

Statement for the 88th Standing Committee meeting
Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme
Kelly T. Clements, Deputy High Commissioner
Agenda item 3(b)

Distinguished delegates,

UNHCR's stance on its inclusive approach to protection and programming has not changed. As mentioned yesterday, there is no room for discrimination within UNHCR or in the work that we do in any shape or form. It is one of our fundamental values, and a fundamental value within all the United Nations.

This has been true not only through the verbal assurances that we have given during this Standing Committee, but through the work that we have done and continue to do every day in our operations, protecting refugees and others we serve, as well as in our policies, programmatic documents and positions expressed from this podium. And this work is strengthened further as we advance also our accountability to affected populations. This is also reflected in wider UN efforts to safeguard human rights protection against all forms of discrimination and violence to which we strongly abide.

This has also been true in the programme and budget documents presented to the Standing Committee, and approved by the Executive Committee for more than a decade. In the spirit of better reflecting our commitment as was done in the previously agreed language — in the coming days, we will consider ways to include language on our important work to fight and prevent all forms of discrimination, and incitement to hatred, and on inclusive approaches to programming reflected in the budget document before you.

Distinguished delegates - we are doing the best we can, but don't always get it right. To those delegations who asked for an explanation for the HR conference room document change - you heard that yesterday from the HR director. This is not removal of standard language, but rather an evolution of our efforts to inform you of our work on all areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our efforts to excise the organization of discrimination, racism, intolerance and all forms of abuse and misconduct remain among the highest priorities for the High Commissioner and all of us and is reflected in our strong Diversity and Inclusion strategies and action plans.

In the budget document, quite frankly we don't have a good explanation for the change - you heard me yesterday say that our work on the ground, protection, programming and planning principles are crystal clear and our work on age, gender and diversity relates to ALL protection needs and vulnerabilities. This remains the case.

The many documents – budgetary, strategic, and on protection – where our inclusive approaches are explicitly mentioned also make that clear. These include the High Commissioner's Annual Report, the General Assembly resolution on the office of UNHCR, the

General Assembly resolution for refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa, the Programme budgets adopted by the Executive Committee.

As you all have helpfully recognized, UNHCR's commitment is clear and unequivocal. We will need your help in the coming days to find a way forward and remain always available for dialogue with Member States, including those who have any concerns on this. As always, we will listen to all States and seek to understand different perspectives, while remaining – as I've said – steadfast in our commitment and efforts to protect all against all forms of discrimination.

While not all Member States will necessarily see things in exactly in the same way, I sincerely hope and trust that we can all work together within a space that allows for effective diplomacy and multilateralism.

Too much is at stake for the over 120 million who currently count on us...