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator system to achieve the desired outcomes.

5. It was assumed that needs would continue to grow, and so the critical importance of increased support for the Office's work could not be underestimated. Her Division would continue to enhance its working effectiveness to deliver more and better, but she remained concerned about the level of regular budget funding. It was essential that the regular budget contribution to UNHCR should be aligned with General Assembly resolution 59/276, recommending a level of funding of 50.8 per cent of UNHCR management and administrative costs. Regular budget funding had long been decreasing and now stood at approximately 23 per cent – below half the level recommended by the General Assembly. While UNHCR management and administrative functions had largely remained consistent over time and constituted a modest 4 per cent of total expenditure, the level of effort had grown, commensurate with the growth in the agency. At a time of mounting crises, record levels of forced displacement and statelessness, the Office's work was ever more critical, and increased regular budget funding was vital.

6. The representative of **Zimbabwe** (African group statement) welcomed the overall orientation of the proposed programme framework, with specific reference to international protection, durable solutions and assistance to refugees with the collaboration of concerned States. The strategy and external factors for 2024 highlighted in paragraph 25.3 resonated with the commitments made by the Heads of State and Government at the fifteenth Extraordinary African Union Humanitarian Summit and Pledging Conference in May 2022 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. During that Summit, the Heads of State and Government had recalled the national security dynamics of hosting large refugee communities, the associated

environmental degradation, resource conflict and debt crisis, which limited the fiscal space available to African countries to provide safety nets for their own citizens as well as for large refugee populations. Given the expected increase in humanitarian needs due to extreme weather events such as droughts in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel region and the southern African region, the strategy should assist in forging partnerships to increase investments in multi-hazard early warning and early response systems and prevention strategies focusing on disaster risk reduction, as provided for in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, while also taking into account the commitments made at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Sharm el-Sheikh in November 2022,

7. As Africa hosted over 30 million refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons, constituting one third of the world's refugee population, the strategy should focus on increasing burden- and responsibility-sharing. The group was grateful for the support of financial donors, whose generous donations made it possible to fund programmes and provide much-needed assistance. Opening national borders to refugees and asylum-seekers in the spirit of Ubuntu and African region solidarity was an in-kind donation that should also be recognized. Given the high numbers of people of concern to UNHCR within the African region, UNHCR should strategically allocate resources matching those people's needs in order to ensure that the proposed framework for 2024 was successfully implemented. UNHCR should also support Member States in creating conditions conducive to the return, readmission, rehabilitation and reintegration of refugees voluntarily returning to their countries of origin.

8. She highlighted the importance of strong collaboration between UNHCR, the United Nations family, other cooperating partners and Member States, and welcomed the proposal to deepen cooperation with United Nations Resident Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordinators to enable a focused and well-coordinated approach. She encouraged UNHCR to work closely with, and have the consent of, concerned States to ensure the successful implementation of programmes. The group welcomed the evaluation activities outlined in paragraph 25.13, allowing programme implementation to be reviewed to determine what worked, and asked to be kept informed of the results of evaluation activities in Africa.

9. The representative of the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** commended UNHCR for its ongoing efforts in the face of the continued impact on its programming and on persons of concern caused by the Russian Federation's unprovoked and premeditated invasion of Ukraine. She welcomed the Office's continued commitment to mainstreaming lessons learned and best practices from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in order to ensure protection and essential assistance to those who needed it most. The Government of the United Kingdom supported the objectives and strategy set out in the report, applauding UNHCR for continuing to embed the principles of the Global Compact on Refugees throughout its activities during the current, most challenging of times, and ahead of the 2023 Global Refugee Forum. It remained committed to the aims of the Compact and to supporting refugees and the countries and communities that generously hosted them.

10. Welcoming the focus on multi-stakeholder approaches, partnerships and participation, she congratulated UNHCR on its achievements so far in working with others, especially development partners. She welcomed the commitments in the report with respect to inclusion, and in particular financial, digital and disability inclusion, gender equality and mitigation of gender-based violence; the focus on mental health and psychosocial support; and the strengthening of community engagement. Finally, she celebrated the success of UNHCR transformation plans over recent years, including reinforced data collection on stateless people and strengthened registration capacity for individuals. She welcomed plans for an evaluation of the regionalization and decentralization process and of the approach to gender-based violence and the multi-year country strategies.

11. The representative of **Nigeria**, recalling the Office's mandate to lead and coordinate international action for protection and search for solutions to the plight of refugees and stateless persons, urged it to enhance efforts towards durable solutions critical to peacebuilding in conflict situations. She welcomed the initiative to enhance partnerships with international financial institutions and the private sector, calling on UNHCR to use concrete and practical national indicators to accurately assess protection needs so as to ensure efficacy

in providing durable solutions. Also welcome was the advancement of the 2020-2024 action plan for disability inclusion, particularly the identification of displaced and stateless persons living with disabilities during registration exercises.

12. It was essential to include a critical strategy in 2024 focused on advocacy with respect to the negative impact of racial discrimination and xenophobia against refugees and migrants, particularly people of African descent. UNHCR should mainstream that advocacy in its work to complement multiple efforts to address the impact of such insensitivity, which increasingly often resulted in loss of life. Referring to the prioritization of digital campaigns and programmes on education for displaced children in 2023, she urged UNHCR to develop specific programmes for youth in Africa, given that the youth population exceeded 60 per cent of Africa's 1.4 billion people, and to advance programmes on climate mitigation and adaptation, particularly at community levels.

13. The representative of **Canada** acknowledged the Office's significant efforts in 2022 to stay and deliver in responding to the humanitarian and protection needs of those driven from their homes by violence, conflict, climate persecution and human rights abuses. Her Government supported the 2024 programme and continued efforts to strengthen protection and find solutions to displacement, noting with appreciation the age, gender and diversity considerations taken into account by UNHCR for the people it served. She commended UNHCR for the wider regional partnerships developed in 2022, noting the strengthened collaboration across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus spectrum of actors. There was significant value in those partnerships, particularly regarding the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees and bringing a more comprehensive response to refugee situations, including the increased engagement of development actors and the inclusion of refugees in national systems. Her Government was very encouraged by the Office's commitment related to localization. Lastly, she noted the active participation of UNHCR in inter-agency initiatives related to accountability and inclusion as well as internal displacement and protection.

14. The representative of **France** welcomed the Office's work on durable and inclusive solutions to better meet the needs of refugees and vulnerable populations in the context of extended crises. Such solutions were well suited to the needs of displaced persons. He stressed the positive outcome of the first Global Refugee Forum in December 2019, which had garnered 800 commitments from the actors involved, States and international, civil society and private sector organizations. That mobilization should be maintained and strengthened for the next Forum in December 2023. France was a co-sponsor and participated actively in that mobilization.

15. He welcomed the quality of the Office's work to implement every solution, from voluntary repatriation to integration and inclusion in host communities. Resettlement remained a safe and effective route to protect the most vulnerable and relieve host communities in countries of first asylum. The French Government contributed to international solidarity by resettling over 3,000 refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic and sub-Saharan Africa in 2022 and creating university corridors for refugee students, all while maintaining its humanitarian corridor operations and asylum visas. His Government had hosted over 12,000 Afghans since the fall of Kabul via evacuations and complementary access routes and had offered temporary protection to over 100,000 displaced Ukrainians.

16. The representative of **Germany** commended the Office's efforts to promote the inclusion of displaced persons in national systems. Inclusion was key for achieving durable solutions in protracted displacement settings; at the same time, it could strengthen social cohesion between displaced persons and host communities and contribute to preventing conflict. The use of comparative advantages, however, was imperative for those efforts. The core mandate of UNHCR to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to displaced populations should stay a priority in its engagement. At the same time, difficulties should be addressed through the Office's own evaluations, as shown in the Sudan context. He underlined the importance of taking into account gender, age and disability from the data collection stage onwards. Responses must include targeted programming to ensure equal access to protection services.

17. It was pleasing to see resettlement numbers on the rise again after the COVID-19 pandemic. Resettlement continued to represent an important protection tool and helped to advance global burden- and responsibility-sharing. His Government had continued its funding support for the Office's global work on resettlement and thanked all resettlement countries, while remaining concerned by the projected funding gap. Efficiency and effectiveness were key to making the best of available resources, and the provision of flexible funding was one instrument to ensure increased effectiveness. The German Government expected UNHCR to keep improving, including through the use of new technologies and innovation.

18. The **Director of the Division of Strategic Planning and Results** (UNHCR) thanked delegates for their appreciation of the work of UNHCR, particularly in certain areas very much in line with the proposed programme for 2023 as well as for 2024. Regarding the need to make sure that the UNHCR protection response incorporated gender disability and other diversity considerations, she said it was covered in the programme for 2024 and would continue to be critical to the Office's work. She agreed with the comments on flexible funding and the need for greater efficiency and effectiveness. Her Division would take due account of the concrete recommendations made concerning international financial institutions, national indicators, inclusion, localization and other subjects.

19. **The Chairperson** took it that the Standing Committee wished to adopt the draft decision found in annex II of document EC/74/SC/CRP.6.

It was so decided.

5. Management, financial control, administrative oversight and human resources

20. The **Inspector General** (UNHCR), providing an oral update on his Office's work, said that the aim was always to use the special value of third line oversight, with its unique qualities of independence and objectivity, to ensure that UNHCR delivered on its mandate to protect and serve. That required not only that the Inspector General's Office should be efficient and effective, but that the systems of both oversight and integrity were functioning well and holistically. As such, he provided a systems risk, process, oversight and organizational development lens to his reporting, supplemented by insights from travel to the field to understand the context of the Office's work. The mandate and work of the Office of the Inspector General continued to be guided by the UNHCR Policy on Independent Oversight to ensure that UNHCR had an effective independent oversight system. Improvements in policy and process had ensured a stronger oversight system and improved handling of integrity matters. There was, however, more to be done. A range of projects across both the oversight and integrity communities were sequenced for implementation during 2023. The Inspector General's Office, through its coordination mandate, would both support and, in part, deliver them.

21. In line with his Office's strategic oversight function, a number of internal advisory products had been issued during 2022, primarily in support of senior executive management. That work would continue in greater depth, quality and quantity in 2023. At present, United Nations Office of Internal Oversight was auditing both the humanitarian response in Ukraine, including field work, and the business transformation programme. The Inspector General's Office had helped the various independent oversight entities to act and see themselves as a coherent system, and coordination and conversations between the various oversight entities had taken place in 2022. There was now a range of tools for management colleagues to use in relation to oversight work, including a dashboard for consolidated oversight planning and a consolidated oversight recommendations tracker. As part of his Office's role as the internal audit focal point, work was ongoing to refresh the terms of the Office's arrangements for internal audit with the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services, with expected finalization in the second quarter of 2023, including the introduction of an internal audit charter.

22. Turning to his Office's investigation and integrity coordination work, he said that his report recorded that the Inspector General's Office had received and registered a record number of complaints of misconduct in 2022. That trend had continued in 2023, with both complaints received and investigations opened at unprecedented levels. Work to recalibrate his Office's complaints intake process, as well as broader work across UNHCR to rebalance

complaints towards informal and management-led resolution – where possible and appropriate – had proved essential.

23. The number of finalized investigations remained high, with a substantiation rate of 54 per cent. The median time to conclude an investigation in 2022 had been five months, and 60 per cent of investigations had been concluded within six months. His Office had continued to prioritize work in relation to sexual misconduct with enhancements to the Inspector General's Office capacity to investigate. Existing online training for partners on investigating sexual misconduct had been supplemented with six regional workshops provided in person during 2022, and further workshops were planned for 2023. His Office had continued both to apply and refine its victim-centred approach in 2022, adopting principles and practices designed to be sensitive and give a measure of control to victims during the investigative process. The Inspector General's Office had seen a cohesion of thinking and approach by the various independent integrity entities, similar to that observed for oversight entities.

24. The Inspector General's Office had also supported various changes to the UNHCR integrity system in 2022, including the establishment of a Support Desk to handle staff workplace concerns not necessarily amounting to misconduct; the placement of the Speak Up Helpline under the Inspector General's Office in order to enhance the confidentiality and anonymity of concerns raised; delivery of investigative input into protection against retaliation complaints of the Inspector General's Office; and support of increased and improved use of informal and management-led resolutions of workplace conflict. In 2023, the Inspector General's Office was supporting the review of the Support Desk's operation; finalization of the revised ombudsperson policy; review of the Speak Up Helpline's operation; review of data held by integrity entities for gathering collective insight; and enhancement of the Office's approach to tackling financial fraud. To ensure that Inspector General's Office investigations, expertise and work were taken into account, the Office had issued 41 management implication reports in 2022 with advice and recommendations to management colleagues.

25. In closing, he was pleased to reiterate the conclusion from his report that UNHCR had indeed strengthened its oversight and integrity systems during 2022. Its control frameworks could, however, be made more consistent. UNHCR should also enhance its level of risk maturity by making a definitive move from risk assessment to risk management. The changes introduced by the information technology systems enabled by the business transformation programme were both a risk and an opportunity, and he and the oversight community would follow them closely in 2023. Finally, his Office would work to ensure that clearer insights based on risk assessment, identification of root causes and lessons learned were brought from its oversight and integrity work to the Office's management team for action in the coming year. He thanked Member States for their continued support of and interest in his Office's work and that of the oversight and integrity communities.

26. The representative of **Sweden** said that donor trust and support depended on reliable, professional and efficient mechanisms for integrity and oversight, and her country recognized the significant achievements made by UNHCR in that regard in recent years. She welcomed the stated ambition of UNHCR to build a holistic ecosystem where legal, investigative, risk management and evaluation functions formed part of a coherent system, while ensuring the independence of the various oversight entities. Some inconsistencies remained in the application of control frameworks, and she stressed the need to continue to monitor and improve their application as the last steps were taken towards decentralization and regionalization.

27. She welcomed the proactive approach to risk planning in relation to the business transformation programme and noted that more work was needed to advance the Office's level of risk maturity. What did UNHCR see concretely as the next steps in that work? The unprecedented number of registered complaints of misconduct in 2022 was likely a sign of improved awareness of reporting mechanisms. It was important that the Inspector General's Office and other mechanisms should remain sufficiently resourced to investigate complaints. The large share of sexual exploitation and abuse cases implicating the personnel of implementing partners as well as the low substantiation rate of such cases compared to that of sexual harassment cases required continuous attention and continued support to enable implementing partners to strengthen their systems. The zero-tolerance policy for sexual

exploitation, abuse and harassment must continue to be enforced; she welcomed the strong stance on those issues.

28. The representative of the **Philippines** expressed his Government's continuing concern at the increase in complaints of misconduct received by the Inspector General's Office, many of which were related to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment and fraud. Although he acknowledged efforts to improve UNHCR oversight and integrity systems, it was nevertheless troubling that reported incidents had increased fourfold in the past six years and that the trend was expected to continue. While a percentage of those cases had been closed or referred for further action, his Government would be interested to see assessments and data on the disciplinary actions taken based on the results of investigation or recommendations.

29. Asking what percentage of reported incidents was attributable to implementing partners, he reiterated the responsibility of UNHCR leadership to exercise due diligence in monitoring, and, if necessary, penalizing implementing partners. A response from UNHCR concerning that issue was still being awaited. Finally, he urged UNHCR to continue the training and awareness campaigns against sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse, improve preventive and protection measures, ensure post-trauma interventions and create an environment where staff felt safe.

30. The representative of the **Russian Federation**, noting the Inspector General's active approach to fraud prevention, requested information on the improved fraud prevention approaches planned for 2023 and what new features Member States could expect. The Government of the Russian Federation fully agreed with the Inspector General's conclusion about the need to strengthen the UNHCR risk management system. As his Government understood it, the Office of Internal Oversight Services should have completed its assessment of the system in 2022. Did the Inspector General have any information on its conclusions and on what specific steps UNHCR should take to raise its risk maturity level?

31. His Government had also noted the Inspector General's efforts to speed up the response by UNHCR management to recommendations by auditors. UNHCR needed some kind of internal centralized system for following up on the recommendations of all oversight bodies, and the Inspector General's presentation suggested that one already existed. Would Member States be given access to the follow-up system? A similar practice was in place or being introduced at some United Nations organizations such as WHO. Such an initiative would allow a noticeable improvement in the quality of UNHCR oversight.

32. The representative of the **Netherlands** supported the establishment of an oversight plan for the business transformation programme but requested further information regarding what it would entail. He wished to stay informed about the progress of the programme, especially regarding any cost overruns. Such a costly and far-reaching process should be audited at some point. He expressed his Government's appreciation for the leadership role of UNHCR on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and underlined the importance of a victim-centred approach. A strong focus should also be placed on disciplinary measures aimed at perpetrators. He supported the Inspector General's recommendation to advance the level of risk maturity within UNHCR from risk assessment to risk management. More regular briefings should be organized on issues such as the business transformation programme and risk management: Member States must be able to follow the development of big processes.

33. The UNHCR leadership must fully support any financial or capacity needs of the Inspector General's Office in general, and on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in particular. Financing and capacity must keep up with caseloads, which were ever-increasing. He underscored the need for adequate capacity for proactive investigations and appreciated insights from the recent investigation on cash-based interventions in Ukraine. His Government attached great importance to the reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and requested that UNHCR brief Member States on the management response thereto as well as on the follow-up of recommendations.

34. The representative of **Switzerland** noted with satisfaction the progress made towards improving UNHCR internal oversight processes and instruments, which were all the more important given the increasingly complex operational context. The measures taken to

improve the complaints mechanism were beginning to bear fruit, as demonstrated by the increase in reported cases. He hoped the measures would have a preventative effect and lead to a long-term decrease in fraud cases and other violations of UNHCR internal rules. To that end, UNHCR must systematically follow up on complaints and effectively apply sanctions, including against implementing partners.

35. The representative of **Germany** commended the work of the Inspector General and his Office. His Government was pleased with the advances made in the development of prevention and learning tools, particularly the management implication report, proactive fraud risk reviews and consultative work. Regular updates were needed regarding the implementation of recommendations and the emergence of any observed changes, as both would be necessary to go from understanding risks to proactively managing them. It was of utmost importance to constantly update the control frameworks and ensure consistent quality in implementation with partners in order to mitigate risks and detect potential breaches in a timely manner. He appreciated the efforts of the Inspector General in tracking risks and looked forward to further exchanges on such topics. There was a need to ensure timely communication around risks and relevant ongoing cases. His Government was well aware of the high-risk settings in which UNHCR and partners operated. In line with its policy of zero tolerance for inaction, UNHCR did not measure its partners based on the misconduct cases that occurred but rather the timeliness, transparency and adequacy of their detection and response. He commended the commitment of the Office's leadership to oversight and integrity in general.

36. The representative of the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** commended the Inspector General's Office for its ongoing efforts to strengthen its oversight systems as well as its own effectiveness, and welcomed the important focus on lesson learning. She noted the four-fold increase over six years in the number of complaints received, which she suspected was a positive sign of growing awareness of when, where and how misconduct was taking place and of increased staff, partner and beneficiary awareness of the reporting channels and support systems available to them. Her Government reiterated its gratitude to UNHCR for its ongoing commitment to openness and transparency with donors, in particular through the quarterly integrity briefings.

37. The Inspector General should provide an assessment of the impact that the increase in complaints had had on the number of cases carried over from previous years. An update on loss recovery from 2022 investigations would also be welcome. Lastly, she noted that the UNHCR control framework remained variable and welcomed the recognition of the need to advance the level of risk maturity. UNHCR should provide an update on its plans to address the matter.

38. The representative of **Denmark** appreciated the regular updates on integrity matters and commended the strong commitment of UNHCR to continuously improving its processes to prevent and address misconduct. Transparency and accountability in all aspects of the work of UNHCR were crucial, both to the people it served and to its Member States. Her Government fully acknowledged that UNHCR worked in a notoriously risk-prone environment and welcomed the continued focus on advancing the UNHCR level of risk maturity. Further information was needed regarding how UNHCR could take the next step from risk assessment to risk management.

39. Preventing and addressing sexual misconduct remained a priority for Denmark. She welcomed the strong focus on a victim-centred approach as well as the work done to pave the way for cultural change and to create safe conditions for victims to come forward. The Inspector General should clarify how he followed up on cases related to external partners. The increasing number of complaints received reflected enhanced reporting practices across UNHCR, including in country offices, and could thus be interpreted as positive. UNHCR should clarify whether it expected to see a stabilization in the number of cases and explain what was being done to assess whether the nature of the complaints was changing as measures to address underlying factors for previous complaints were being implemented.

40. The representative of **Norway** supported effective control and oversight functions, and acknowledged the progress made with the five-year strategy to ensure an effective independent oversight system. She welcomed the openness of UNHCR on instances of

misconduct and acknowledged that it operated in a high-risk environment. The unprecedented number of complaints in 2022 was likely a result of increased awareness of misconduct and improved reporting mechanisms, which was a positive development. The Inspector General should clarify whether he expected the number of complaints to plateau in the near future. Her Government was pleased with efforts to enhance capacity and reiterated the importance of ensuring that sufficient resources were allocated to vital accountability functions. It also welcomed the commitment to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse, both within UNHCR and among implementing partners. UNHCR was encouraged to continue strengthening that important work.

41. The representative of the **United States of America** appreciated the progress made by UNHCR on the implementation of the five-year strategy, but noted that the control frameworks were still variable in the quality of their definition and application. He encouraged UNHCR to continue improving its oversight and integrity efforts and to move from risk assessment to risk management, as noted in the update by the Inspector General. It had been encouraging to learn how UNHCR was integrating risk management throughout different elements of the business transformation programme, such as linking risk registers with COMPASS, the cloud enterprise resource planning systems and the Project Reporting, Oversight and Monitoring Solution, to ensure risks facing UNHCR and its partners were better documented and mitigated in a more systematic way. It had also been encouraging to hear about the proactive fraud risk reviews, including examining the cash-based intervention programme in Ukraine and neighbouring countries. UNHCR should continue conducting proactive fraud risk reviews in the future.

42. He appreciated the data that UNHCR had shared on the status of misconduct investigations and noted the 17 per cent increase in anonymous complaints registered against UNHCR personnel or implementing partners in 2022 compared to 2021. It would be interesting to hear more about any emerging trends in order to identify and address systemic issues. His Government strongly supported ongoing training efforts and took note of the Inspector General's professional development training programme as well as the six regional training sessions conducted to build the investigations capacity of partners.

43. The representative of the **Geneva Group of Friends to Eliminate Sexual Harassment** (NGO group statement) said that the group, which was a Member State-led platform, aimed to foster discussions and coordinate actions across the different multilateral organizations and agencies in Geneva to work towards the elimination of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. It also sought to raise awareness, encourage the development of policies and support effective follow-up throughout the United Nations system through collective activities such as events, advocacy and stakeholder collaboration.

44. Considering the large outreach and presence of UNHCR in the field, with thousands of staff members and affiliated workforces operating in often challenging environments and in contact with vulnerable people, it was crucial for it to enhance efforts to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. The Group fully supported the strong stance continuously reaffirmed by the High Commissioner that sexual misconduct was unjustifiable and must be eradicated from the operations of the organization, and thanked the Inspector General for the oral update on the activities being undertaken to investigate cases of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment involving both UNHCR and partners. The Inspector General's Office held a crucial position in preventing sexual misconduct and guaranteeing accountability. It was important that oral updates should be provided at regular intervals. He recalled that the Policy on Independent Oversight was obligatory for all individuals employed by UNHCR, its partners, and any other entities with which UNHCR had a contractual agreement. He called on UNHCR to expand and improve its registration programme for persons of concern, recognizing that registration could be a key protection tool. Making that process as transparent and accountable as possible helped strengthen the integrity of operations by preventing and combating fraud, crime and the abuse of power, thereby preventing the occurrence of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment by addressing root causes.

45. In 2022, the Inspector General's Office had received 178 complaints of sexual exploitation and abuse compared to 150 in 2021. The group understood that an increase in reported cases reflected an increase in awareness of existing mechanisms and stronger trust

in the responses rather than necessarily an increase of cases. The group would appreciate hearing the Inspector General's view on whether the trend in reported cases would continue upwards or plateau in coming years. He urged UNHCR to continue to ensure appropriate disciplinary action when allegations were substantiated and to promptly investigate all reported cases of sexual exploitation and abuse as well as sexual harassment, while maintaining and ensuring a victim- and survivor-centred approach guided by consideration for human rights and a gender perspective.

46. The group appreciated the leadership of the Deputy High Commissioner in addressing sexual harassment and called on UNHCR to continue training and awareness-raising on sexual misconduct and maintain its efforts to strengthen its organizational culture. Additionally, he urged UNHCR to continually reaffirm its strong inter-agency engagement and appealed to all United Nations organizations to adopt a joint approach to protecting against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, including through investigations.

47. The **Inspector General** (UNHCR) said that part of his strategy was to open up the oversight system so that people felt more comfortable to raise concerns of sexual misconduct. As such, he agreed that the increased number of reported cases was a positive development. The trend would definitely not plateau, since 2023 was already seeing another increase. The number of complaints was generally stable for sexual harassment but going up for sexual exploitation and abuse. Regarding perpetrators, 83 per cent of concerns raised for sexual exploitation and abuse related to implementing partners as opposed to UNHCR staff. The split was more balanced for sexual harassment, with 45 per cent of concerns relating to implementing partners. His Office followed up on all complaints regarding implementing partners and referred them to third parties. A strong system was in place to vet partners. UNHCR made use of the United Nations Clear Check system and was also participating in a pilot programme for vetting international NGOs, particularly for sexual misconduct. The Project Reporting, Oversight and Monitoring Solution would enhance and systematize the oversight of partners in addition to making it more efficient.

48. An advisory review of the control framework had been conducted, with particular emphasis on how UNHCR would move from risk assessment to risk management. The review had been very positive against all the metrics and measures set out by the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit and the Enterprise Risk Management policy, showing that UNHCR had made huge progress. The next step was to embed the decisions into the work of UNHCR by taking action and providing the necessary resources. UNHCR was getting better at doing so but needed to be more consistent, for instance, by defining the systems so that they were more clearly documented and understood.

49. Additional resources would be made available in the second half of 2023 for dealing with fraud. Enhancing the recovery of fraud losses would be one part of the process. Legal action was, however, difficult given the supranational nature of the United Nations system. Efforts were also being made to join up the work of the Inspector General's Office with different divisions of UNHCR, such as the finance, legal and human resources divisions.

50. The Office of Internal Oversight Services was currently auditing the business transformation programme, as well as the cash system and broader response in Ukraine. The audits would be subsequently followed by an evaluation. The audit process would ask whether UNHCR had done things right while the evaluation process would ask whether it had done the right things. Overall, it was his belief that the response in Ukraine had been very strong and that the oversight team would come to a similar conclusion.

51. He wished to underscore that the rise in the number of complaints was a positive development. His entire strategy had been about sifting through more cases, extracting the matters that were significant and handing off the matters that either did not need a full independent investigation, or could be handled locally or by third parties. The upward trend was likely to continue in 2023, which meant that his team would need to keep an eye on resourcing in order to remain efficient and effective.

52. The **Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees** (UNHCR) said she had taken very careful note of the recommendations for additional briefings and suggested that they be held in between the meetings of the Standing Committee. She thanked the Geneva Group of Friends to Eliminate Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse for their leadership, noting

with satisfaction the increase in its scope to include the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in addition to sexual harassment. More help was needed from Member States in order to follow up on allegations of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. The High Commissioner had recently released his 2022 disciplinary digest where he detailed 66 cases in which disciplinary measures had been taken. Every substantiated case related to sexual misconduct resulted in termination of employment.

53. UNHCR organized itself differently from other United Nations agencies, which assigned the prevention of sexual harassment to their division of human resources, whereas prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse was assigned to another division. UNHCR, however, brought those two functions together, with both being dealt with not only by the human resources division but also by the Office of the Senior Coordinator on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment. Efforts were being made to strengthen the response day by day, particularly with regard to training and awareness. As mentioned by the Inspector General, the majority of allegations related to partners. The operations division was working very closely with the Division of Strategic Planning and Results on vetting and follow-up, particularly with regard to sexual misconduct.

6. International protection

54. The **Director of the Division of Resilience and Solutions** (UNHCR) said that the 2022 High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges had brought together relevant stakeholders at the end of a challenging year marked by new and unresolved conflicts, frequent and severe climate shocks and emergencies, chronic food insecurity and economic instability. The latest figures on forcibly displaced individuals were alarming. Most refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons lived in low and lower-middle-income countries particularly susceptible to political and economic fragility. Considering those challenges, traditional humanitarian responses were not enough. Instead, agile and nimble shifts in approaches were needed to enhance protection, inclusion and solutions.

55. One of the ways UNHCR hoped to apply such approaches was by deepening its engagement with non-traditional actors with a view to building long-term support and securing durable solutions. The 2022 Dialogue had been a particularly timely one in that regard. Well aligned with the UNHCR Strategic Directions 2022-2026, it had sought to identify opportunities to broaden and bolster development cooperation between humanitarian, development and peace actors, international financial institutions, host countries and countries of origin in displacement settings.

56. To prepare for the Dialogue, UNHCR had convened seven regional roundtables to explore and advance development cooperation and multi-stakeholder engagement on a specific situation or country. At the Dialogue, more than 500 stakeholders from various sectors, including States, international organizations, development actors, international financial institutions, peace actors, NGOs, the private sector and refugee-led organizations had come together to discuss three thematic pillars: early action, inclusion and solutions, all underpinned by protection as the central objective.

57. The High Commissioner and the Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund had opened the Dialogue by highlighting how development partnerships could support the realization of protection and solutions. The High Commissioner had stressed that development approaches were not a substitute for humanitarian action and protection. Instead, they should be viewed as a complementary and essential tool that could be used to create new opportunities for protection. Two sessions had followed in which each thematic pillar had been explored. Close to 200 interventions had been made. States had emphasized the role of development assistance in meeting their protection obligations and the need for greater collaboration and burden-sharing.

58. A number of cross-cutting policy and operational messages had emerged from the roundtables and the Dialogue. First, national leadership was critical to spearheading development initiatives that addressed the causes and impacts of forced displacement and statelessness. Refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees and stateless persons needed to be included in national development planning, emergency response and climate adaptation strategies from the outset. Second, flexible and multi-year financing was needed to support transitions from humanitarian to development assistance, and to support rights-based and

protection-sensitive coordination between humanitarian, development and peace actors. Third, there had been a strong call to ensure that displaced and stateless communities meaningfully participated in policy and programme design as well as implementation and evaluation. Although refugees had been represented at the Dialogue, enhancing the depth and quality of their participation at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum had been seen as essential.

59. The primary purpose of the Dialogue had been to see how early action, inclusion and solutions could be enabled and supported through meaningful multi-stakeholder partnerships. The Dialogue had served as a useful springboard for preparations for the 2023 Global Refugee Forum. Stakeholders had announced nine development cooperation initiatives to make progress on key issues and address ongoing challenges. Those initiatives covered academia in low- and middle-income countries, the advancement of development policy, refugee education and employment, self-reliance, development and statelessness, data and statistical inclusion, youth participation, interfaith alliances, the United Nations Common Pledge 2.0 and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-UNHCR partnership. He invited Member States to join an initiative that best aligned with their areas of regional or thematic expertise or interest.

60. The representative of **Ecuador** reaffirmed the importance of strengthening alliances with different stakeholders and promoting cooperation for development, as demonstrated at the High Commissioner's Dialogue. Stronger alliances would support Member States in their efforts to design and implement programmes that ensured effective international protection.

61. Under an "inclusive company seal" initiative, 62 companies in Ecuador had received a seal of recognition for employing refugees or working towards the socioeconomic inclusion of people on the move. In addition, the Government had introduced new processes to regularize and integrate migrants from Venezuela and elsewhere, thus showing its solidarity and respect for human rights. The new processes included actions for socioeconomic inclusion and had enabled a number of positive developments, such as the biometric registration of 150,000 people and the issuing of 40,000 exceptional residency visas. He urged the international community to show support for the Ecuador Chapter of the Regional Refugee Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela. A total of \$300 million was required to meet all protection and integration needs.

62. His Government agreed on the need to strengthen international coordination between humanitarian, development and peace actors. It was necessary to have a human rights focus as well as to be sensitive to the international protection needs of persons of concern. The Global Refugee Forum was an excellent opportunity to foster new alliances with governments, development agencies, international financial institutions and the private sector with a view to promoting responsibility- and burden-sharing.

63. The representative of **Canada** recognized the Office's important comparative advantage across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus as well as the need for more data to inform policy and programming decisions. Her Government was keen to discuss how it could further support the efforts of UNHCR in engaging with international financial institutions to advance durable solutions. It also commended UNHCR for the multi-stakeholder approach to the High Commissioner's Dialogue, in particular the refugee voices that had been heard. Solutions could not be discussed without having everyone at the table. The Dialogue and the theme of development cooperation were particularly important ahead of the 2023 Global Refugee Forum.

64. Her Government had taken a whole-of-society approach to refugee protection and contributed to international responsibility-sharing for refugees, including through traditional resettlement, complementary pathways and humanitarian and development assistance. It aimed to put equity inclusion at the centre of its efforts. She stood with UNHCR, refugees, host communities, Member States and other stakeholders in the desire for the next Global Refugee Forum to be a success, with focused, well-coordinated and tangible outcomes.

65. The representative of the **United States of America** supported the 2022 High Commissioner's Dialogue, which had reaffirmed the importance of cooperation between humanitarian and development actors as well as responsibility-sharing to support host governments, especially in displacement and stateless contexts. He thanked UNHCR staff for delivering protection and assistance to refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons

and stateless persons in a year marked by profound crises. It was also commendable that many countries were demonstrating respect for the principle of non-refoulement, granting access to asylum and other forms of international protection, and identifying the protection needs of individuals in particular situations of vulnerability. All States must protect individuals fleeing persecution, including persecution on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics.

66. His Government remained committed to ensuring equal access to assistance, protection and durable solutions for all forcibly displaced and stateless persons. It continued to urge that gender-based violence prevention and response be a priority at the start of every humanitarian intervention. UNHCR must ensure that the specific and unique needs of children remained at the forefront of humanitarian assistance. He welcomed the Office's efforts to finalize and roll out its new child protection policy and would follow the implementation of recommendations outlined in the child protection audit and evaluation closely.

67. His Government welcomed the progress made on internally displaced persons and encouraged UNHCR to increase its engagement with the World Bank and other multilateral development banks on the inclusion of forcibly displaced populations in development strategies and programmes. It also echoed the call for States to integrate refugees and others into development planning, emergency response and climate adaptation strategies.

68. Lastly, it was important to emphasize the crucial role played by registration and documentation in identifying and providing solutions for protection needs. Universal birth registration and other forms of civil registration were vital to help people access essential services, restore family links and claim their legal identity. In 2022, the Government of the United States had continued to take steps towards establishing a process for making statelessness determinations for United States immigration purposes and improving the protection of stateless persons residing in the United States. He supported the Office's strong leadership through the #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness and encouraged Member States to fulfil their pledges.

69. The representative of the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** said that, while humanitarian assistance would always remain vital, considering that the number of forcibly displaced persons had exceeded 100 million and that three quarters of refugees were displaced for five years or more, it was clear that forced displacement was not only a humanitarian issue but also a development one. For that reason, the Government of the United Kingdom welcomed the focus on development cooperation in the 2022 High Commissioner's Dialogue. She commended UNHCR for its work on strengthening engagement between humanitarian, development and peace actors.

70. Her Government understood well that the benefits of greater development cooperation were multifaceted. With the majority of forcibly displaced persons living in low- and middle-income countries, greater coordination with development actors was vital in order to create opportunities for self-reliance of refugees and internally displaced persons alongside their host communities. She encouraged UNHCR to harness those opportunities to achieve inclusion and in turn create long-term, sustainable solutions for the displaced. In addition, UNHCR must continue to bring together a range of actors from across civil society, governments and the private sector, make sure that regional specificities were considered, and support the inclusion of refugees into national and local frameworks of host countries. She was keen to ensure that strengthening development cooperation in displacement situations was a key issue discussed at the next Global Refugee Forum.

71. The representative of the **European Union** (observer) said that increased development cooperation for forced displacement was the way to go, not only to meet the needs and growing challenges of forced displacement but also because the inclusion of displaced populations into national services and systems was the most effective way to ensure protection. The European Union was fully committed, both financially and politically, to such action, having engaged in joint advocacy and provided technical expertise to UNHCR and other partners in that regard.

72. She wished to highlight three areas of progress. First, the World Bank Refugee Policy Review Framework was an important tool to identify further opportunities for development

cooperation, stimulate policy dialogue with host governments, and inform better programming and policy. Second, the UNHCR-World Bank Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement had become a recognized knowledge hub. Additional work was necessary not only to fill gaps and embrace new data innovations but also to share the information with a wider audience. It was her hope that that work would also become a priority for the three support platforms launched at the Global Refugee Forum in 2019, particularly in efforts to promote better evidence planning and programming. Third, she expressed her appreciation for the dialogue on internal displacement and recognized the important role that UNHCR could play in promoting protection and solutions at the global and country levels. It was important to strengthen the role of the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in promoting solutions for internally displaced persons.

73. The **Director of the Division of Resilience and Solutions** (UNHCR) took note of the suggestions made. One of the strong messages of the High Commissioner's Dialogue was that inclusion needed to go hand in hand with financing. It was particularly important to support local governments with accessible financing. Another area highlighted at the Dialogue was the provision of services and greater engagement on the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly at the country level. More needed to be done to ensure the integration of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons. It was important to engage more development partners on risk reduction and resilience strategies. The World Bank Refugee Policy Review Framework was becoming a fundamental instrument, particularly for countries receiving support from the International Development Association and the Global Concessional Financing Facility but also in other locations where refugee protection assessment was available to development partners.

7. Coordination

74. The **Director of the Division of External Relations** (UNHCR), accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, shared an overview of key developments in the strategic partnerships of UNHCR in 2022, as documented in the paper on strategic partnerships, including coordination (EC/74/SC/CRP.7/Rev.1). The partnership strategy was guided by four tenets: placing affected populations at the centre of the response; upholding protection principles; championing localization; and assisting governments to coordinate the international response to displacement and statelessness.

75. In 2022, UNHCR had led the development of seven regional refugee response plans covering the inter-agency responses which had mobilized 1,180 partners in countries hosting refugees as a result of the crises in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. In recent years, UNHCR had also stepped up its engagement in situations of internal displacement and continued to lead on the protection, shelter and camp coordination and camp management clusters in contexts of internal displacement.

76. UNHCR had strong partnerships with many members of the United Nations family and had concluded new framework agreements with the UNDP, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the past year. UNHCR was also partnering with the Development Coordination Office and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to co-lead the process towards the United Nations Common Pledge 2.0, looking at 30 United Nations country teams that had pledged to step up their support in refugee-hosting countries. UNHCR was fully committed to system-wide reform and efforts to support the 2030 Agenda. Over 70 UNHCR operations had prepared multi-year plans to be aligned with the development cooperation programme cycle by 2024. UNHCR worked very closely with international financial institutions. Its partnership with the World Bank had facilitated \$3.6 billion in investments to support 16 low-income refugee-hosting countries since 2017, and approximately \$755 million in grants to secure over \$6.1 billion in concessional loans for development projects targeting refugees and host communities in five middle-income countries.

77. In mid-2022, UNHCR had co-led global NGO consultations on localization and climate change, and for the first time, local actors had outnumbered international NGO participants. There was a new simplified grant agreement for refugee-led organizations, which permitted direct funding for the first time. A Refugee-led Innovation Fund had also

been launched. Lastly, an exciting new sport strategy had been instituted in 2022, which aimed to bring sports activities to displaced and stateless communities, to support refugees with elite potential, and to counter xenophobia and hate speech. UNHCR had developed new partnerships with the Barcelona and Nottingham Forest Football Clubs, and was continuing to work closely with the Olympic Refugee Foundation, the Union of European Football Associations and others.

78. The representative of **France** emphasized the need for a stronger and more flexible budget to enable UNHCR to uphold its mandate and participate effectively in the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees. He welcomed the partnerships with development actors, including UNDP, the World Bank and the French Development Agency, as well as with the private sector, in the context of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. France encouraged greater engagement with multilateral and regional development banks to ensure that internal displacement situations were fully integrated into their programmes in all areas. He also welcomed the initiatives that had been developed with United Nations funds and programmes to strengthen cooperation on issues relating to internal displacement. France looked forward to welcoming the UNHCR refugee team to the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris and wished them every success. In closing, he requested further details about any initiatives relating to the upcoming European Humanitarian Forum.

79. The representative of **Australia** commended UNHCR for its continued focus on diversifying engagement and elevating the voices of people affected by crises. Australia was committed to the meaningful participation of refugees and refugee-led organizations in decisions that affected their lives. Meaningful participation should reflect the interests of all, including the most marginalized, which was why Australia had a particular focus on supporting women refugees and persons with disabilities. It was committed to enhancing locally led action which, when designed well, was sustainable, effective, equitable and inclusive. In that regard, updates would be appreciated on the Refugee-led Innovation Fund and direct funding to refugee-led organizations as those initiatives continued to roll out. In 2022, Australia had formalized its commitment to localization in its new strategic partnership frameworks, encouraging its multilateral partners to track and provide detailed reports on funding flows to local actors.

80. The representative of the **United States of America** commended the Office's efforts to support increased coordination and strengthen internal displacement responses, including through the secondment of personnel to the Office of the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement. The pivotal review of humanitarian responses to internal displacement by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee must be underpinned by critical reflection on how agencies, including UNHCR, could have the greatest impact and by clarifying the agencies' roles, responsibilities and accountability for internal displacement issues.

81. The focus on localization was important, and therefore efforts to simplify and expand access for refugee-led organizations to direct funding were welcome, as were efforts to streamline NGO partnership agreements. However, there had been persistent reports of the inconsistent application of reform measures across different regions. The United States appreciated the Office's efforts in favour of regional response plans and support platforms such as MIRPS (the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework Support Platform); they advanced efforts to strengthen inclusion and self-reliance, which were a top priority. The United States also welcomed the commitment of UNHCR to the Grand Bargain discussions, especially those related to localization and the role of intermediaries, and would appreciate continued periodic reporting on the subject.

82. The Office's strong and growing partnerships with international financial institutions had been a global model for coordination between humanitarian and development actors in support of forcibly displaced populations. Its advisory role in financing mechanisms such as the Global Concessional Financing Facility and the International Development Association Window for Host Communities and Refugees had brought a critical refugee protection lens to those tools, while also enabling support to stabilize host communities and ensure refugee inclusion. UNHCR should continue to strengthen those existing partnerships and consider expanding them to other regional development banks and financial institutions.

83. As food insecurity crises were outpacing available resources, effective coordination between UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP) was becoming even more essential. The United States appreciated the updates on the Joint Programme and Excellence Targeting Hub but would appreciate more information about coordination more broadly and what progress had been made. It would be useful to know whether there were any good practices that could be applied to other operations.

84. The representative of **Switzerland** welcomed the update on the Office's various strategic partnerships, which were often crucial to the fulfilment of its mandate. Closer collaboration with United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators would give them a more significant role in evaluating the performance of UNHCR representatives on the ground. The Global Refugee Forum had been recognized as a key opportunity to improve the calibre of partnerships using a strategic approach, including through closer relationships with the private sector. Civil society inclusion was also important, so it was good to see an explicit link made to localization in that regard. UNHCR should further strengthen its engagement with local partners and affected populations and indicate the expected level of implementation for its Grand Bargain commitments in 2024. Refugee-led organizations should have a more strategic role to ensure their significant participation.

85. The representative of **Sweden** commended UNHCR on its role in championing the centrality of protection task force and its leadership of the global protection cluster. There needed to be accountability throughout the system and, although the strong leadership role of UNHCR was important, it could not be depended on alone. The Government of Sweden looked forward to follow-up on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee protection policy review with the protection task force and the Principals of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. That was a large undertaking for the system that would require donor support and engagement. Within that framework, Sweden supported the "Access that protects" campaign and appreciated the collaboration between UNHCR and OCHA. In addition, Sweden recognized the important role of UNHCR in bringing together humanitarian and development actors to define roles and responsibilities with regard to the assistance and protection of people, and commended its work to bring together development and humanitarian actors during the 2022 High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges.

86. Sweden recognized the Office's contribution to the reform of the United Nations development system, both through its financial contributions to the Resident Coordinator system and through active membership in many United Nations country teams. It was good that the results-based management approach ensured the alignment of country strategies with the collective priorities of the United Nations sustainable development cooperation frameworks. The many joint initiatives of UNHCR with other agencies and its efforts to ensure strong engagement from a wide range of stakeholders were welcome.

87. The representative of **Denmark** welcomed the Office's commitment to strengthening partnerships and coordination with relevant stakeholders. UNHCR had an important role in connecting the dots across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. She welcomed the Office's commitment to the United Nations delivering as one. It was of the utmost importance to integrate the perspective of forced displacement into the broader sustainable development cooperation framework. Efforts to convene various agencies around a Common Pledge 2.0 for the upcoming Global Refugee Forum were also appreciated. It was important that commitments made under that pledge were concrete and that they strengthened United Nations cooperation to the benefit of displaced persons and their host communities.

88. She welcomed the framework for engagement with IOM in the context of mixed movements of migrants and refugees and encouraged the Office to continue strengthening its coordination with IOM, particularly with regard to data gathering, dissemination and analysis. Denmark strongly supported the cooperation of UNHCR with international financial institutions and other development actors and was proud to support the UNHCR-World Bank Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement. It was also pleased to note the expanded partnership with the World Bank Group through the new joint initiative with the International Finance Corporation, as leveraging private sector engagement in displacement settings could improve refugee self-reliance and that of host communities. The record level of resources from private sources in 2022 was to be commended, and more information on

any lessons learned and how UNHCR planned to maintain and expand that level in the future would be appreciated. The Government of Denmark would also welcome more information on partnerships and how best to provide support.

89. Denmark commended UNHCR for delivering on its Grand Bargain commitment regarding localization and the meaningful participation of refugees, and welcomed the establishment of the Refugee-led Innovation Fund. It was important to engage with all stakeholders to ensure that the Global Refugee Forum provided the necessary push for meaningful participation of refugees at all levels. Lastly, she welcomed the secondment of staff members to the Office of the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement, which would be key to fostering much needed cooperation on new comprehensive approaches to durable solutions to internal displacement. The nexus approach must be operationalized by everyone for the effort to succeed.

90. The representative of the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** said that transparent, strong partnerships with a variety of actors were more important than ever in order to deliver the greatest impact for refugees, internally displaced people and all persons of concern to UNHCR. He welcomed efforts to diversify those partnerships and strengthen collaboration, in particular with local organizations and those led by displaced and stateless persons, as well as with development actors, international financial institutions, the private sector and faith-based and sports organizations. Work on localization was particularly important: stepping back to allow local partners to lead should become an integral part of how UNHCR operated. The United Kingdom valued the ongoing participation of UNHCR in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee review of humanitarian responses to internal displacement, its role in the protection expert group for internally displaced persons and its ongoing participation in the Global Protection 2.0 Plan of Action. He noted the continued efforts to push for progress on Grand Bargain commitments and particularly welcomed the focus on supporting country-level cash coordination, including through the development of global standards. UNHCR should play a leadership role in the work towards a global successor pledge in the lead-up to the Global Refugee Forum in December, which represented a real opportunity to forge a collective commitment to refugees and displaced people.

91. The representative of **Japan** welcomed the collaboration of UNHCR with development actors and promotion of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. The refugee problem could not be resolved through humanitarian assistance alone. It was important to work with development and peace actors from a medium- to long-term perspective, including support for refugee self-reliance and support that benefitted both refugees and host communities. In that regard, he welcomed the focus that had been put on cooperation with development actors at the High Commissioner's Dialogue in December 2022. Japan had been promoting nexus initiatives in Uganda, in collaboration with UNHCR, and would like to make the Global Refugee Forum a key milestone in the promotion of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus for durable solutions to displacement.

92. The representative of **Norway** commended the progress made to strengthen partnerships, including with local actors and refugee-led organizations, as well as efforts to strengthen mechanisms for the meaningful participation of displaced and stateless people. She acknowledged the Office's commitment to the Grand Bargain and welcomed the simplified grant agreement for refugee-led organizations. Her Government also supported the plans to introduce simplified, individualized global partnership agreements for the Office's international NGO partners in 2024. It would be useful to know how the new cash coordination model endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Principals in 2022, in which UNHCR had been accorded a role in cash coordination in refugee contexts, was being implemented.

93. The Government of Norway commended the efforts of UNHCR in support of the centrality of protection task force: ensuring that protection was at the centre of humanitarian action placed responsibility on organizations that did not have a specific protection mandate. Norway would continue to work with the United Nations and other actors to achieve the goals of the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement. She requested information on how UNHCR planned to engage with the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement to implement lessons learned and sustain systemic changes after the expiry of his mandate.

94. The representative of **Uganda** said that localization was a key issue and one of the thematic areas that her country planned to concentrate on at the upcoming Global Refugee Forum. As well as engaging local civil society organizations, it was also crucial to pay attention to partnership with local government, especially district and local councils. Her Government would be interested to learn more about the United Nations Common Pledge 2.0. As one of the co-conveners of the Forum, it hoped that United Nations country teams would strongly consider matching their Common Pledge to the policy pledges of refugee-hosting countries.

95. She commended the Director for forging important partnerships with development partners such as the World Bank and other lending institutions but stressed that the existing debt burden of developing countries should not be forgotten. As much as they appreciated the lending windows, some countries could not take on any additional debt, and the national legislatures would not be able to approve them. What they needed were grants, not additional burdens.

96. The representative of the **Philippines** said that his Government supported partnerships and coordination with a view to increasing efficiencies and reducing redundancies in humanitarian response. It would like to see greater collaboration on the issue of displacement in the context of disasters and climate change, including through engagement with the Platform on Disaster Displacement, which was all the more important in view of the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Philippines was also pleased with the involvement of UNHCR in the International Data Alliance for Children on the Move and encouraged by the finalization of the framework of engagement between UNHCR and IOM. He urged UNHCR to continue driving localization efforts, including through bringing together national and local actors in humanitarian response. Community-based approaches and locally-led initiatives added value to broader response plans. Due diligence, transparency and shared accountability in localization partnerships was important, including in the management of donor resources. It was also valuable to continue expanding the support base beyond traditional donors to include the wider community of Member States, civil society and private organizations.

97. The representative of **Germany** expressed appreciation for the Office's work on partnerships and coordination and for its continued engagement with the Platform on Disaster Displacement. There needed to be reliable protection regimes in the context of cross-border displacement. The work of UNHCR on internal displacement, including ongoing efforts towards more predictable and consistent humanitarian responses to internally displaced persons in need, also continued to be immensely important. His Government commended the Office's engagement in enhancing protection and assistance for internally displaced persons, including its participation in the Steering Group on Internal Displacement Solutions.

98. With regard to partnerships with international financial institutions and development actors, it was important for UNHCR to provide advocacy and advice to ensure that refugees were adequately taken into account in development agendas. Close cooperation and coordination were essential in that regard. Germany welcomed the contributions of UNHCR to the International Monetary Fund strategy, and the joint assessments and monitoring with the World Bank. It encouraged UNHCR to work closely with the relevant agencies to develop institutional plans to reach common goals and planning mechanisms that reflected each actor's mandates and comparative advantages. It also welcomed the Office's continued collaboration with OCHA, IOM and the World Food Programme in an effort to build synergies and utilize comparative advantages for a more efficient response. The Grand Bargain remained key, so Germany supported the engagement of UNHCR in international forums such as Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

99. In closing, he commended the Office's focus on localization and its efforts to strengthen partnerships with local actors and accountability to affected populations, including through the Refugee-led Innovation Fund, and the provision of mentoring and technical expertise to refugee-led organizations.

100. The representative of the **European Union** (observer) welcomed the update on the strategic partnerships of UNHCR, underlining the importance of cooperation rather than competition between aid organizations. The European Union appreciated the Office's efforts

to build synergies for a robust collective response and valued its engagement in Inter-Agency Standing Committee initiatives and the related periodic updates. She commended UNHCR for its leadership in the development of seven regional refugee response plans and welcomed the new cash coordination model. She requested an update on the implementation of the United Nations Common Cash Statement, especially the efforts to ensure systems interoperability.

101. She commended UNHCR for its increased engagement on internal displacement, support for the objectives of the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement and service as co-chair of the Global Protection 2.0 Plan of Action. The European Union looked forward to the recommendations of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee independent review of humanitarian responses to internal displacement. UNHCR should keep reinforcing its role as the lead of the protection cluster and co-lead for camp coordination and camp management, shelter and non-food items clusters. More details would be appreciated on the conclusion of the joint UNHCR-WFP cluster leadership review, as well as updates on the implementation of the recommendations of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee protection policy review. The European Union welcomed the new framework of engagement with IOM on mixed movements, as well as the recent strategic collaboration framework with UNICEF. She welcomed the work conducted by the UNHCR-WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub and would appreciate regular updates on its progress.

102. She commended the Office's commitment to localization and urged it to continue empowering local and refugee-led organizations. She also welcomed the operationalization of the Office's results-based management system, which was a key change in strategic planning, budgeting and reporting. Lastly, she recognized the role of UNHCR in facilitating cooperation with development partners and international financial institutions, which should be done according to each actor's mandate and comparative advantage with a view to addressing the global funding gap and expanding the resource base.

103. The Director of the Division of External Relations (UNHCR) thanked representatives for their comments and said that a separate briefing on partnerships would be held in the coming weeks to respond more fully. With regard to the Office's relationship with WFP, she noted that their annual consultation would be held in the coming week, and they were in the process of discussing a joint protocol. UNHCR was also scheduled to speak on a panel with WFP at the European Humanitarian Forum to discuss the move towards self-reliance with regard to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. She welcomed all the comments about the Grand Bargain, which was something else that UNHCR was scheduled to discuss at the European Humanitarian Forum, and was an issue of keen interest. Taking note of the comment from the representative of Uganda, she said that the Division would look into working much more closely with local governments.

104. The **Head of the Partnership and Coordination Service** (UNHCR) said that UNHCR was working very closely with OCHA with regard to the cash coordination model. Forty countries had already transitioned to the new model, of which 27 were in internal displacement situations and 13 in refugee situations. The cash coordination groups had a government co-lead in about 40 per cent of the countries in refugee situations. In other contexts, the co-lead was a local NGO or a local or district authority, depending on the situation. Consideration was being given to updating the cash working group terms of reference in all the countries in order to build on sustainable local capacity and leadership. UNHCR was also looking at promoting common cash arrangements, in line with the Common Cash Statement, and had continued to expand on interoperability, specifically with WFP, which was one of the largest cash organizations alongside UNHCR. Referring to the feedback from NGOs on partnership reform, she said it was true that implementation had been a bit uneven. Senior management would be sending a strong message to representatives in the field endorsing the simplified reporting requirements and other partnership reforms.

105. In closing, she mentioned that the UNHCR Refugee Advisory Board, bringing together organizations led by refugees, internally displaced persons and the stateless to discuss UNHCR policies and practices, had held its first in-person meeting that day. More than 400 refugee-led organizations and others had applied to join the Board, and the selection had been carried out by a committee of refugee-led organizations.

8. Programme budgets and funding

106. The **Director of the Division of Strategic Planning and Results** (UNHCR), accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that document EC/74/SC/CRP.8 provided an update on the budget and funding situation. The final 2022 budget as at 31 December 2022 stood at \$10,714 billion, representing an increase of \$1,720.3 billion from the original budget of \$8,994 billion for 2022. The increase reflected the challenging operational context in which UNHCR had worked in 2022, having responded to a total of 52 emergency situations in 32 different countries. Four supplementary budgets amounting to \$1,720.3 billion had been established in support of the Afghanistan, Cameroon, Pakistan and Ukraine situations.

107. The total provisional funds available in 2022 stood at \$6,130.6 billion, representing an increase of \$977.3 million, or 19 per cent, compared to 2021. The provisional funds available included voluntary contributions of \$5,822 billion, with the remaining funds coming from other sources. The overall funding gap – namely, the funds available compared to the needs-based budget of \$10,714 billion – was estimated at approximately 43 per cent.

108. Implementation of available funds remained very high, at 91 per cent. Total provisional expenditure was \$5.6 billion, representing a 14 per cent increase compared to 2021. There was, however, a high level of regional variation in terms of provisional expenditure compared to the budget. In Europe, for example, provisional expenditure had increased by \$740 million, while in the Asia and the Pacific region it had increased by \$154 million. In other regions, provisional expenditure compared to the budget had decreased – for example, in the Middle East and North Africa region – or had remained stable.

109. The budget shortfall meant that UNHCR had to make difficult decisions in such areas as assistance with returns or cash provision. Only 22,000 refugees had been assisted to return to Burundi in 2022, for example, compared to 65,000 in 2021. Expenditure by impact area in 2022 had remained consistent with 2021. The 2023 budget stood at \$10.6 billion, consisting of the original approved budget of \$10.2 billion, plus three supplementary budgets established in support of Ukraine, Pakistan and the Türkiye and Syrian Arab Republic earthquake response.

110. The **Director of the Division of External Relations** (UNHCR), accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that while the UNHCR budget had increased, the Office's needs continued to outpace the funds raised. A record number of pledges had been received at the pledging conference in December 2022, and some \$1,322 billion had been raised to date, for which she expressed her thanks. At the end of 2022, UNHCR had been 57 per cent funded, with \$6.1 billion estimated funds available.

111. She expressed concern that the level of flexible contributions had decreased from 52 per cent in 2012 to 36 per cent in 2022, excluding the Ukraine situation. The limited pool of funds available to fill gaps and respond to emergencies that required the ability to shift funds from one region to another ultimately impacted the Office's ability to deliver life-saving assistance. The increasing practice of donors earmarking funds for specific emergencies resulted in fewer resources for protracted and forgotten crises. Food rations in Uganda, which hosted the highest number of refugees on the African continent, currently provided less than half the minimum required kilocalories, and food shortages for the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh were expected. Such geographic disparities in the availability of resources ran counter to the founding principles of the United Nations, including fundamental human rights, equal rights of all men and women, and the dignity and worth of human beings.

112. She thanked all donors, particularly those that had provided unearmarked contributions, and said she was grateful for the impressive levels of private sector funding received, including from companies, individuals, foundations and private sector partnerships. The top three donors – United States, Germany and the European Union – had covered 43 per cent of the total income in 2022, and she was grateful for their generosity. Efforts were being made to raise more resources for action related to the climate, gender-based violence and education, and some contributions had been received to date; much more was needed, however, in order to make an impact in those areas.

113. A number of innovative financing initiatives had been established. For example, the Global Islamic Fund for Refugees had been set up in conjunction with the Islamic Development Bank, and aimed to support global refugee and host community needs through an endowment mechanism. The Fund required more seed funding, however, and she encouraged contributions to that end.

114. The representative of **Kenya** (African group statement) thanked host countries and financial donors for their support and commended UNHCR for its resource mobilization efforts. In view of the growing needs in protection of refugees and persons of concern and the huge gap between those needs and the available resources, the African group urged UNHCR to continue its efforts to expand its donor base. Generous financial support was required to achieve durable and sustainable solutions such as resettlement and voluntary returns.

115. The African group called for continued engagement by the international community in addressing the root causes of forced displacement, particularly with regard to protracted situations that did not make it to the front pages of international news. The group stressed the need for multi-year and unearmarked funding to ensure that UNHCR had uninterrupted operational flexibility as well as agility in its life-saving work. With the number of forcibly displaced persons having risen to over 103 million, upholding humanitarian principles, including impartiality, and ensuring that humanitarian support was principally guided by need, was key to ensuring that all forcibly displaced persons everywhere were given the required support.

116. The 42.8 per cent funding gap between the 2022 final budget and the available funds was a matter of critical concern. It was important to ensure that difficult prioritization decisions did not have to be made. As UNHCR rightfully noted in its “Underfunded Report, September 2022”, nobody should be forced to choose between equally life-saving priorities. The report also shed light on 12 countries, 6 of them in Africa, which accounted for the Office’s most acute underfunding. All operations should be supported and adequately funded, in line with the Global Compact for Refugees and its principle of equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing within the international community.

117. It was also a matter of concern that impact area 4, securing solutions, remained the least funded impact area, despite the fact that, as drivers of vulnerability and fragility increased, sustainable and durable solutions were crucial. The African group would welcome clarification on what efforts were being made to scale up resourcing for impact area 4. Amid violent conflict, global economic shocks, adverse climatic events, rising commodity prices and the longer-term impacts of COVID-19, the need for collective international action and solidarity had never been greater.

118. Speaking in her national capacity, she said that as new situations triggering displacement of persons emerged, it was imperative to ensure that protracted situations remained on the international agenda and received commensurate political, diplomatic and financial support. The disparities noted across geographical regions remained an affront to shared humanity and should shock the collective conscience.

119. The representative of **Ethiopia** expressed concern at the 42.8 per cent funding gap in the budget, considering the unprecedented numbers of refugees in host countries that faced their own developmental challenges. The funding gap, which affected countries including Ethiopia, appeared to be growing considerably each year, making it difficult to ensure even the bare minimum of protection to refugees. Funding of UNHCR operations in Ethiopia had decreased from 56 per cent in 2021 to 40 per cent in 2022. In addition to the almost 900,000 refugees and asylum-seekers that Ethiopia hosted, however, more than 100,000 new refugees and asylum-seekers had arrived from Somalia in 2023, following the conflict in the Las Anod district. As a result of the ongoing conflict and the climate change-induced drought situations in the region, the number of people arriving at Ethiopia’s border was increasing. The new influx of refugees from Somalia required urgent international support in order to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance and respond to rapidly growing needs. In 2023, the budget for Ethiopia was only one third of what it had been in 2017, whereas the country’s refugee numbers had soared since then.

120. He implored all donors to respond generously to the growing needs and, in the spirit of solidarity, provide support to fill the huge funding gap in a timely manner. Donors were encouraged to respond generously to humanitarian appeals by UNHCR by providing unearmarked funding. Predictable, timely and flexible funding was of the utmost importance in overcoming protection challenges and securing durable solutions. UNHCR was also encouraged to diversify its resource base by strengthening its engagement with the private sector and seeking innovative ways for resource mobilization.

121. The representative of **Japan** commended UNHCR for having promptly established supplementary budgets in 2022 to meet the urgent needs of Ukraine, Afghanistan, Cameroon and Pakistan, and for its productive efforts to mobilize the necessary funds. However, despite the high levels of voluntary contributions in 2022, the funding gap had led to operations in some countries having to be scaled back. It was not desirable for resources to be concentrated in one region. Japan wished to continue to provide as much support as possible, while giving due consideration to need in the overall response to humanitarian crises around the world.

122. The representative of the **Netherlands** expressed concern at the discrepancy between the 42.8 per cent funding gap and the enormous needs facing UNHCR. She welcomed the efforts of UNHCR to expand and diversify its donor base, which should continue. Expressing her full support for requests for more unearmarked funding, crucial not only for new situations but also for protracted situations, she announced the Netherlands' decision to increase, pending parliamentary approval, its multi-year unearmarked contribution for the following three years from \$33 million to \$35 million. However, a \$2 million rise in contributions was only a drop in the ocean compared to the immense humanitarian needs facing UNHCR. More unearmarked contributions were required from new and existing donors, bearing in mind the principle of burden- and responsibility-sharing enshrined in the Global Compact for Refugees.

123. The representative of **Algeria** commended UNHCR for its continued efforts to fulfil its mandate in the complex international context marked by a number of protracted conflicts, the emergence of new centres of tension, the damaging effects of the pandemic and its economic repercussions on the daily lives of refugees around the world. The funding gap in the UNHCR budget was a matter of concern and was not conducive to securing durable solutions, particularly in protracted situations. UNHCR must redouble its efforts in order to improve its protection of refugees. Its resource mobilization strategy must be actively supported by all, particularly the main donors, international organizations and civil society, in order to respond effectively to the challenges born of the new geopolitical context.

124. In line with the 1951 Geneva Convention, Algeria provided protection to refugees in its territory, including Syrian and African refugees and those from the non-autonomous territory of Western Sahara. The latter was the most long-standing group of refugees in Algeria and benefited from various forms of protection provided in close collaboration with UNHCR, WFP, the European Union and civil society actors including NGOs. He thanked UNHCR, donors and other partners for the support the refugees received.

125. However, the natural rise in the Saharan population living in the Tindouf refugee camps, challenges related to the impact of COVID-19 and the increase in food prices had led to an increase in needs, which required greater presence and funding. UNHCR had a responsibility to act in line with its mandate to secure adequate, timely, flexible and predictable funding by stepping up its pleas to the actors concerned in order to meet the real needs of Saharan refugees. In order to adapt requirements to the situation on the ground, he renewed his call for UNHCR to promptly adapt its funding requirements to the real number of Saharan refugees, which had been estimated at 173,600. He recalled the appeal launched in August 2022 by UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF for increased solidarity to reverse the food shortage situation in the Saharan refugee camps. He expressed his deep concern at the UNHCR delay in updating the number of Saharan refugees, which no longer reflected reality. If the situation continued, it was likely to erode the long-standing credibility and reliability of UNHCR, which must not bow to malicious pressure from certain States.

126. The representative of **Uganda** expressed deep concern at the budget deficit of 42.8 per cent. Uganda hosted the largest number of refugees – 1.5 million people – who would all suffer as a result of the funding gap, including a large proportion of women and children, for

her Government would have no option but to scale down its generous and progressive refugee response. By “scaling down” the budget, those present at the meeting were agreeing that refugees in Uganda could turn to prostitution in order to survive, or to suicide, and that children would no longer be schooled, resulting in large numbers of uneducated, unemployed, frustrated, malnourished young refugees, with the risk of terrorism that entailed. It was hard for one region to accept a deficit of 5 per cent when another was enjoying a 200 per cent increase. Humanitarian causes did not distinguish between regions. The alternative to providing support to refugees in line with the 1951 Geneva Convention was for all countries to close their borders, thus ending interaction among nations and their peoples.

127. The representative of **Germany** expressed his concern at the existing funding gap and stood ready to work with UNHCR to remedy that situation. It was important to increase unearmarked funding. As the representative of the largest donor of flexible funding, he urged others to step up. It was important to remedy the situation through increased support from both traditional and non-traditional donors.

128. The representative of **France** commended UNHCR on its work on the international protection of refugees and other persons of concern in an international context marked by increasing conflicts, climate change and the repercussions of COVID-19. UNHCR was also to be commended for its responsiveness and flexibility with regard to those affected by crises, for example the assistance required by a large number of refugees and internally displaced persons following the war of aggression against Ukraine by the Russian Federation, the terrible floods in Pakistan at the end of 2022 and the recent deadly earthquake in Türkiye and the Syrian Arab Republic. The Government of France had significantly increased its contributions to UNHCR in 2021 and 2022, which it expected to be accompanied by increased accountability.

129. The representative of the **United States of America** commended the work of UNHCR in Tigray, Türkiye, the Syrian Arab Republic and Ukraine in demonstrating effective programming. Expressing concern at the 42.8 per cent funding gap, he noted that when translated into expenditures, it meant that UNHCR programmed less than 50 per cent of its budgets in Africa, the Americas, the Middle East and North Africa. In 2022, the top 10 donors had covered close to 70 per cent of total contributions to UNHCR. The United States’ contribution alone was nearly \$2.2 billion, in other words 36 per cent of the total provided to UNHCR.

130. He strongly urged all governments to increase their contributions, and for those that had yet to donate, to consider doing so. Of particular concern was the growing imbalance in support for refugee programming on different continents. The Office’s assessment of needs must yield comparable programme budgets. It should be remembered that refugees, internally displaced persons and other forcibly displaced and stateless people relied on it for support, wherever they were. The United States had been humbled to see that citizens of 52 countries had made private contributions covering nearly 22 percent of the funds UNHCR had raised in 2022. That was more than double the level of private giving in 2021. As valuable as that funding was, however, private citizens could not replace government support for the Office’s protection and assistance work for refugees.

131. For the 2023 budget, he encouraged donors to step up and increase funding to UNHCR, given the significant needs. The update gave a figure of \$231.5 million carried over for future implementation, and he asked whether that funding had been provided as multi-year funding or whether it was for programmes that it had not been possible to implement in 2022. He had been pleased to see that funding labelled as “protection” had grown from 19 per cent in 2022 to 26 per cent in the 2023 budget. He would be interested to know more about the reasons for the increase.

132. The representative of **Morocco**, responding to the comments by the representative of Algeria, said that in annex VIII to the update on the budget, the number of refugees in Algeria was listed as just over 90,000 people, not 173,600 as Algeria had contended. The systematic inflation of numbers by Algeria merely served to justify the diversion of humanitarian assistance and enrich the leaders of separatist movements.

133. The representative of **Pakistan** expressed his appreciation for the supplementary budget established by UNHCR in response to the floods in Pakistan in 2022 and 2023.

Months after the floods, which had affected over 33 million people in Pakistan, including half a million refugees in two provinces, some 14 million people still required humanitarian assistance. Seventy per cent of food crops had been destroyed and thousands of livestock lost. The floods had altered the human and economic reality in Pakistan. He looked forward to the continued generosity of donors for the fulfilment of the budget appeal and the supplementary appeal for Pakistan, and to fulfilment of the generous pledges made at the International Conference on Pakistan in January 2023. His country had been very progressive in terms of refugee protection and wanted to maintain its protection capacity in the future.

134. The **Director of the Division of Strategic Planning and Results** (UNHCR), responding to the comments made by members, acknowledged the points made concerning the funding gap and the underfunded operations, the repercussions of which were experienced on a daily basis by UNHCR colleagues in the field, with the very difficult choices and trade-offs that had to be made. With regard to the questions by the representative of the United States, she said the \$231.5 million provided was indeed multi-year funding, and did not correspond to under-implemented or unimplemented activities. The rise in the funding labelled as “protection” from 19 per cent in 2022 to 26 per cent in the 2023 budget was because UNHCR had given additional guidance to its country operations on how to allocate their budget to the different impact areas, particularly by applying more precise allocations for cash-based interventions and other direct interventions. The Ukraine response, which was very much geared to protection, was another driver.

135. The **Director of the Division of External Relations** (UNHCR), responding to points raised by members, thanked the representative of Uganda for her pertinent comments and the representative of the Netherlands for the increase in its contribution, expressing the hope that others would follow suit. In response to the question from the representative of Kenya on action taken by UNHCR to increase funding for impact area 4, she said UNHCR was working closely with international financial institutions and private sector donors, including corporations and foundations; there was also an increase in resettlement, which was one of the possible solutions in that regard.

The draft decision contained in document EC/74/SC/CRP.8 was adopted.

9. Any other business

136. The **Chairperson** noted that no representatives had any other business to raise.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.
