

63rd Meeting of the Standing Committee taking place 24-26 March 2015

Alice Edwards' remarks on ExCom Conclusions

Agenda sub-item 6(b)

Thank you for allowing me to take the floor.

As requested by the Rapporteur and Bureau at the March Standing Committee, we have identified four potential themes for Conclusions, in the Note on International Protection at paragraph 26, and reiterated in other protection documents prepared for this meeting of the Standing Committee.

We see the multi-year work plan as providing a good basis for a more predictable process for the selection of themes, and one that will also allow us to help facilitate that process more smoothly. We also appreciate the commitment by the membership to ensure that the work plan is sufficiently flexible to allow for a new theme to be added in a given year based on humanitarian priorities or extingencies.

As to the four themes proposed by UNHCR - reception and alternatives to detention; machine-readable travel documents; engagement and empowerment of youth; and self-reliance from a solutions perspective - if you would allow me, Mr. Chairperson, to say just a few words about their selection. We will also clarify in more detail why they have been put forward during the 10 July meeting.

Based on the High Commissioner's global priorities and the current state of international protection and solutions, we shortlisted a number of themes and considered a number of additional factors. First, we sought to achieve a balance between themes that touch on protection and those more oriented to solutions; some could deal with both. Second, we undertook an extensive review of the 111 existing conclusions and identified where particular themes have either (i) not been previously addressed [for example, youth or alternatives to detention] or (ii) where, although previous conclusions exist, there have been important developments since that are not fully reflected in those conclusions [such as machine-readability in relation to travel documents]. Third, we selected themes upon which UNHCR is substantially and actively engaged, and where the Executive Committee's advice to the High Commissioner would add value to that work and the protection and solutions environment for persons of our concern. Fourth, we wanted to make sure that there we provided themes of interest to both major hosting countries as well as countries that are better characterized as operating on the basis of individual asylum requests.

I look forward to supporting the Rapporteur, the Bureau, and Members of this Committee in the process going forward. We have every confidence that we will settle on a good list of Conclusions for the multi-year plan.