

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

Distr. : Restricted  
2 October 2017  
English  
Original: English and French

**Standing Committee  
70<sup>th</sup> meeting**

**Report of the seventieth meeting of the Standing  
Committee (21-22 September 2017)**

**Contents**

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction .....	1	2
II. Adoption of the agenda .....	2	2
III. Management, financial control, administrative oversight and human resources .....	3-28	2
A. Finance and oversight .....	4-15	2
(i) Report of the Board of Auditors .....	4-8	2
(ii) Internal audit .....	9-12	3
(iii) Report of the Independent Audit and Oversight Committee .....	13-15	4
B. Management .....	16-21	5
C. Human resources .....	22-28	6
IV. International protection .....	29-30	8
V. Programme budgets and funding .....	31-38	8
(i) Update on budgets and funding .....	31-35	8
(ii) Biennial programme budget for 2018-2019 of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees .....	36-38	9
VII. Coordination .....	39-43	10
VIII. Any other business .....	44	11
<b>Annex</b>		
Decision on budgets and funding for 2017 .....		12

## **I. Introduction**

1. The Chairperson of the Executive Committee, Her Excellency Ambassador Rosemary McCarney (Canada), chaired the meeting.

## **II. Adoption of the agenda**

2. The agenda for the meeting (EC/68/SC/CRP.24) was adopted.

## **III. Management, financial control, administrative oversight and human resources**

3. The Deputy High Commissioner introduced the agenda item on management, financial control, administrative oversight and human resources, outlining the complex context in which UNHCR was operating. In this environment, UNHCR was seeking to be able to respond to the needs of people of concern in a faster and more flexible manner, together with host governments and partners, including development actors. UNHCR's change process was imperative in this regard, as were the commitments the Office was making in the context of the New York Declaration and implementation of the comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF). The Deputy High Commissioner briefed the Committee in detail about the change process and various reforms already underway, including in the areas of human resources and oversight. She also addressed the funding situation, noting that the gap in resources was significant and that this would jeopardize the Office's ability to meet the needs of the displaced and force it to make difficult decisions with respect to prioritization. She assured the Committee that UNHCR was committed to diversifying its funding sources, with particular attention to private sector investment.

### **A. Finance and oversight**

#### **(i) Report of the Board of Auditors**

4. The Acting Controller and Director of the Division of Financial and Administrative Management (DFAM) presented the report on the financial statements for the year 2016 as contained in the report of the Board of Auditors (A/AC.96/1168 and A/72/5/Add.6), as well as the key issues and measures taken by UNHCR in response (A/AC.96/1168/Add.1). He noted that the Board had issued an unqualified audit opinion and confirmed that UNHCR's finances remained sound, with sufficient assets to meet the liabilities. He briefed the Committee on the key findings and 17 new recommendations, 5 of which related to additional controls and monitoring steps, and 12 of which related to administration and management of operations.

5. The unqualified audit opinion of the Board of Auditors was welcomed by a number of delegations, as were the efforts by UNHCR to address the Board's recommendations in a timely manner. UNHCR was encouraged to continue its work in this regard, particularly in relation to recommendations from previous reports. Support was expressed for the detailed timeline for implementation which UNHCR had provided, and the Office was encouraged to make this a standard feature in its future reporting. UNHCR's commitment to adopting a risk-based management approach was welcomed. However, the Office needed to invest in raising awareness and building staff capacity to implement such an approach, fostering a risk-based management culture across the organization, including at the country level.

UNHCR's efforts to collect risk data were commendable, but this had to be coupled with the strategic use of this information. Delegations supported the Board's recommendation that risk registers be systematically reviewed at senior management meetings and by country offices and that the risk-based monitoring of partnerships be applied. UNHCR was commended for its efforts to develop enhanced risk assessments and monitoring plans for implementing partners and contractors, and was advised to thoroughly review their financial reports as well.

6. Numerous delegations commented on the challenges associated with high levels of earmarked funding, as highlighted in the Board's report, and expressed concern that unrestricted funding only amounted to 14 per cent in 2016. UNHCR was encouraged to develop reporting that ensured visibility for donors which provided unearmarked funding, which was considered key in increasing this type of contribution, and to continue to diversify its funding base beyond traditional donors, raising resources across States and bringing in private sector investment. In relation to the Board of Auditor's recommendation to review the Copenhagen warehousing shipping procedures, UNHCR was encouraged to undertake such a review at the global level, looking at warehouse management, shipping procedures, vehicle logistics and practices with contractors and sub-contractors, to ensure all parties were upholding strong standards and to avoid mismanagement and fraud. With regard to procurement, the Office was also encouraged to implement the Board's recommendation to bring country operations up to standard and to enhance monitoring and evaluation of contracts and purchases.

7. The Deputy High Commissioner thanked delegations for their support, including in relation to UNHCR's change process. She welcomed the suggestion that UNHCR organize in 2018 an informal consultative meeting on enhanced risk monitoring. With respect to cash-based programming, she assured the Committee that UNHCR was collaborating extensively with its inter-agency partners, particularly the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP). On evaluation, the Deputy High Commissioner noted that UNHCR was developing a new approach that would allow the organization to shift from post facto analysis to one which allowed for course corrections, even in the midst of an active emergency. In response to a concern about the timeliness of documentation received by the Committee, the Deputy High Commissioner assured delegations that UNHCR would strive to do better next year, particularly with the regard to the budget document.

8. In follow up to a question regarding the decision taken by the Standing Committee in March on end-of-service and post-retirement liabilities, the Acting Controller updated the Committee on the Office's efforts to make long-term investments, which would help the Office address this liability. Responding to a question about the matrices and discrepancies in the status of recommendations and timeline for completion, the Senior Policy Advisor (Finance) advised that this was due to differences in reporting lines and the terminology used by UNHCR and the Board of Auditors, and that efforts would be made to align the reporting in the future.

**(ii) Internal audit**

9. The Head of the UNHCR Internal Audit Service of the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) presented the report on internal audit in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 (A/AC.96/1170), briefing the Committee on the recommendations issued and on the relationship between OIOS and other management and oversight bodies in UNHCR. He noted that OIOS was now focusing on decreasing the number of recommendations and, instead, focusing on higher risk areas and high impact areas.

10. The Committee expressed concern that the majority of audit findings were either partially satisfactory or unsatisfactory, and that 138 recommendations remained open, of which 133 were important and five were in the critical category. UNHCR was urged to address each recommendation thoroughly and to prioritize those that were most critical. The Office was also advised to review systemic control weaknesses in operations beyond those that were audited, such as in the distribution of non-food items and monitoring implementing partner agreements. Appreciation was expressed for UNHCR's thematic audit on self-reliance and livelihood programmes, and the Office was encouraged to work towards the recommendation to conduct socioeconomic baselines and market assessments in its strategic planning. UNHCR should share the lessons learned in this area with its inter-agency partners. Concern was also expressed over the audit findings on vendor management and procurement processes, and the identification of systemic and persistent control weaknesses.

11. In response to a question about why the audit ratings were discontinued, the Head of the UNHCR Internal Audit Service indicated that the ratings took the focus away from the actual findings and issues to be addressed and that focusing on audit opinions was in line with the international auditing standards. Thus, OIOS was now providing a clear conclusion and opinion, as well as a summary of the key issues that needed to be addressed, and was also endeavouring to communicate the critical recommendations to the highest levels of the organization. In response to concern expressed over recommendations closed without implementation, he explained that either UNHCR was not in position to implement them or that they had been overtaken by events.

12. The Deputy High Commissioner also spoke more broadly about UNHCR's efforts to address more strategically the recommendations coming from the various oversight bodies, particularly those of a critical nature. This effort, which was being led by the Inspector General, would link the recommendations more closely to the work of the Senior Management Committee and the Divisions and Regional Bureaux. UNHCR would provide more details about this at the next Standing Committee meeting.

**(iii) Report of the Independent Audit and Oversight Committee**

13. The Chairperson of the Independent Audit and Oversight Committee (IAOC) presented the fifth annual report of the Committee (EC/68/SC/CRP.28), covering the period from July 2016 to June 2017. He outlined the IAOC's main observations and recommendations related to the review of UNHCR's internal oversight functions, systems and processes; the work of the Inspector General's Office; follow-up on internal and external audit; evaluation; enterprise risk management; financial management and reporting; the work of the Ombudsman's Office and the Ethics Office; private sector fundraising; cash-based interventions; and cyber security. The Chairperson noted that although UNHCR operated in complex and dynamic settings, opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness should be sought continuously.

14. Delegations expressed appreciation for the update on the review of oversight functions in UNHCR and for the progress made in implementing the recommendations. The need to ensure that adequate resources were allocated for all oversight functions was underscored, particularly in the context of the work of the Investigation Service of the Inspector General's Office. It was important that the Inspector's General's Office had the capacity to perform proactive investigation work and to take on more complex cases. States stressed the importance of properly handling mismanagement, promoting fraud prevention and embedding risk awareness in all UNHCR operations. The Office was also encouraged to promote a culture of ethics and to incorporate lessons learned on risk management in current and future operations. The establishment of the Strategic Oversight Service in the Inspector General's Office and a new Evaluation Service was also welcomed.

15. Regarding the capacity of the Inspector General's Office and investment in investigation, the Deputy High Commissioner noted that UNHCR was committed to ensuring adequate resources and acknowledged that this remained a challenge. She added that follow-up measures undertaken by other internal entities also required additional resources. She spoke about the discontinuation of the inspection activities and how the most relevant recommendations from a management point of review would be folded into other strategic oversight processes. In terms of risk and lessons learned following an investigation, she explained the kind of follow-up measures that were conducted by management in a case such as the fraud committed in the Kakuma refugee camp, where a multi-functional protection management review was conducted in cooperation with the Division of International Protection and the Regional Bureau. The Deputy High Commissioner noted that fraud was not prevented by internal controls alone, as human factors were involved and required independent management reviews which were aimed at strengthening the moral of colleagues in the field country level and organizational culture. These measures had wide-ranging implications that went well beyond the findings of the particular investigation, and the Office hoped to do more preventative work in this area to address weaknesses within an operation.

## **B. Management**

16. The Director of the Division of External Relations (DER) presented the report on progress towards implementing the "grand bargain" commitments (EC/68/SC/CRP.25), emphasizing that the commitments were taken very seriously and that implementation was well on track. She highlighted the increased use of cash assistance, the volume of funds transferred to local and national responders, the new joint needs assessment handbook and the strengthening of partnerships to demonstrate the progress made by the organization. She also underscored that the grand bargain was a joint commitment to be more effective and efficient, drawing attention to a number of critical efficiency targets where further effort was needed, including on unearmarked funding, donor assessments and harmonized reporting requirements.

17. The Committee commended UNHCR on the progress made in implementing the "grand bargain" commitments, especially on the use and coordination of cash-based programming and for reaching its target in this area. UNHCR's growing expertise in the use of cash (including to meet protection needs) was valued, as was its commitment to training staff and partners, and developing tools to facilitate cash-based interventions. At the same time, cash was not a panacea to meet all needs and its introduction should be gradual in order to overcome the challenges involved. UNHCR was encouraged to strengthen its collaboration with local partners, including involvement in decision-making processes and in the context of cluster coordination and implementation of the CRRF. The quality of partnerships was highlighted as being equally as important as quantitative targets. The Office was also urged to work with other humanitarian agencies to simplify approaches towards non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including through the use of UNHCR's Partner Portal as a common platform for information sharing and harmonized partnership agreements.

18. Support was expressed for UNHCR's work in rolling out a multi-year, multi-partner planning approach. At the same time, it was suggested that UNHCR provide NGO implementing partners with similar opportunities for longer-term planning through its sub-contractual agreements. The Office was also urged to report on what results had been achieved through multi-year funding that would have otherwise not been possible through annual support alone, including through the results-based management framework. The progress made in strengthening cooperation with development actors, particularly the World Bank and the International Labour Organization, was also appreciated. In this

context, the importance of the “new way of working” concept, aimed at collective outcomes and an inclusive approach involving a diverse range of actors, was highlighted. The implementation of the CRRF was seen as a model for this new way of working.

19. UNHCR’s commitment to improving the participation of women and girls in decision-making structures was considered important. The Office was urged to enhance the use of feedback mechanisms to inform managers of the need for programme adjustments in order to ensure responsiveness to the needs. Delegations also welcomed the new needs assessment handbook, emphasizing the need to collaborate closely with other agencies to contribute to “one single understanding of the need” that was impartial and not tied to agency mandates. The Committee reiterated its strong support for unearmarked funding, with numerous delegations highlighting their contributions in this area. There was a suggestion to organize a follow-up debate on the “grand bargain” at the next humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in order to look at its impact on the budget of humanitarian agencies. Finally, delegations stressed the importance of carrying forward the momentum and achieving tangible results on all workstreams, both on the donor side and agency side.

20. Appreciating the Committee’s numerous interventions and meaningful comments, the Deputy High Commissioner emphasized the need to ensure that the work being done to implement the “grand bargain” was connected to the reality in the field and had an impact on the ground. It was important not to get lost in the processes and workstreams and to maintain focus on those in need. There was a proliferation of efforts, and UNHCR appreciated the guidance of the Committee in helping it focus on the highest priority issues which needed to be taken forward, in close partnership with other agencies. She also reiterated UNHCR’s commitment to the “grand bargain”.

21. On cash-based programming, the Director of DER stated that UNHCR did not intend to update its monetary target but rather to increase cash assistance depending on the context and when it was deemed beneficial to persons of concern. While it was difficult to measure cost-saving through the use of cash, there were additional factors that needed to be taken into account, such as the indirect benefits for local economies. In response to a question on multi-year planning and funding, the Director explained that the percentage of multi-year funding stood at 15 per cent. Multi-year funding was, therefore, still a small percentage of the total and was mostly tightly earmarked. With regards to the “new way of working”, the Director reiterated UNHCR’s commitment to strengthening its collaboration with partners, including on impartial joint needs assessments, and also took the opportunity to highlight a number of successful innovation projects undertaken in cooperation with private sector partners.

## **C. Human resources**

### *Human resources*

22. The Director of the Division of Human Resources Management (DHRM) presented the paper on human resources, including staff welfare (EC/68/SC/CRP.26), providing an overview of UNHCR’s global workforce. She briefed the Committee on the recently released policy on recruitment and assignments that represents a key change in the Office’s human resources management. She mentioned the different initiatives the organization is carrying out with regard to its “duty of care” toward the entire workforce, in particular those serving in high-risk and hardship duties stations and with special attention to the needs of national staff. She also informed delegations about an external review of DHRM and human resources in UNHCR that was being conducted. The outcomes would pave the way for more effective and streamlined human resources processes and guide workforce planning.

23. Delegations welcomed UNHCR's new human resources policy and its efforts to enhance the Office's duty of care towards all staff. UNHCR was encouraged to continue its effort to ensure the wellbeing and mental health of its staff, as well as to consider mandating psychological debriefings for all staff returning from hardship assignments. UNHCR's commitment to increased diversity and gender parity at all staffing levels was commended and the Office was urged to continue tackling the challenges outlined in the paper. Delegations emphasized that good performance should be recognized and poor performance dealt with. Assignments at a higher grade should be performance driven, and talent progression should be clear and transparent. UNHCR was also encouraged to consider how it could retain high calibre staff and to facilitate secondments to and from other agencies. The Committee requested to be kept informed of the implementation of the new initiatives, as well as of the results of the external review.

24. In response to questions about gender parity, the Director noted that UNHCR's current policy went further than the criteria established by the Secretary-General. However, she acknowledged that gender parity had gone down at the D1 and P5 level and expressed confidence that this would be remedied with the new policy, allowing parity to be reached by 2026, as called for by the Secretary-General. She also mentioned a deliberate shift of leadership development efforts at the P4 level to ensure senior management succession. The Director noted that the Office was not only promoting greater geographical diversity among its workforce, but also greater cross-regional diversity. The Head of the Staff Health and Welfare Service outlined the initiatives that had been implemented to better integrate the affiliated workforce.

#### *Staff safety and security*

25. The Director of the Division of Emergency, Safety and Supply (DESS) presented the paper on staff safety and security (EC/68/SC/CRP.27). He briefed the Committee on UNHCR's action plan, "A culture of security 2017-2019", including its five broad pillars: (i) advice and support, (ii) the security workforce, (iii) governance and oversight, (iv) liaison and partnership, and (v) training.

26. Delegations condemned deliberate attacks on aid workers and expressed appreciation for the organization's commitment "to stay and deliver" in high-risk situations. UNHCR was commended for continuing to make staff safety and security a high priority, as well as for the efforts being made to address gender-based threats. Training for female security staff and staff welfare officers was an important step in this regard. Among the various measures being taken by UNHCR, the importance of training was highlighted and, in this regard, the value of the eCenter in Bangkok, which contributed to capacity development in the area of security management, was noted. The Office was encouraged to seek enhanced policies, strategies and procedures to address the challenges associated with the safety and security of national staff. Appreciation was expressed for UNHCR's commitment to include NGO partners in security training, briefings and other activities in the field, reflecting principles of a true partnership approach. Several delegations encouraged the Office to strengthen synergies with other agencies, noting the need for developing a more coherent approach to security within the United Nations system.

27. The Director expressed appreciation to delegations for their continued support of staff safety and security in UNHCR. He noted that UNHCR could only deliver on its mandate when its own staff, and that of the wider humanitarian community, was safe to do so. Regarding the eCenter in Bangkok, he stressed that this was an integral part of DESS and assured the Committee that UNHCR would enhance the support the eCenter was providing to the Asia and Pacific region and beyond, in terms of conducting security management training for both UNHCR and partners, in addition to emergency preparedness and situational analysis. In terms of providing adequate information to newly recruited

staff, he noted that DESS and DHRM were collaborating on a “duty of care” project, one of the primary tasks of which was to ensure that the information package for newly recruited staff covered security. Regarding support for persons of concern, field staff safety advisors were working with UNHCR managers and partners, providing technical support on various issues, including humanitarian access. DESS worked closely with the Division of International Protection in this regard. He promised to share the plan of action with the Committee and further details on how it was being implemented in practice.

28. In response to a question about prevention and response to sexual assault, the Chief of UNHCR’s Field Security Service noted that the United Nations Security Management System had adopted a new global policy on gender inclusion in security management, which emphasized the integration of gender analysis in the security risk management process. He highlighted the efforts being undertaken to provide security awareness training for women in key positions and to develop “psychological first aid” skills for security professionals, allowing them to respond appropriately in a gender-sensitive way to sexual assault. Regarding a request for disaggregated data on the number of critical incidents by gender and by national versus international staff members, he noted that different categories of staff were vulnerable to different types of threats and indicated that details could be shared in a future update. He also outlined the measures that UNHCR was undertaking in relation to its partners, including in the context of the “saving lives together” framework. This included information sharing and more substantive forms of collaboration, depending on the needs of the partner.

#### **IV. International protection**

29. The Rapporteur provided an update on the progress made in the negotiation of this year’s Executive Committee conclusion on international protection, focusing on machine-readable travel documents for refugees and stateless persons. With only one outstanding issue, she would continue her efforts as facilitator until consensus was reached. She reiterated that the purpose of the conclusion was to acknowledge the importance of travel documents and to encourage States to take appropriate measures in this regard. The Rapporteur reminded delegations that this was a technical issue and that political considerations should not prevent the Committee from reaching agreement on a matter that had a real and positive impact on the lives of refugees and stateless persons.

30. Several delegations thanked the Rapporteur for her tireless efforts and echoed her call for Member States to show flexibility and a willingness to compromise in order to reach consensus. The importance of machine-readable travel documents in reducing the risk associated with irregular movements (which could expose refugees and stateless persons to exploitation, abuse, violence and human trafficking) and in supporting international burden- and responsibility-sharing, was highlighted.

#### **V. Programme budgets and funding**

##### **(i) Update on budgets and funding**

31. The Acting Controller and Director of the Division of Financial and Administrative Management (DFAM), and the Director of the Division of External Relations (DER) jointly presented the update on budgets and funding for 2017 (EC/68/SC/CRP.29). The Acting Controller provided an update on the 2017 annual budget as of 31 July, noting that seven supplementary budgets had been established since the beginning of the year. The Director of DER outlined the trends in voluntary contributions and funding levels for 2017. The



funding gap continued to widen, and the Director of DER cited a number of examples where underfunding had an impact on persons of concern.

32. The Committee expressed concern over the large funding gap of 48 per cent and asked UNHCR for more information about the impact on its operations. UNHCR was urged to prioritize based on need and vulnerability and to be more transparent with partners and Member States about how the decisions were made. One delegation suggested that UNHCR share its spending ceilings at the beginning of each calendar year and provide periodic updates so the Committee could better understand the prioritization process. Concern was also conveyed about the annual growth rate of the budget, which was not sustainable, and UNHCR was asked about what measures it was taking to control costs. Support for unearmarked funding was expressed by several delegations, and there was a query as to whether an analysis had been done on the impact of supplementary budget appeals and special pledging conferences on the levels of earmarking. One delegation highlighted the fragile situation of Sahrawi refugees and the impact of funding shortages over the last years and called for more international solidarity. UNHCR was commended on its continued success in relation to private sector fundraising, as well as in the increasing number of individual contributions, and was encouraged to continue its public outreach, which was important in terms of spreading positive narratives about refugees and messages about inclusion and diversity. The central emergency response fund (CERF) was also highlighted as an important mechanism through which funds for emergency operations and underfunded crises could be obtained.

33. In relation to concerns expressed about the ability to sustain the annual growth rate of the budget, the Acting Controller recalled the methodology of the budget based on a global needs assessment (GNA) approach and noted the ever increasing needs of persons of concern. He expressed the hope that some of the new initiatives being pursued would eventually lead to a reduction in UNHCR's budget.

34. The Director of the Division for External Relations thanked those delegations which emphasized the importance of and provided unearmarked funding to UNHCR, and she urged other countries to join them. She also highlighted the enormous contributions of the refugee host countries, noting that their generosity should not be overlooked. In terms of the effects of the grand bargain and other initiatives on the budget, she agreed that – even with the best possible intentions – it would realistically be a long time before any impact would be seen, given that the number of displaced persons continued to grow. There was really only one solution that would significantly bring humanitarian budgets down, and that was peace. In terms of prioritization, she welcomed a continued dialogue with the Committee on this to look at ways to maximize the use of the funding made available to the organization. She also noted that, although UNHCR had previously benefitted greatly from CERF funding and that it remained a useful tool, it was not always predictable.

35. Concluding its discussion, the Committee adopted a decision on budgets and funding for 2017 (see the annex to this document).

## **(ii) Biennial programme budget for 2018-2019**

36. The Acting Controller and Director of DFAM presented the biennial programme budget for 2018-2019 (A/AC.96/1169) and commented on the Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ)<sup>1</sup>, which was an

---

<sup>1</sup> The report of the ACABQ was provided to the Committee as an advance version and would be issued in due course as A/AC.96/1169/Add.1.

addendum to the budget document. He noted that the revised programme budget for 2018-2019 would be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval at its upcoming sixty-eighth session and that it incorporated the recommendations made by the Committee in recent consultations. He highlighted the main features of the budget, noting that the evolution of planning figures for persons of concern was an important driver of the budgetary requirements.

37. While delegations expressed support for the work of UNHCR in meeting the needs of all persons of concern, as it struggled to address multiple crises and address protracted situations, concern was conveyed about the unsustainable growth of the budget. While the current budget based on a global needs assessment had its advantages, it might also fail to reveal the operational priorities in a situation of constantly underfunded budgets. Several delegations expressed concern about the budget for Africa, which was being reduced despite the region hosting a large percentage of the world's displaced persons. In Africa, while efforts were underway to include refugees in national development programmes, in line with the CRRF, this would take time and might not need lead to decreased needs as of yet. One delegation expressed concern at the substantial reduction in the proposed budget for pillar 3 operations for Afghan refugees in its country and urged UNHCR to reconsider the proposal. Given the emphasis placed on the organization's response to internal displacement in the High Commissioner's strategic directions 2017-2021, there was a query as to why the budget for this pillar remained fairly steady, with only a slight increase. UNHCR was also asked how UNHCR was adjusting its budgetary decisions to meet the new ways of working, including with respect to the "grand bargain", the CRRF and other initiatives. The Committee expressed support for oversight and control functions and queried why the budget document showed reductions in the budget in these areas, despite recommendations from the IAOC to the contrary. Support was expressed for UNHCR's commitment to use a multi-year, multi-partner planning approach. At the same time, it was important to find the right balance between advocating predictable funding and the need to retain some flexibility to respond to unforeseen events.

38. With regards to questions about budget decreases for specific operations, the Deputy Director (Budget) of DFAM noted that a comprehensive needs assessment was undertaken at the beginning of each year, based on planning figures available at the time. Therefore, the reduction in budgets reflected decreases in the planning figures based on the projected number of persons of concern. This was something that was continually reassessed and which might need to be adjusted accordingly. In terms of the multiple comments on prioritization, she explained in detail the internal process that UNHCR conducted each year, starting with the comprehensive needs assessment at the country level to careful review at Headquarters and the continual assessment of the funding projections vis-a-vis the updated requirements. She also explained the reasons behind some of the decreases in specific budget areas, related to the closure of projects, capital investments, reduced humanitarian access and consolidated operations. Regarding the impact of budgetary savings due to the "grand bargain", CRRF and other initiatives, UNHCR would look at how to reflect this in the revised budget for 2018-2019.

## **VII. Coordination**

39. One year after the comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly as annex one to the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the Director for Comprehensive Responses provided an update on progress made, focusing on four key areas: i) the practical application of the CRRF, ii) the response of States, iii) partnerships in supporting the CRRF, and iv) UNHCR's internal process to support the roll-out. Since the Director last addressed the Committee in June

2017, El Salvador, Guatemala and Panama had agreed to apply the CRRF, bringing the total number of participating countries to 11. Within this context, the Director welcomed the two separate regional approaches that were being pursued in Central America and Mexico, and in Africa.

40. The Committee expressed strong support for the CRRF and the progress achieved to date by the countries that were applying it. A number of delegations provided updates on their financial, technical and other contributions as well as on their progress in fulfilling the commitments they had made during the 2016 Leaders' Summit on Refugees. These contributions notwithstanding, concerns were raised about gaps and inequalities in humanitarian funding, particularly in relation to Africa. Noting that refugee host countries were providing a global public good, States were called on to improve burden- and responsibility-sharing. In addition to supporting refugees to achieve greater self-reliance, identifying durable solutions to protracted refugee situations and addressing the root causes of displacement were identified as priorities.

41. Forced displacement was recognized as a complex challenge in need of a comprehensive response, including more predictable multi-year funding. UNHCR was commended for its role in developing and initiating the CRRF and consulting a broad range of partners in its application, particularly development actors, in line with the "new way of working". It was noted that the CRRF and the global compact on refugees were separate but interrelated processes, with the Office encouraged to incorporate lessons learned from the roll-out of the former into the development of the latter. The programme of action contained within the compact should be as operational as possible and provide practical guidance on how best to implement the CRRF.

42. The Director reiterated the importance of addressing the root causes of forced displacement, citing paragraphs 12 and 64 of the New York Declaration as anchors from which further discussions and efforts could be based. He agreed that the international community could not consider refugees in isolation, as cases of statelessness and internal displacement also needed to be considered in the context of large-scale movements. That said, the CRRF should lead to a strengthening of refugee protection and humanitarian principles, with development and other support complementing these efforts.

43. The Deputy Director for Comprehensive Responses added that the CRRF aimed to empower people with specific needs, including women, children and persons with disabilities, allowing them to participate actively in the decisions that affected their lives. States and other partners would have a number of opportunities to share their experiences on addressing specific needs and recommendations going forward, including during the second and third thematic discussions leading to the development of the global compact on refugees in October 2017.

## **VIII. Any other business**

44. The Secretary of the Executive Committee briefed delegations on the preparations for the upcoming sixty-eighth session of the Executive Committee, including the special segment on the CRRF and the speaking arrangements for the general debate. He also indicated that the draft report of the seventieth meeting of the Standing Committee would be circulated shortly and that Member States would be invited to submit their comments or corrections to language relating to their interventions by 29 September. Any amendments would be incorporated, as appropriate, and the report would be subsequently recirculated and considered adopted.

## Annex

### Decision on budgets and funding for 2017

*The Standing Committee,*

Recalling the Executive Committee's decisions on administrative, financial and programme matters at its sixty-sixth and sixty-seventh plenary sessions (A/AC.96/1154, para.13 (c) and A/AC.96/1165, para 15 (3) respectively), as well as its discussions under the programme budgets and funding item at the sixty-ninth meeting of the Standing Committee in June 2017,

Reaffirming the importance of responsibility-sharing in solidarity with countries hosting refugees,

1. Recalls that the Executive Committee, at its sixty-sixth plenary session, approved programmes and budgets for regional programmes, global programmes and headquarters under UNHCR's 2016-2017 biennial programme budget, amounting to \$6,408.5 million for 2017,
2. Recalls that the Executive Committee, at its sixty-seventh plenary session, approved revised programmes and budgets for regional programmes, global programmes and headquarters under UNHCR's 2016-2017 biennial programme budget (revised) amounting to \$7,309.7 million for 2017,
3. Notes that the supplementary budgets for 2017, which amount to \$778.5 million as at 31 July 2017, are for programmes benefiting UNHCR's global refugee programme and projects for reintegration and for internally displaced persons,
4. Notes the total budget reduction of \$178.9 million in 2017,
5. Takes note of the increase in UNHCR's annual budget for 2017 to the current total of \$7,909.3 million as at 31 July 2017,
6. Recognizes that emergencies and unforeseen activities unfolding in 2017 may result in the need for additional or expanded supplementary budgets, and that additional resources, over and above those for existing budgets, would be needed to meet such needs, and
7. Urges Member States to continue to respond generously, in a spirit of solidarity and in a timely manner, to the High Commissioner's appeal for resources to meet in full the annual budget for 2017.