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Report on UNHCR's global strategic priorities

Summary

This report outlines the progress made in pursuit of UNHCR's global strategic priorities (GSPs) for 2020 to 2021 during the first year of the biennium. It covers both the operational GSPs and the support and management GSPs, and reviews achievements against each priority.

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	1-2	3
II. GSPs in the operations management cycle.....	3-5	3
III. Overview of the progress achieved in 2020 against the 2020-2021 GSPs	6-22	4
A. Operational GSPs.....	6-15	4
B. Support and management GSPs.....	16-22	6
Annex		
I. Progress made in achieving the 2020-2021 operational GSPs		8
II. Progress made in achieving the 2020-2021 support and management GSPs		12

I. Introduction

1. The global strategic priorities (GSPs) for the 2020 to 2021 biennium set out areas targeted by UNHCR to enhance the protection of persons of concern and find solutions to their plight. The GSPs are divided into two categories: (i) operational priorities for field operations; and (ii) support and management priorities for core organizational functions. The operational priorities influence the development and implementation of country-level plans by field operations. The support and management GSPs, on the other hand, facilitate the necessary financial frameworks and business processes, and mobilize the resources required, to allow UNHCR to deliver on its mandate. The GSPs are in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and reflect [UNHCR's strategic directions \(2017-2021\)](#), as well as the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit, including under the “grand bargain”.

2. This paper provides an update on the progress made by UNHCR, together with its partners, in implementing the 2020-2021 GSPs during the first year of the biennium. For the first time, information related to the GSPs will be integrated in the Global Report, UNHCR's annual publication.

II. GSPs in the operations management cycle

3. The 2020-2021 GSPs guided UNHCR in developing strategies and prioritizing planned activities within the budget available in 2020. Operations reviewed which GSPs applied to their specific context and implemented tailored strategies and plans. Amid the unprecedented challenges presented by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the objectives related to strategic collaboration, burden- and responsibility-sharing, and the inclusion of persons of concern to UNHCR in national responses were of particular importance. Progress achieved against the operational GSPs in 2020 was the result of collective efforts undertaken by UNHCR, its partners and other stakeholders, including national governments. In line with the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) (GCR), UNHCR's work was strengthened through a broad range of humanitarian, development and private-sector partnerships.

4. In response to the far-reaching impacts of the pandemic, funds were reallocated towards the most urgent needs. This included life-sustaining support in the areas of health; water, sanitation and hygiene; protection, cash assistance and shelter.

5. At the end of 2020, UNHCR's operations collected and analysed programme implementation information, and communicated progress and results through Focus¹ as well as the organization's [integrated refugee health information system](#). With the support of technical experts based at UNHCR Headquarters, operations reviewed the data to determine and report on the progress achieved against the GSPs. The aggregated results for each GSP indicator in 2020 are set out in annex I, under “engagement”.

¹ Implementation, monitoring and reporting in 2020 continued in Focus, UNHCR's results-based management (RBM) tool. UNHCR's new RBM system, COMPASS, will replace Focus for the planning year 2022 and beyond.

III. Overview of progress achieved in 2020 against the 2020-2021 GSPs

A. Operational GSPs

6. In 2020, UNHCR continued to advocate accession to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol to advance a favourable protection environment. By December 2020, 149 States were party to either the 1951 Convention or its 1967 Protocol. The Office promoted the translation of these instruments into domestic law. It also provided States with guidance on interpreting and applying international and regional refugee law and standards. Legal, judicial and academic partners and networks were engaged in these efforts. In 2020, nine countries adopted laws or legislative changes which represented advances in refugee rights. Although the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the temporary closure of many courts, UNHCR intervened as a third party in 18 cases in 10 jurisdictions.

7. By the end of 2020, the number of people who were internally displaced by violence and conflict reached an estimated 48.5 million. This is the highest number recorded to date and 4.7 million more than in 2019. UNHCR reinforced efforts aimed at addressing internal displacement, including by supporting national legislative and policy development in Colombia, Mali, Mexico, the Philippines, South Sudan and Ukraine. Working closely with [the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement](#), UNHCR supported the global and national discourse on solutions to situations of internal displacement and enhanced dialogue with internally displaced persons (IDPs).

8. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, progress was made in raising awareness of the plight of stateless persons and in achieving results to prevent and resolve statelessness. Pledges submitted in 2019 at the [high-level segment on statelessness](#), which took place during the seventieth session of the Executive Committee, and during the [Global Refugee Forum](#) (GRF) helped accelerate these efforts. Of the 270 pledges made by States, more than 30 were either fully or partially implemented by the end of 2020. With technical support from UNHCR, 19 countries reformed their nationality laws, policies and procedures during the year to close gaps leading to statelessness. Côte d'Ivoire, Kazakhstan and Ukraine established statelessness determination procedures to identify and protect stateless persons, while many States removed barriers to birth registration. In Turkmenistan, a new civil registration law entered into force which guarantees birth registration to all children born in the country. The Congo (Republic of) removed fees associated with birth registration and established auxiliary civil status centres in health facilities. In Jordan, the Government suspended deadlines for birth registration and waived fees for late birth registration.

9. In the area of fair protection processes and documentation, UNHCR strengthened its capacity for registration, profiling and identity management. This work was facilitated by the Office's [population registration and identity management ecosystem \(PRIMES\)](#), which includes the profile global registration system (proGres), the biometric identity management system (BIMS) and the global distribution tool (GDT) for in-kind assistance for registered refugees. By the end of 2020, an additional 27 operations were using proGres, bringing the total number of operations using the tool to 100. This represented coverage of 15 million individuals, an increase of 44 per cent. With regard to expanding the use of biometrics for refugee registration, UNHCR achieved its "grand bargain" commitment with the roll-out of BIMS to a total of 75 operations in 2020, an additional six countries compared to the previous year. The number of individual biometric records in BIMS reached 9.2 million, up from 8.8 million. In the context of in-kind assistance for registered refugees, the GDT was deployed in 20 operations by year-end, increasing from 14 operations in 2019. Employing biometric tools meant that aid reached the intended recipients swiftly and effectively, reducing the risk of fraud.

10. Children make up 50 per cent of the world's refugees and 40 per cent of IDPs, compared with 31 per cent of the global population. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated challenges and specific protection risks, restricting access to education and other developmental opportunities, while increasing poverty, isolation and violence against children. In Greece and Mexico, progress was made towards the inclusion of refugees in national child protection systems. UNHCR scaled up efforts with a view to implementation of the [“Blueprint for joint action for refugee children”](#) embarked upon in 2020 with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The initial cohort of 11 countries, which host 20 per cent of the world's refugee children, developed plans for including them in national child protection systems, scaling up best interest procedures, registering births, and strengthening community-based protection, mental health and psychosocial support. Of the approximately 10 million refugees under UNHCR's care in 2020, 7.1 million were of school age. Those enrolled in school during the year were negatively affected by closures due to the pandemic, with potential consequences on enrolment rates in coming years as students struggled to make up for the disruption. In the face of school closures, UNHCR provided 934,000 students in 74 countries with the opportunity to learn through support for online classes and innovative teaching approaches. With the support of [Educate A Child](#), a programme of the Education Above All Foundation, 15 operations strengthened their primary education programming.

11. UNHCR strengthened community-based leadership structures and empowered women with the skills necessary to actively participate in decision-making. In 2020, the Office launched a [gender equality toolkit](#) and provided operational support to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. In Chad, India, Nigeria and Uganda, UNHCR and partners focused on the equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in decision-making processes. Stronger participation of IDP women and girls in leadership and management structures was achieved in Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Myanmar, South Sudan and Yemen.

12. UNHCR's [“Policy on the prevention of, risk mitigation and response to gender-based violence”](#) was released in October 2020. The policy established nine “core actions” for advancing the quality of its programming in this area. In response to COVID-19, UNHCR adapted its GBV prevention and response activities by strengthening collaboration with community- and women-led organizations and local partners, expanding remote case management services and updating referral pathways to reflect the pandemic's impact on the needs of GBV survivors. Many operations created or expanded communication channels for survivors, such as 24/7 emergency hotlines, including in Kenya, Pakistan, South Sudan and Zambia. Together with its partners, UNHCR assisted 2 million women and girls through these channels. In more than three quarters of the 63 countries in the [“Global humanitarian response plan for COVID-19”](#), operations reported that they had maintained or expanded GBV prevention and response services to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. UNHCR deployed senior specialist staff to 12 operations through the “Safe from the start” programme, including in Burkina Faso, Mali, the Sudan and Yemen.

13. In the area of basic needs and services, the number of emergency shelters provided to persons of concern increased by 58 per cent in 2020, better facilitating COVID-19-related measures such as physical distancing, isolation and quarantine. UNHCR provided some 362,690 people with core relief items and shelter materials, helping those modifying their homes to create additional space. A total of 268 isolation centres were built, enhancing national triage capacity. In addition, 9,000 refugee housing units and 10,160 tents – enabling emergency shelter for approximately 100,000 individuals – were provided, helping to decongest collective centres and settlements, reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission and enhancing protection through better shelter options.

14. With respect to durable solutions, UNHCR stepped up its efforts in support of livelihoods and mobilized resources and partnerships to mitigate the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic. Advocacy was reinforced to promote the inclusion of refugees in national social protection and economic development plans, as well as in socioeconomic statistics. In Brazil, Colombia, the Congo (Republic of), Ecuador, Mauritania, Mexico, Panama, South Africa and Uruguay, persons

of concern were included in COVID-19 social assistance programmes. Additionally, UNHCR and partners assisted some 1.26 million individuals globally with a range of activities to foster livelihoods, including training, the provision of financing to facilitate business creation and recovery, and support for wage employment and agricultural work. In Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco and Uganda, national statistics offices and the World Bank included refugees in surveys on the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19.

15. Voluntary repatriation was a challenge during the pandemic. Nevertheless, approximately 250,900 refugees returned home, compared to some 317,000 in 2019. This number included UNHCR-facilitated repatriation as well as spontaneous returns. Despite situations of complex security and fragile peace, UNHCR observed self-organized returns by refugees and IDPs in South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. The pandemic heightened the importance of resettlement and complementary pathways, both as protection tools and solutions mechanisms, as well as tangible demonstrations of burden- and responsibility-sharing. In 2020, the availability of such solutions decreased, and implementation of the [“Three-year strategy \(2019-2021\) on resettlement and complementary pathways”](#), which anticipated the resettlement of 70,000 people and the admission of 140,000 refugees under complementary pathways throughout the year, suffered a considerable setback. Due to COVID-19, UNHCR submitted over 39,500 refugees (48 per cent fewer than in 2019) to 25 countries for resettlement, and 22,800 refugees (64 per cent fewer than in 2019) departed for resettlement to 22 countries.

B. Support and management GSPs

16. Annex II provides an overview of the progress achieved against the support and management GSPs for the first year of the 2020 to 2021 biennium.

17. Over the past year, advancements were made in the context of UNHCR’s organizational transformation. The new decentralized model came into effect in January 2020 with the regionalization of seven regional bureaux. UNHCR equipped the bureaux to perform a broad range of functions, including protection and operational support, programme planning and resource management, monitoring, internal control, and risk management. Bringing these functions and capabilities closer to field operations enabled faster and more effective support, which was put to the test in the organization’s COVID-19 response. The new decentralized model also facilitated greater external engagement with key regional organizations and inter-governmental mechanisms, and the creation of dedicated capacity paved the way for more consistent and reliable collaboration. UNHCR supported the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) platform to implement a regional refugee framework focused on assisting member States in East Africa with inclusion. Additionally, the Office signed a memorandum of understanding with the African Development Bank to mobilize and direct resources to the Sahel region in support of the primary health response and the resilience of vulnerable communities in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger.

18. As part of the organizational transformation, UNHCR advanced its new approach to results-based management (RBM). In 2020, the design of the new processes and results framework, as well as the configuration of RBM software, were completed, and the new approach was launched in January 2021 to assist in strategic planning for 2022 and beyond. The approach introduces: (i) a multi-year strategic programming cycle; (ii) a simplified and contextualized results framework focusing on changes in the well-being of persons of concern; and (iii) a new global results framework. The new approach also aligns UNHCR’s results with the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs). These changes, including the move to a multi-year cycle, will facilitate the organization’s engagement with national development frameworks and development partners, in the pursuit of the SDGs.

19. In 2020, UNHCR ramped up its operational support in the context of the COVID-19 crisis and other emergencies. It activated 10 new emergency responses in 23 countries and declared a

level-2 global emergency for the pandemic. Despite the multiple crises, UNHCR's supply chain was able to respond effectively, dispatching \$36.2 million worth of core relief items from its global stockpiles, with 1,000 tons shipped by air, 2,100 tons by sea and 4,800 tons by road. UNHCR carried out 22 airlifts (11 from global stockpiles) for its operations in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Chad, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Liberia, Somalia and the Sudan. Efficient and agile service delivery to emergencies was crucial, as the pandemic created global supply shortages and brought transport networks to the brink of collapse. UNHCR acted early to procure personal protective equipment, medicines, oxygen, rapid test kits, and other emergency supplies and services worth \$186.1 million, reaching 95 operations. The organization participated in the creation of the [United Nations COVID-19 supply chain task force](#), set up in April 2020 to streamline and expedite the joint procurement of common pandemic-related supplies.

20. In 2020, UNHCR provided \$695 million in cash assistance to approximately 8.5 million persons of concern. This brought the total amount of cash assistance delivered since 2016 to \$3 billion, reaching more than 25 million persons of concern in over 100 countries. Refugees in 47 countries received digital payments, including 32 per cent in the form of mobile money. In response to the pandemic, more than 65 operations launched new cash initiatives and expanded existing ones. UNHCR aligned its cash assistance with government schemes, including in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Costa Rica, Mauritania, Morocco, Pakistan, Peru and, to some extent, in Rwanda and Uganda. The organization's [CashAssist](#) management system was used in 14 operations (Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico, Rwanda and Zambia), while the post-distribution monitoring tool was employed in 60 operations.

21. The pandemic reinforced the importance of strategic collaboration, burden- and responsibility-sharing, and the inclusion of the displaced in national responses, which are key concepts underpinning the GCR. Many of the 1,400 pledges made at the GRF in 2019 were adapted or accelerated to support the response to the pandemic. By the end of 2020, UNHCR had received updates for nearly half of these pledges, with over 70 per cent indicative of work in progress and 15 per cent at the planning stage, while an encouraging 71 pledges were fulfilled during the year. More than 230 good practices directly linked to the objectives of the GCR were shared on the [GCR digital platform](#), particularly in the areas of jobs and livelihoods, education and solutions.

22. UNHCR participated in United Nations inter-agency processes to develop monitoring frameworks, including a global inter-agency, multi-sectoral monitoring framework in the context of COVID-19. This was undertaken in collaboration with a broad range of entities, including the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The Office co-led several common data initiatives aimed at strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to gather, access and manage strategic information and to improve the analysis and communication of data. UNHCR contributed to the report entitled "[Data disaggregation of SDG indicators by forced displacement](#)" and led the technical assessments for two reports on the inclusion of people with disabilities, at the initiative of the United Nations Special Rapporteurs on the rights of persons with disabilities and on the human rights of IDPs.

Annex I

Progress made in achieving the 2020-2021 operational GSPs

<i>2020-2021 Operational GSPs</i>	<i>Engagement</i>	<i>Mid-biennium progress</i>
Favourable protection environment		
1. Ensuring access to territorial protection and asylum procedures; protection against refoulement; and the adoption of nationality laws that prevent and/or reduce statelessness	Seek improvements to national law and policy in 80 countries so as to be consistent with international standards concerning refugees and asylum-seekers	Adoption of improved legislative changes to enhance the protection of asylum-seekers and refugees were reported in nine countries.
	Seek improvement to national law and policy in 17 countries, so as to be consistent with international standards concerning IDPs	Improvements in national laws and policies on IDPs were reported in 14 countries. This included measures to promote laws and policies that focus on durable solutions.
	Seek improvement in citizenship laws in 40 countries, so as to be consistent with international standards on the prevention of statelessness	Nineteen countries amended their nationality laws to more effectively prevent statelessness or to protect the rights of stateless persons.
	Seek to increase the percentage of stateless persons who acquire or have their nationality confirmed in 14 situations	A number of States took important steps to grant nationality to stateless persons, resulting in some 63,200 stateless individuals, or those with undetermined nationality, acquiring or having their nationality confirmed.
Fair protection process and documentation		
2. Securing birth registration, profiling and individual documentation based on registration	Seek increase in the systematic issuance of birth certificates to newborn children in 53 situations	Increases in the systematic issuance of birth certificates to newborn children were reported in 20 situations.
	Maintain or increase levels of individual registration in 96 refugee situations	Increases in the levels of individual registration were reported in 12 refugee situations, while levels were maintained in a further 45 refugee situations.
Security from violence and exploitation		
3. Reducing protection risks faced by persons of concern, in particular, discrimination, sexual and gender-	Provide and seek improved provision of support to known	Improvements in the provision of support to known SGBV survivors were reported in 37 refugee situations.

<i>2020-2021 Operational GSPs</i>	<i>Engagement</i>	<i>Mid-biennium progress</i>
based violence and specific risks faced by children	SGBV survivors in 95 refugee operations	
	Provide and seek improved provision of support to known SGBV survivors in 10 situations where UNHCR is operationally involved with IDPs	Improvements in the provision of support to known SGBV survivors were reported in three situations where UNHCR was operationally involved with IDPs.
	Provide and seek improved provision of support to known SGBV survivors in three returnee situations	Improvements in the provision of support to known SGBV survivors were reported in two returnee situations.
	Seek improved community involvement in prevention and protection of SGBV survivors in 58 refugee situations	Progress in mobilizing communities to be active in SGBV prevention and survivor-centred protection was achieved in 14 refugee situations.
	Seek improved community involvement in prevention and protection of SGBV survivors in eight situations where UNHCR is operationally involved with IDPs	Progress in mobilizing communities to be active in SGBV prevention and survivor-centred protection was achieved in seven situations where UNHCR was operationally involved with IDPs.
	Seek improved community involvement in prevention and protection of SGBV survivors in four returnee situations	Progress in mobilizing communities to be active in SGBV prevention and survivor-centred protection was not reported in any returnee situation.
	Maintain or increase the proportion of unaccompanied or separated refugee children for whom a best interest process has been completed or initiated in 74 refugee situations	Increases in the proportion of unaccompanied and separated refugee children for whom a best interest process was completed or initiated were reported in 25 refugee situations, while the proportion was maintained in a further nine refugee situations.
	Seek increase in the non-discriminatory access to national child protection and social services in 37 refugee situations	Non-discriminatory access to national child protection and social services was increased in 15 refugee situations, and maintained in a further eight refugee situations.
	Seek increase in the non-discriminatory access to national child protection and social services in four situations where UNHCR is operationally involved with IDPs	Non-discriminatory access to national child protection and social services was maintained in two situations where UNHCR was operationally involved with IDPs.
Seek increase in the non-discriminatory access to national child protection and social	Increases in non-discriminatory access to national child protection and social services were not reported in any returnee situation.	

<i>2020-2021 Operational GSPs</i>	<i>Engagement</i>	<i>Mid-biennium progress</i>
	services in three returnee situations	
Basic needs and services		
4. Reducing mortality, morbidity and malnutrition through multisectoral interventions	Maintain UNHCR standards or reduce level of global acute malnutrition in 36 situations where refugees live in camps or settlements	UNHCR's standards for global acute malnutrition ($\leq 10\%$) were met in 27 situations where refugees live in camps or settlements.
	Maintain UNHCR standards or reduce mortality levels of children under five years old in 44 situations where refugees live in camps or settlements	UNHCR's standard for <5 mortality rates ($<1.5/1000/\text{month}$) was met in 159 sites in 19 countries. The average under-five mortality rate was 0.19 per 1000 under-5 population per month (a decline of 37% compared to 0.3 in 2019).
5. Meeting international standards in relation to shelter, domestic energy, water, sanitation and hygiene	Maintain or increase the percentage of households living in adequate dwellings in 48 refugee situations	An increase in the percentage of households living in adequate dwellings was reported in 37 refugee situations, while the percentage was maintained in a further nine situations.
	Maintain or increase the percentage of households living in adequate dwellings in 15 situations where UNHCR is operationally involved with IDPs	An increase in the percentage of households living in adequate dwellings was reported in 14 situations where UNHCR was operationally involved with IDPs.
	Maintain or increase the percentage of households living in adequate dwellings in seven returnee situations	An increase in the percentage of households living in adequate dwellings was reported in five returnee situations.
	Maintain or increase the level of water supply in 46 refugee situations	Increased or maintained levels of water supply were reported in 32 refugee situations.
Community empowerment and self-reliance		
6. Promoting active participation in decision-making of persons of concern and building coexistence with host communities	Seek improved participation of women in leadership/management structures in 54 refugee situations	The participation of women in leadership/management structures was increased or maintained in 36 refugee situations.
	Seek improved participation of women in leadership/management structures in four situations where UNHCR is operationally involved with IDPs	The participation of women in leadership/management structures was increased or maintained in four situations where UNHCR was operationally involved with IDPs.

<i>2020-2021 Operational GSPs</i>	<i>Engagement</i>	<i>Mid-biennium progress</i>
	Seek improvement in relations between persons of concern and local communities in 65 refugee situations	Improvements in the extent to which local communities supported the continued presence of refugees were reported in 26 situations.
7. Promoting human potential through increased opportunities for quality education and livelihoods support	Maintain or increase the percentage of persons of concern who are supported to improve their business/self-employment opportunities in 38 operations	Increases in the percentage of persons of concern (ages 18-59) who were supported with their own business/self-employment were reported in 27 operations, while the level was maintained in a further six operations.
	Seek improved enrolment rate of primary school-aged children in 95 refugee situations	Increases in the percentage of primary school-aged children enrolled in school were reported in 33 refugee situations, while the percentage was maintained in a further 14 situations.

Durable solutions

8. Expanding opportunities for durable solutions for persons of concern, particularly those in protracted situations, including through strengthening the use of comprehensive approaches and contributing to sustainable reintegration, local settlement and successful resettlement in third countries.	Support refugees to return voluntarily, and in safety and dignity, in 42 situations where conditions permit	Refugees were supported to return voluntarily in safety and in dignity in 41 situations, where conditions permitted.
	Support returnees in 11 situations to reintegrate in a sustainable manner, with the same access to rights as other citizens	Returnees were supported in nine situations to reintegrate in a sustainable manner.
	Support local integration in 42 refugee situations where conditions permit	Improvements in local integration were reported in 11 refugee situations.
	Seek to maintain or increase the percentage of people submitted for resettlement among those identified in need of resettlement, thereby supporting solutions in 74 situations	UNHCR submitted the cases of 39,500 refugees for resettlement to 25 countries, representing a decrease of 48% when compared with the previous year.

Annex II

Progress made in achieving the 2020-2021 support and management GSPs

<i>2020-2021 Support and management GSPs</i>	<i>Engagement</i>	<i>Mid-biennium progress</i>
<p>1. UNHCR's programmes are carried out in an environment of sound financial accountability and effective oversight</p>	<p>Financial management and reporting are strengthened at UNHCR Headquarters and in the field through streamlined and enhanced systems, with effective guidance on financial controls provided and applied</p> <p>Accounts are recorded and disclosed in full compliance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), and UNHCR obtains maximum benefits from the standards applied</p> <p>Cash-based interventions (CBIs) are supported by a robust financial control framework and business processes that are embedded in the delivery system</p> <p>Partnership arrangements are simplified and harmonized in collaboration with stakeholders, including other United Nations entities, and the share of resources entrusted to local partners is increased</p>	<p>The statement of internal controls was published for the first time in 2020 for 2019, and work was initiated for the 2020 issuance. This facilitated standardized self-assessment of local internal controls, allowing for global reporting.</p> <p>Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the external audit shifted to a virtual model. The Office completed the closure of the 2019 accounts, supporting the audit, and obtained an unqualified opinion on its financial statements.</p> <p>UNHCR continued validating the accessibility of financial services in meeting requirements with regard to the distribution of mobile and digital money. The Office supported the digitalization and delivery of new payment mechanisms and modalities to further enhance secure and direct delivery of cash assistance to persons of concern.</p> <p>UNHCR simplified partnership arrangements by reducing the length and complexity of required documentation, and by increasing the budgetary flexibility a partner can apply within an agreement. The Office worked closely with other United Nations entities, most notably within the framework of the United Nations Partner Portal, to harmonize procedures, including on risk and capacity assessments.</p>
<p>2. UNHCR's operations deliver quality protection, facilitate solutions for</p>	<p>Global protection and solutions capacity and response are strengthened through</p>	<p>As the first year of implementation of pledges made at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum, 2020 presented</p>

<i>2020-2021 Support and management GSPs</i>	<i>Engagement</i>	<i>Mid-biennium progress</i>
persons of concern and effectively advocate for their rights	direct operational support, enhanced monitoring and partnerships	opportunities to further develop asylum capacity, supporting States to cope with challenging circumstances such as public health emergencies. Greater engagement with communities – including through innovative tools introduced by UNHCR and at the inter-agency level – allowed active participation of forcibly displaced people and facilitated their role as front-line responders. Age, gender and diversity considerations in all advocacy, policy and operational interventions were of key importance in responding to the COVID-19 emergency.
	The promotion of gender equality is enhanced and accountability to persons of concern is reinforced at global and operational levels	A focus on gender equality was essential in working to address gender-based violence, which significantly increased during the pandemic. Challenges related to the timely identification of people with disabilities and older people in displacement contexts were worsened by the pandemic. A total of 85 per cent of countries had functioning feedback and complaints mechanisms for refugees, IDPs and other persons of concern.
3. UNHCR facilitates effective responses to forced displacement and statelessness through strengthened protection and solutions frameworks, advocacy and operational partnerships and the promotion of inclusion in national systems	National, regional and global protection frameworks and capacities are strengthened through effective implementation of supervisory responsibility and advocacy, in close collaboration with States and other relevant actors, including international development and peacebuilding entities	To advance the rights and legal protection of refugees and other forcibly displaced people in accordance with its supervisory responsibility, UNHCR continued to advocate the accession of States to the 1951 Refugee Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and their translation into domestic law. By December 2020, 149 States were party to either the 1951 Convention or its 1967 Protocol, 70 of which maintained reservations and declarations to one or both instruments.
		UNHCR provided States with guidance on interpreting and

<i>2020-2021 Support and management GSPs</i>	<i>Engagement</i>	<i>Mid-biennium progress</i>
	<p>Protection of displaced and stateless persons is strengthened, and pathways to solutions are expanded, through new partnership arrangements, support to strengthen national systems and institutions, and implementation of comprehensive responses</p>	<p>applying international and regional refugee law and standards domestically. UNHCR also engaged with United Nations entities and legal, judicial and academic partners and networks. Although COVID-19 forced many courts to close temporarily, UNHCR intervened as a third party in 18 cases in 10 jurisdictions.</p> <p>UNHCR advocated increased access to third-country solutions for refugees in mixed movements. It continued efforts to prevent persons of concern moving in mixed flows from falling victim to violations and abuses, and to provide them with adequate protection and assistance. As co-chair of the Global Protection Cluster Task Team on Anti-Trafficking in Humanitarian Action, UNHCR developed and rolled out the “Introductory guide to anti-trafficking action in internal displacement contexts”. UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration issued the updated “Framework document on developing standard operating procedures to facilitate the identification and protection of victims of trafficking”.</p>
<p>4. UNHCR facilitates responsible and comprehensive use of data and information for decision making and advocacy, including by partners and persons of concern</p>	<p>UNHCR and partners manage and use data and information, following a principled, systemized and collaborative approach to enable evidenced-based actions, programme design and resourcing decisions for quality protection outcomes</p>	<p>UNHCR contributed to the report “Data disaggregation of SDG indicators by forced displacement”, and led the technical assessments for two reports on the inclusion of people with disabilities at the initiative of the United Nations Special Rapporteurs on the rights of persons with disabilities and on the human rights of IDPs. UNHCR also developed a demographic model to estimate the sex- and age-disaggregated data at the global and regional levels to strengthen evidence-based programming and advocacy.</p>

<i>2020-2021 Support and management GSPs</i>	<i>Engagement</i>	<i>Mid-biennium progress</i>
	Information and analysis on the situation of refugees and other persons of concern is made available to support their inclusion in international and national development frameworks	UNHCR led inter-agency processes to develop monitoring frameworks, including a global inter-agency multi-sectoral COVID-19 monitoring framework in collaboration with OCHA, UNICEF, IOM, UNRWA, UNESCO, WFP and WHO, among others.
5. UNHCR makes effective use of and contributes to improving inter-agency humanitarian coordination mechanisms and drives efforts to place protection at the centre of humanitarian action	Data and information management approaches, including storing and sharing of personal data, respect protection practices and privacy concerns	UNHCR supported the operationalization of the WFP-UNHCR Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub, creating a joint targeting capacity and supporting inter-agency collaboration. It further ensured the interoperability of data systems in refugee contexts together with WFP. UNHCR provided technical leadership to the United Nations Common Cash Statement working group.
	Effective coordination and leadership is established for refugee responses and for UNHCR-led clusters at the global and operational levels	UNHCR led 29 out of 32 field protection clusters and cluster-like mechanisms. The global protection cluster team undertook field missions to Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Iraq and the Sudan, and provided technical support and sharing of good practices to field protection clusters. This saw the global protection cluster working with over 1,000 diverse partners around the world.
		The global camp coordination and camp management cluster supported 23 country-level clusters and cluster-like structures in 2020, with UNHCR leading or co-leading 19. UNHCR developed the " Camp/site management interim operational guidance for COVID-19 readiness and response ", containing key considerations to incorporate into pandemic preparedness and operational planning. UNHCR led 16 of the 30 country-level shelter clusters and 19 of the 37 shelter coordination mechanisms.

<i>2020-2021 Support and management GSPs</i>	<i>Engagement</i>	<i>Mid-biennium progress</i>
<p>6. Multi-year, multi-partner protection and solutions strategies, supported by results-based management (RBM) approaches, facilitate collaboration and effective inclusion of persons of concern in national systems and development frameworks, in pursuit of the sustainable development goals (SDGs)</p>	<p>UNHCR provides protection expertise and analysis to guide and inform joint humanitarian action</p>	<p>The UNHCR-led clusters provided shelter and core relief items to over 12 million IDPs through 535 partners in conflict situations, representing 81.6% of all displaced people assisted with shelter globally. Some 2.2 million people were reached with COVID-19- specific shelter activities in 12 out of the 16 UNHCR-led clusters.</p> <p>UNHCR combined coordination leadership with field operations, bringing delivery closer to persons of concern, enhancing credibility with cluster partners and strengthening relations with governments, especially at the local level. Engagement through community-based protection networks, telephone hotlines and other virtual means helped circumvent COVID-19-related physical distancing measures.</p>
	<p>Multi-year, multi-partner strategies are informed by improved joint needs assessments and are developed and implemented in consultation with key stakeholders, including national authorities, civil society, development partners and private sector representatives</p>	<p>During 2020, through the RBM renewal project, UNHCR firmed up a multi-year strategic planning approach that engages stakeholders throughout the programming cycle. The new approach introduces the United Nations system results chain and a global results framework aligned with the SDGs. It also introduces the flexibility for operations to formulate their results and indicators. These changes and the move to a multi-year cycle will facilitate UNHCR’s engagement with national and United Nations development frameworks, in pursuit of the SDGs.</p>
	<p>UNHCR’s RBM systems support collaborative and evidence-based planning and monitoring</p>	<p>UNHCR’s new approach to RBM introduces: (i) a multi-year strategic programming cycle; (ii) a simplified and contextualized results framework focusing on changes in the wellbeing of UNHCR’s persons of concern; (iii) a new global results framework; and (iv) a new software. In 2020, UNHR finalized the design of the new processes and results</p>

<i>2020-2021 Support and management GSPs</i>	<i>Engagement</i>	<i>Mid-biennium progress</i>
7. UNHCR, in collaboration with partners, provides refugees and other persons of concern with the possibility to meet their needs, enhance their protection and support their transition to solutions through the expanded use of CBIs	UNHCR is equipped with the relevant systems, tools, skills and processes to implement and scale up cash-based assistance programmes in an accountable manner	framework, as well as the configuration of the software for strategic planning for 2022 and beyond. The new approach facilitates engagement with stakeholders towards a common set of results and emphasizes monitoring, including through a set of core indicators.
8. UNHCR strengthens emergency preparedness and maintains and builds	UNHCR pursues the objective of common cash transfer arrangements with partners, in line with UNHCR's CBI policy and strategy	Despite the difficulties of face-to-face transactions in 2020, UNHCR achieved this goal and its “grand bargain” commitment, distributing \$695 million to 8.5 million people, a total of around \$3 billion to more than 25 million people in over 100 countries since 2016. In 2020, refugees in 47 countries received digital payments, with 32% in the form of mobile money. The pandemic spurred UNHCR to rapidly scale up its cash assistance programmes. In collaboration with governments and other partners, more than 65 operations across UNHCR launched new cash initiatives, and expanded or adapted existing cash assistance.
	Active standby capacity is maintained and UNHCR and partner personnel, with appropriate leadership, coordination and	To address some of the main challenges in attaining system-wide efficiency in cash assistance, UNHCR worked toward achieving the United Nations Common Cash Statement and building upon progress made in the seven focus countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, the Niger and Yemen. These country operations launched joint procurement for financial service providers, joint cash feasibility and risk assessments, and joint post-distribution monitoring.
		The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impeded UNHCR's ability to deploy staff to new

<i>2020-2021 Support and management GSPs</i>	<i>Engagement</i>	<i>Mid-biennium progress</i>
capacity to mobilize rapidly and effectively in response to emergencies	protection skills, are available for immediate deployment to emergency operations	emergencies. However, the pace of emergency deployments increased in the second half of the year. Some deployments started off remotely until travel was possible, and standby partners were asked to identify in-country international experts. UNHCR facilitated 319 deployments, including 150 UNHCR staff and 169 external staff working for emergency standby partners.
	Core relief items are stocked to provide emergency assistance for up to 600,000 persons and dispatched within 72 hours	UNHCR’s supply chain management system dispatched \$36.2 million worth of emergency core relief items from its strategically-located global stockpiles. Of these items, 1,000 tons were shipped by air, 2,100 tons by sea and 4,800 tons by road. UNHCR carried out 22 airlifts (11 from global stockpiles) for recipients in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Chad, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Liberia, Somalia and the Sudan. Global stocks were regularly replenished to cover the urgent needs of up to 600,000 people within 72 hours. In enhancing emergency response in the Americas, UNHCR added an eighth global stockpile in Panama.
	Representation of local and national partners and communities is increased in preparedness action planning	A total of 722 UNHCR and partner staff were trained in emergency management/leadership, including practical exercises, and security management and awareness.
	A proactive approach to security management is applied, through a qualified security workforce, security training and support to emergencies	Security missions were undertaken in several countries including Ethiopia and Mozambique, and in the Sahel region. In 2020, over 3,000 UNHCR staff and almost 500 partner staff were trained on security-related topics, including the Security Management Learning Programme and Women’s Security

2020-2021 Support and management GSPs	Engagement	Mid-biennium progress
<p>9. UNHCR is optimally prepared to respond to global forced displacement challenges, through a diverse workforce of talented and highly performing people, who are flexible and able to be deployed in a timely manner, and who benefit from comprehensive care and support from the organization</p>	<p>Strategic workforce planning that accounts for diversity and gender balance is improved through analysis of current and future talent requirements</p>	<p>Awareness Training. UNHCR's security workforce responded to 298 security incidents and supported managers and staff in managing 13 critical incidents.</p>
	<p>Career management is supported through the provision of learning opportunities and performance review, and is informed by the organizational demand for skills</p>	<p>Increased focus was placed on strategic workforce planning and data-based decision-making with regard to human resources. Workforce analysis allowed the monitoring of progress towards increasing diversity and gender parity, and facilitated future priority setting. These efforts were complemented by the creation of the UNHCR skills catalogue, comprising close to 1,400 skills corresponding to current and emerging areas of work, as well as insights on gaps and current and future talent requirements.</p>
	<p>A fair and transparent assignments framework ensures diversity and gender balance in the deployment of qualified personnel through efficient human resources systems, particularly in the context of emergencies and high-risk operations</p>	<p>Over the course of the year, 15,000 staff participated in at least one learning activity, with over 1,000 e-learning activities and 300 learning programmes made available in English and French. Over 4,000 staff took part in 80 career webinars, 400 signed up for coaching or mentoring, and 400 managers took part in reflective dialogues on leadership with regard to inclusion and creating enabling work environments.</p>
	<p>Minimum standards of occupational health and safety for UNHCR's workforce are implemented across operations</p>	<p>During the year, 1,700 job openings were processed, 110 of which were for fast-track situations. Of the candidates externally recruited into the international professional category, 52% were female. A total of 33 talent pools were managed, with 1,300 applications received a month. Psychosocial capacity was strengthened through the network of peer advisors and regional staff counsellors, and additional</p>

<i>2020-2021 Support and management GSPs</i>	<i>Engagement</i>	<i>Mid-biennium progress</i>
<p>10. UNHCR mobilizes political, financial and operational support from public and private sectors through effective strategic partnerships and fundraising strategies, as well as through evidence-based multimedia communications and targeted campaigns, building empathy and awareness among the general public and shaping the global dialogue on forced displacement</p>	<p>Resource mobilization strategies are enhanced to increase funding from public and private sources, through existing and new creative approaches</p>	<p>external mental health support was provided to UNHCR’s workforce. The Office continued to be a leader in inter-agency efforts on health and safety matters, and was an active contributor to the United Nations System-Wide Task Force on Medical Evacuations and the United Nations vaccination strategy. This strengthened the representation of field concerns, which underpinned United Nations preparedness and response plans.</p>
	<p>Partnerships with member States of the Executive Committee, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other partners are maintained and enhanced through regular and substantive dialogue</p>	<p>UNHCR’s private-sector fundraising efforts generated unprecedented levels of income in 2020. Together with its national partners, \$537.5 million was raised, including over \$256.4 million in unearmarked funding. This was an overall growth in income of 27% compared to 2019, exceeding the ambitious fundraising target of \$500 million for the year.</p>
		<p>In line with the Global Compact on Refugees, UNHCR redoubled efforts to expand its collaboration with multilateral development banks and to strengthen systematic engagement with bilateral development agencies and institutions. UNHCR supported the International Labour Organization’s drive to create sustainable, decent work opportunities for refugees and host communities, strengthened its partnership with UNICEF to streamline country-level collaboration, and worked with the United Nations Development Programme on ways to integrate displacement into development initiatives.</p>
		<p>On World Refugee Day (WRD) in June 2020, the #WithRefugees</p>

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	<p data-bbox="639 293 1078 477">Strategic external communication activities are strengthened through targeted multimedia campaigns, timely public updates and increased outreach to target audiences, building a strong community of supporters</p> <p data-bbox="639 1122 1078 1238">Political and operational support from private and public sectors is expanded to improve the welfare of displaced populations and host communities</p>	<p data-bbox="1098 293 1469 1025">coalition – backed by faith-based organizations, businesses, universities, NGOs, private-sector partners and over 200 cities – sent a message of inclusion with a positive narrative about refugees in communities, helping UNHCR mobilize new audiences. A total of 55.2 million followers of the coalition were reached through social media posts on WRD celebrations. UNHCR’s Goodwill Ambassadors included refugees in their advocacy, bringing power and authenticity to their messages. Together with high profile supporters, they helped raise millions of dollars and generated significant media coverage. Their reach of more than 177 million followers brought UNHCR record social media engagement.</p> <p data-bbox="1098 1066 1469 1500">UNHCR continues to maintain positive, strategic relations with its nine national partners. In 2020, a new national partner was established in Switzerland, while UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe (UNHCR’s German national partner) marked its 40-year anniversary. España con ACNUR (UNHCR’s national partner in Spain) remained the largest contributor with a record \$103 million transferred to UNHCR.</p>