

# Country Strategy Evaluation for UNHCR South Sudan 2018-2022

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## Executive Summary and Recommendations

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## Evaluation at a Glance

<b>Title of the evaluation:</b>	<b>Country Strategy Evaluation, South Sudan</b>
<b>Timeframe covered</b>	2018-2022
<b>Date</b>	08-06-2023
<b>Type of evaluation</b>	Country Strategy Evaluation
<b>Locations/focus countries to be included</b>	South Sudan
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# UNHCR CSE South Sudan: Executive Summary and Recommendations

## Background

**Introduction: purpose & scope:** The purpose of this strategic, learning-oriented Country Strategy Evaluation (CSE) is: (1) to inform and adjust UNHCR's new Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) for 2023 to 2025; (2) to contribute to its improved operation and effectiveness in South Sudan; and (3) to feed into its contribution to joint planning and implementation of the UNSCDF of 2023 to 2025.

The scope of the CSE is UNHCR's entire portfolio in South Sudan between 2018 and the end of 2022. The focus is the period from December 2020 when there was a strategic shift to address solutions and opportunities for development while still retaining a focus on refugee and emergency operations and protection. **It is important to note that the CSE hence does not cover the recent outbreak of conflict in neighbouring Sudan and consequent influx of South Sudanese returnees as well as Sudanese refugees. These have huge ramifications for UNHCR South Sudan – although the CSE conclusions and recommendations all remain pertinent in addressing the additional challenges.**

**Approach and methods:** With the aim of being as user-focused as possible, the CSE piloted a real-time participatory learning approach, and the evaluation report has been presented as a slide deck, which can be divided into different modules.<sup>1</sup> A Theory of Change (ToC), retrospectively constructed with UNHCR staff, provided the evaluative framework. The evaluation used a mixed methods approach of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), group interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs); learning-oriented workshops; participant observation and online surveys. Over 800 people were consulted during the main phase of the CSE, the majority being members of displaced and host communities. The evaluation team visited all UNHCR's Field Offices (FOs) and Sub-Offices (SOs), with the exception of Yei, which was covered remotely. Methodological constraints include the non-availability of some key informants, and also limitations of UNHCR's performance monitoring data, which in turn reflects weaknesses within its results management system. The latter is a constraint not only for the CSE, but also for UNHCR's strategic and adaptive decision-making.

**South Sudan context and overview of UNHCR operation:** Implementation of the peace agreement, signed during the 2018-22 period, has been slow and patchy, and the situation in South Sudan has remained volatile. Although an increasing number of South Sudanese refugees have returned home from neighbouring countries, close to 2.4 million people are internally displaced, with the number rising in 2022 due to flooding and localized conflict. The refugee and asylum-seeker population of around 350,000 has been relatively stable since 2018. This has been a period of economic volatility and widespread food insecurity, exacerbated by climate-related natural disasters, the Covid-19 pandemic, a reduction in donor funding and the war in Ukraine.

UNHCR has had to address multiple emergencies during this challenging period, with a focus on protection as well as seeking durable solutions, at the same time as donor funding has fallen. This is reflected in a growing gap between UNHCR's planned and actual budget expenditure during the 2018 to 2022 period. The ToC for the period applied four pathways to change covering: (i) protection, (ii) assistance, (iii) empowerment and inclusion, and (iv) solutions, supported by a number of cross-cutting approaches, including environmental sustainability, strengthening the HDP nexus, and building partnerships and coordination. Over two-thirds of UNHCR funding is allocated to programming

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<sup>1</sup> In the spirit of appreciative inquiry (and unlike conventional evaluations), many of the findings in the CSE have been formulated in terms of what needs to change for improved performance and greater effectiveness, as a way of providing a forward-looking evaluative judgement on current performance, rather than criticizing current performance.

for refugee populations, reflecting its core mandate in relation to the 350,000 refugee and asylum-seeker population in South Sudan; a quarter or less is allocated to programming for internally displaced persons (IDPs), despite the very large number of over 2 million IDPs.<sup>2</sup>

## Relevance – part I<sup>3</sup>

**Alignment with needs of persons of concern:**<sup>4</sup> UNHCR has a strong track record on some aspects of consultation with the people it serves, for example through regular and disaggregated needs assessments, which inform programme design and annual planning. Ongoing consultation with, and accountability to persons of concern is weaker, characterised by one-way information flows from UNHCR and its implementing partners, and limited feedback loops, for example on issues raised at Protection Desks. The shrinking funding base has constrained UNHCR's ability to meet needs, although there are positive examples of UNHCR and its implementing partners consulting with persons of concern to make prioritisation decisions. Communication about the nature and reason for reduced services could, however, be strengthened. UNHCR's approach of targeting People with Special Needs (PSN) is an appropriate response to the shrinking funding base, and in most contexts is well understood and supported by the displaced.

**Alignment with policies, strategies and frameworks:** UNHCR staff at the Juba level have high awareness of the key policies guiding UNHCR's work, and have played a key role supporting government to align with, and contextualise global and regional frameworks and policies to South Sudan, e.g. the International Refugee Conventions, the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), and the Kampala Convention on Displacement. UNHCR's own strategic frameworks for South Sudan, such as its multi-year strategic plans (MYSPs), are well-rooted in the plethora of relevant global and corporate policies and frameworks. However, a deeper analysis of the complexity of the South Sudanese context both at national and subnational levels (e.g. patterns of repeated displacement) would help to ground UNHCR's strategic aspirations, and to clarify how particular challenges can be addressed. Progress has been made in implementing UNHCR's commitment to gender equality and it is regarded as a good gender advocate. However, there is scope for more systematic approaches to gender mainstreaming and gender equality throughout all aspects of its work, from protection through to solutions and promoting self-reliance. The designation of gender focal points would help to support gender mainstreaming.

## Main thematic areas

**Meeting protection and basic needs of refugees:** UNHCR's institutional support to government has been critical to developing a progressive policy environment and system for refugees in South Sudan, although weak government capacity, especially at state level, is a major constraint in implementation. While UNHCR is generally serving the refugee caseload in South Sudan adequately in terms of meeting protection and basic needs, funding shortfalls affect the provision of certain services and UNHCR capacity. There are some positive protection outcomes associated with the long-term engagement of UNHCR and its implementing partners with particular refugee groups, for

<sup>2</sup> These were refugee and IDP numbers at the end of 2022. They may have changed since.

<sup>3</sup> The evaluation questions that fall under the evaluation criterion of 'relevance' were divided into two parts in the main evaluation report. Evaluation questions on the HDP nexus and sustainability come after the thematic areas, so they may be understood more fully. This executive summary follows the same pattern.

<sup>4</sup> In early 2023 the evaluation team was informed that UNHCR is no longer using the terminology of 'Persons of Concern'. However, as this terminology is central in the ToR and questions for this evaluation, the team has continued to use the phrase in this evaluation report (although it refrains from using the acronym, which is confusing in the South Sudan context where POC is widely used to refer to Protection of Civilians)

example the greater enrolment of girls in education (e.g. female enrolment in secondary education in Maban trebled between 2017/18 and 2022/23), strengthening community-based protection structures, and reduction of child marriage. As refugees engage in agricultural livelihood activities, however, they are often facing protection risks – particularly women – that are not yet being systematically addressed.

Maintaining the civilian nature of refugee camps has been a significant issue, particularly in Maban and Jamjang. There is some evidence of progress, for example through work with the Commission for Refugee Affairs (CRA) and awareness-raising; the CSE notes how the relevant Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) could be strengthened, for example with contextual analysis and reference to the role of other specialist agencies. Tension between refugees and host communities in South Sudan has sometimes erupted into violent conflict, particularly where concentrations of refugees outnumber the host community. UNHCR has taken positive action to promote harmonious relationships between refugees and host communities in some areas, for example through joint peace committees between refugees and host communities, but these actions could be strengthened with a more robust analysis of the underlying political and conflict dynamics, for instance in Maban.

UNHCR has appropriately emphasised the importance of its partnership with government in its refugee response, especially CRA as the key state institution responsible for refugees, and this is widely appreciated. UNHCR has made progress in building the capacity of some of its protection partners, especially its implementing partners, often from a weak base, but much remains to be done, requiring long-term commitment and investment, especially to build the capacity of national partners.

**Protection of IDPs:** UNHCR's engagement with IDP protection has been neither commensurate with the scale of needs, nor with current trends of rising protection risks, despite UNHCR's global commitment to step-up its engagement. UNHCR assisted less than a quarter of IDPs in 2022. This has been inadequately prioritised, and also a consequence of limited funding, although there is evidence of greater prioritisation by UNHCR in 2023. In the South Sudan context, where the 'centrality of protection' is judged to be weak within the international humanitarian system (according to the recent Peer-to-Peer review), UNHCR has a key leadership role to play. Its track record is mixed, with recent and welcome improvements at national level through leadership of the protection cluster, and some good practice examples to draw upon at sub-national level, e.g. from the Malakal FO. Addressing the protection environment has been weaker, for example through high level advocacy, although there are recent improvements, e.g. monthly briefing of humanitarian donors.

In a context where capacity to protect IDPs is weak, and coverage of some areas is limited (e.g. Pibor Administrative Area), working collaboratively and in complementary ways is critical to maximise impact. In some states UNHCR has promoted this through the protection cluster, with examples of good division of labour between cluster members, and there are important, albeit limited, examples of UNHCR working as part of consortia, e.g. on child abduction in Jonglei. Partnerships with other UN agencies are critical. In some cases this is working well, e.g. with UNICEF, and aspects of its partnership with UNMISS. There are also areas for improvement, e.g. with UNFPA to make full use of its expertise in SGBV; and for advocacy for protection at the highest level, globally, in relation to UNMISS's mandate and role, informed by UNHCR's analysis of protection risks, e.g. in former POC sites.

Lack of documentation is a major issue for the majority of South Sudanese, and a protection issue for IDPs. UNHCR is credited with raising the issue of statelessness at national level, and has a strong partnership with the Directorate of Civil Registry, Nationality, Passports and Immigration (DCRNPI). Progress in addressing statelessness is hampered by low government capacity and lack of funding.

**Emergencies:** As coordinator of the protection cluster, UNHCR has a key role to play in promoting a

collaborative response to emergencies. It has a good track record at state level, e.g. mobilising needs assessments. There is a need to step up its communication and advocacy at national level, for example to draw attention to new emergency protection needs at Juba level. UNHCR is credited with the timely scale-up of its response in Upper Nile and Jonglei states in August 2021, with the (internal) declaration of an L1 and provision of emergency funding. However, UNHCR needs to step up its emergency preparedness, particularly for flooding, which has become an annual occurrence due to climate change. In an environment of inadequate humanitarian funding, UNHCR targets PSNs; while this is a sound approach in protracted crises, this is questioned by some UN agencies as omitting many vulnerable individuals and households in an emergency.

**Solutions and self-reliance:** UNHCR's vision and approach has evolved to become more comprehensive over the CSE period, encapsulated in the Multi-Year Protection and Solutions Strategy (MYPSS) of 2021 to 2023.

On solutions, UNHCR has made some progress in fostering an enabling institutional environment, particularly through the consultative approach to developing the National Durable Solutions Strategy in 2021. Enhanced cross-government buy-in and political endorsement is still required at the national level and in some states. Of the three solutions options promoted by UNHCR – voluntary return, local integration and resettlement – the local reintegration option is not being taken forward as actively as returns: both voluntary IDP returns and to a lesser extent support to spontaneous refugee returns. Addressing Housing, Land and Property (HLP) issues is recognised by UNHCR and its partners as key to durable solutions in South Sudan, and requires greater emphasis. Returns need to be better monitored to assess how substantive and sustained they are; potential returns need to be better assessed using a conflict sensitivity lens. The Pockets of Hope initiative, focused on spontaneous refugee returnees, and providing tangible benefits in terms of infrastructure and services, is valued by government and communities. But there are concerns amongst international actors, including donors, that it may create a 'pull' factor when conditions are not conducive to return, and that some locations do not meet the criteria, e.g. where there is deteriorating food security and conflict risk. The Pockets of Hope initiative is currently inadequately synchronised with other area-based approaches, although this has now been recognised and plans to address this are being developed.

The Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC) and UNHCR-led solutions architecture is developing at national and state levels, linked to the IGAD regional solutions approach. Different strands of the Durable Solutions architecture need to work in better synergy, for example with the IOM-UNDP-led Partnership for Peace Recovery and Resilience (PfPRR). UNHCR South Sudan is cooperating effectively with neighbouring UNHCR offices in relation to operational and cross-border issues, but collaboration on Solutions is at an early stage, for example with UNHCR Uganda where collaboration is focused mainly on new arrivals into northern Uganda rather than solutions. Enhanced cooperation with UNHCR Sudan will support the recently revived UNHCR South Sudan focus on Abyei.

Progress on self-reliance, a key step towards Durable Solutions, has mainly, to date, focused on refugee livelihoods. Efforts so far are small-scale in relation to need and under-funded, for example on livelihoods, which are not sufficiently market-oriented, and associated with protection challenges that are yet to be addressed. Partnership-working on self-reliance is not as well developed as broader solutions partnerships, and will be critical to making further progress given UNHCR's limited capacity, (e.g. with FAO, IOM and UNDP). More senior and specialized livelihoods expertise is needed to support this more strategic partnerships approach and to mobilize resources.

**Building coherence through partnerships:** UNHCR's partnership with key government institutions



such as CRA and RRC is strong, although greater higher level political and cross-government engagement will be key to progress solutions and advocacy for protection. UNHCR's thematic, results-focused partnerships are generally well-developed in its traditional areas of focus: protection, camp-based and emergency responses. Partnership-working for solutions, and around the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) triple nexus is gaining traction. Partnerships for self-reliance and for tackling climate change are less well-developed, and UNHCR is not fully engaged in joint working on Women, Peace and Security. UNHCR invests significant efforts in most of its UN partnerships, with UNMISS as an increasingly important partner. There is scope for further optimising the comparative advantage of different agencies. Strong implementing partnerships are essential for effective delivery, and could be strengthened with more attention given to operationalising good partnership principles, including equitability of power relationships, and accelerated progress on localisation. Engagement of national actors such as academia, think-tanks and civil society is not well-developed, yet this could benefit a number of aspects of UNHCR's work, e.g. taking forward the National Action Plan on Durable Solutions.

In terms of resource mobilisation, opportunities to address funding shortfalls include joint UN funds, development partnerships, private sector engagement and support from non-traditional donors. Some traditional donors are also more likely to step up funding if they see a strengthening of important aspects of UNHCR South Sudan's approach, for example in the area of conflict sensitivity. UNHCR has an important advocacy role to play, with others, in highlighting the increased protection risks associated with funding cuts.

## Relevance – part II

**Operationalisation of nexus thinking:** The HDP nexus is an important strategic framework for UNHCR in the South Sudan context. Some progress has been made in operationalising this, even if it has not been an explicit strategy: for example UNHCR's adaptive programming across and within contexts, and its approach to Durable Solutions. Partnership working in support of the nexus is still embryonic, for example the emerging development-oriented partnership with the World Bank. Focus on the peace dimension of the nexus is beginning, for example through peace-focused partnerships with UNMISS and other actors, but this is not sufficiently robust in all locations. Nexus-oriented programming is an opportunity to promote more transformative approaches to gender equality, including action on climate change.

**Conflict sensitive approaches:** While UNHCR teams have a good general grasp of local context and conflict dynamics, there is limited evidence of well-informed, up-to-date, and well-documented conflict analysis informing programmes and decision-making. While UNHCR is operating satisfactorily at the "do no harm" end of the conflict sensitivity spectrum, some international actors, including donors, are concerned that some UNHCR decisions, e.g. on IDP and refugee returns, have not been adequately conflict-sensitive. The robust, systematic and proactive approach to conflict sensitivity, which is needed in the South Sudan context, is not yet in place.

## Sustainability

Although UNHCR South Sudan does not have a specific sustainability strategy, a number of its country level policies and strategies have a sustainability dimension, including the MYSP (2023-2025) and the Sustainable Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Strategy.

**Preparing for handover to government:** UNHCR's work with government is guided by the principle

of state responsibility. There is evidence that it is enabling government functional capacity to deliver in the short-term. However, there is less focus on longer-term institutional strengthening. At the same time, the potential for government to assume responsibility in future is undermined by its inability to provide adequate funding to the responsible state agencies; this requires greater political will. Even if government will not be ready to assume full responsibility in the foreseeable future, a systematic approach to longer-term institutional strengthening in preparation for an eventual handover of responsibilities is important, guided by a roadmap, and working together with UN agencies and other key partners (such as the World Bank) at national and local levels.

**Environmental sustainability:** UNHCR has a growing focus on environmental sustainability, for example through different forms of environmentally-smart agriculture and some local renewable energy projects. The approach could be strengthened if more clearly guided by a strategic framework on climate change, integrated with conflict approaches to address the clear climate-conflict nexus in South Sudan, and informed by a strong gender lens. Assessment of, and plans to reduce, UNHCR's carbon footprint, a key step towards carbon neutrality, have not to date been systematically conducted.

## Conclusions

UNHCR has performed well in a challenging environment in relation to its refugee mandate, supporting government institutions and a progressive national policy framework on asylum and refugees, as well as demonstrating adaptability to the dynamic context of South Sudan. Its performance has been weaker in prioritizing IDP protection, promoting self-reliance, applied context analysis, and conflict sensitivity. As UNHCR expands its portfolio to support the search for Durable Solutions, and responds to a growing humanitarian caseload in an environment of declining resources, it must prioritise strategically to work to its comparative advantage: providing leadership on protection, fulfilling its mandate on refugees, and playing a catalytic role in promoting self-reliance and solutions, at the same time as pulling back from implementation and delivery in areas where others have a stronger comparative advantage, e.g. livelihoods and economic inclusion, and some aspects of SGBV.

## Recommendations

The CSE makes nine high-level recommendations for UNHCR to consider, each supported by a number of points that detail how the high-level recommendation can be implemented. Draft recommendations were discussed with UNHCR staff in South Sudan in an online workshop in April 2023. Thus, they were involved in the co-creation of these final recommendations, and could alert the evaluation team to examples where progress has already been made, reflected in the final formulation of the recommendations. In line with the ToC, the first four recommendations are thematic, and the remaining five address cross-cutting issues. Recommendations on partnerships are woven throughout.



**Table 1: CSE Recommendations**

Recommendation	Priority <sup>5</sup>	Action by <sup>6</sup>
<b>A. THEMATIC</b>		
<b>REFUGEE PROTECTION - Recommendation 1</b>		
<p><b>UNHCR should strengthen the connection between its refugee policy protection work at Juba level and its engagement with authorities at state level to support implementation of South Sudan’s progressive policy framework on refugees, while also adapting its approach to funding shortfalls to maintain its track record on refugee protection.</b></p> <p>Proposed actions:</p>	HIGH	CO/ SOs/ FOs
<p><b>a.</b> Ensure stronger coordination between UNHCR protection policy staff at Juba level and its protection officers at state and county level, so that the latter are supported to raise awareness and capacity to implement national policies through CRA and local authorities, while policy staff at Juba level make the case for improved government resourcing at state level, and accountability for policy implementation</p>	MEDIUM	CO/ SOs/ FOs
<p><b>b.</b> In order to adapt to funding cuts affecting refugee services and protection, play a more strategic and catalytic role, encouraging and leveraging partners rather than always delivering itself, especially where others have a greater comparative advantage (e.g. on livelihoods), and increasingly working through refugee and host community structures, learning from adaptations made during the Covid-19 pandemic</p>	HIGH	CO
<p><b>c.</b> Step up efforts to build protection capacity within South Sudan, particularly amongst national actors, building on experience over the last decade of what has worked, especially long-term accompaniment, ensuring principles of localisation are well-respected, e.g. adequate coverage of national NGO overheads</p>	MEDIUM	CO/ SOs/ FOs
<b>IDP PROTECTION – Recommendation 2</b>		
<p><b>UNHCR should step up its work on protection of IDPs, in particular its key leadership role, to better meet growing IDP protection needs in South Sudan and to align with UNHCR’s corporate policy on IDP protection as well as the UNSG’s Action Agenda.</b></p> <p>Proposed actions:</p>	HIGH	CO/ FOs/ RB/ HQ
<p><b>a.</b> Step up its leadership role to ensure protection is better understood and mainstreamed within the HCT, to promote collective advocacy to improve the protection environment within South Sudan, and to draw attention to the impact of funding cuts on exacerbating protection risks</p>	HIGH	CO

5 All recommendations are prioritised as ‘High’ (requiring urgent attention) or ‘Medium’ (requiring attention in the next six to twelve months), in order to support UNHCR in adaptation and implementation of its new MYSP, and to strengthen programming in the dynamic and uncertain context in South Sudan.

6 This column indicates which parts of UNHCR should be centrally involved in taking the recommendation forward, but is not exhaustive.

Recommendation	Priority <sup>5</sup>	Action by <sup>6</sup>
b. Build on recent improvements in UNHCR's leadership role, especially through the protection cluster, heightening awareness of protection issues in the CCCM, NFI and other clusters, and more promptly communicating new emergency protection needs as they arise	HIGH	CO/ FOs
c. Share good practice within some FOs in promoting IDP protection and effective partnership working, with other FOs, with the support of the new integrated IDP Team	HIGH	CO/ FOs
d. Step up certain partnerships (e.g. with UNFPA, UNMISS) and collaborative ways of working (e.g. working in consortia) within South Sudan and regionally to strengthen protection of IDPs	HIGH	CO
e. Ensure UNHCR senior management in South Sudan is better supported by the RB to step up IDP protection and advocacy, e.g. in high-level negotiations with UNMISS at country level, learning from good practice in other COs	MEDIUM	RB
<b>SOLUTIONS – Recommendation 3</b>		
<p><b>UNHCR needs to advocate for high level political endorsement and build enhanced cross-government ownership of, as well as broader civil society engagement in, the Durable Solutions Strategy, and play a strong leadership role in ensuring clearer synergy between the different strands of Solutions in South Sudan.</b></p> <p>Proposed actions:</p>	HIGH	CO
a. Lobby and build on progress to date to ensure approval of the SSDSS by the Council of Ministers	HIGH	CO
b. Catalyse and support participation of a broader range of national actors (governmental and non-governmental) in the implementation of the joint roadmap and 5-year Plan of Action contained in the SSDSS	MEDIUM	CO
c. Ensure ongoing progress in streamlining of the Solutions architecture within South Sudan, with the PfPRR, to ensure the Task Forces for Solutions are recognised and integrated	HIGH	CO
d. Step up the agreed approach to dovetail the Pockets of Hope initiative with wider area-based approaches, especially at county level, with a focus on building local government institutional capacity	HIGH	CO
e. Advocate to open up refugee and IDP integration options as part of the overall approach to solutions	MEDIUM	CO/ FOs
f. Carry out systematic monitoring of returns, both of refugees and IDPs, to inform programming and ensure that assisted returns are substantive and sustained.	HIGH	CO/ FOs

Recommendation	Priority <sup>5</sup>	Action by <sup>6</sup>
<b>SELF-RELIANCE – Recommendation 4</b>		
<p><b>UNHCR’s work on self-reliance needs to be stepped up, become more strategic, more collaborative and partnership-oriented, in line with its Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion (LEI) strategy (2022-5), and consistently sensitive to protection risks.</b></p> <p>Proposed actions:</p>	HIGH	CO
<p><b>a.</b> Strategically scale up livelihood support in the context of funding constraints, disengaging from implementation and focusing on a strong partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture as well as those UN agencies (FAO, IOM and UNDP) that can lead in delivering and diversifying livelihood programming, while concurrently stepping up engagement with the private sector, focusing more on market-based solutions and local value chains</p>	MEDIUM	CO
<p><b>b.</b> Re-orient UNHCR’s internal capacity, and ensure adequate senior level expertise, to support this more strategic, partnerships-focused approach to sustainable livelihoods, including building expertise to support an enhanced green economy / sustainability focus and a strong emphasis on women’s economic empowerment</p>	MEDIUM	CO
<p><b>c.</b> Ensure enhanced attention to the protection risks inherent in some livelihood activities, particularly for women, with stronger collaboration between livelihoods and protection colleagues, to ensure risk assessments and mitigation strategies are consistently in place</p>	HIGH	CO/ FOs
<p><b>d.</b> Step up progress towards refugee self-reliance, taking advantage of the political will wherever this exists (e.g. in WES), and promoting innovative and climate-smart programming</p>	MEDIUM	CO/ FOs
<b>B. CROSS-CUTTING</b>		
<b>EMPOWERMENT – ALIGNMENT WITH PERSONS OF CONCERN – Recommendation 5</b>		
<p><b>UNHCR should improve the alignment of its programming with persons of concern, by strengthening ongoing consultation through two-way flows of communication, and improving UNHCR’s and its implementing partners’ relationship with, and accountability to affected people.</b></p> <p>Proposed actions:</p>	HIGH	CO/ SOs/ FOs
<p><b>a.</b> Conduct action research to better understand which population groups use which communication channels (e.g. protection desks, local leaders, local professionals) with UNHCR and its partners, to inform how these communication channels can be strengthened and how to ensure all groups have voice and are heard</p>	MEDIUM	CO/ SOs/ FOs

Recommendation	Priority <sup>5</sup>	Action by <sup>6</sup>
b. Put in place clearer and collective action plans, with partners, for communicating with affected people when funding shortfalls result in services and other programming being cut, particularly with refugees and host communities	HIGH	CO/ SOs/ FOs
c. Step up regular communication and engagement with host communities in refugee-hosting areas, to understand and address current and emerging tensions between refugee and host communities	HIGH	CO/ SOs/ FOs
<b>GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP &amp; HANDOVER TO GOVERNMENT – Recommendation 6</b>		
<b>UNHCR should develop a strategy and roadmap to build government institutional capacity over the medium and long-term, to be reviewed and adapted on a regular basis, supported by organisational assessments, and carried out jointly with government counterparts.</b>  Proposed actions:	MEDIUM	CO
a. Build advocacy and influencing jointly with other key agencies, to increase political will on the part of government to allocate resources for refugee care and management, to enable a gradual handover of responsibilities	MEDIUM	CO
b. Ensure any future handover of responsibilities to government is underpinned by thorough capacity and risk assessments, plus ongoing monitoring of conflict sensitivity risks, supported by systematic benchmarking of government capacity requirements and standards	MEDIUM	CO
c. After handover of responsibilities (e.g. POC sites), put in place a significant period of continued support and monitoring by UNHCR, particularly around the provision of protection services and ongoing monitoring of both protection and conflict sensitivity risks	HIGH	CO/ FOs
<b>ENHANCING CONTEXT RELEVANCE &amp; CONFLICT SENSITIVITY – Recommendation 7</b>		
<b>UNHCR should (i) ensure its operations are systematically underpinned by stronger contextual analysis and understanding and (ii) use this analysis and enhanced understanding to become more systematic and rigorous in applying conflict-sensitive approaches in its programming and operations at all levels.</b>  Proposed actions:	HIGH	CO/ SOs/ FOs
a. Systematically conduct regular context assessments, internally as well as in partnership with others, unpacking the specifics of local contexts, the local political economy, and the complex dynamics of displacement, ensuring the perspectives of affected people (e.g. youth), are incorporated	HIGH	CO/ SOs/ FOs

Recommendation	Priority <sup>5</sup>	Action by <sup>6</sup>
b. Make use of the considerable expert support, training and resources available in South Sudan to step up its application of conflict sensitive approaches, aiming to become a model of best practice	HIGH	CO/ SOs/ FOs
c. Ensure UNHCR is fully abreast of changing localised patterns of violence and security threats, e.g. gang-related violence, trafficking, modern slavery, abductions, working in close partnership with other actors e.g. IOM	HIGH	CO/ SOs/ FOs
d. Ensure all aspects of programming and risk management proactively demonstrate enhanced conflict sensitivity, e.g. in considering IDP and refugee returns, Pockets of Hope programming, and promoting improved relationships between refugees and host communities	HIGH	CO/ SOs/ FOs
e. Regularly review and balance staff allocations in relation to changing patterns of needs on the ground, building on the current staffing review, ensuring the mix of national staff in its offices at all levels represents the diversity of the South Sudanese communities which it serves, which will in turn help in enhancing conflict-sensitive approaches	MEDIUM	CO/ SOs/ FOs
f. Look for opportunities to consolidate strategy and operations across connected and similar zones within the three greater regions (Greater Upper Nile, Greater Equatorias, Greater Bahr El Ghazal), maximising proactive joint planning and learning between different SOs and FOs within each region to better address local context specificities	MEDIUM	CO
g. Ensure national level strategies and SOPs not only reflect global, corporate and regional frameworks and policies (which they usually do), but are also informed by, and adapted to the context in South Sudan, so their strategic aspirations are grounded in the reality of South Sudan, and it is clear how they will be implemented (e.g. multi-year national GBV strategy)	MEDIUM	CO
<b>HDP NEXUS, CLIMATE AND GENDER SENSITIVITY – Recommendation 8</b>		
<p><b>UNHCR should deepen its understanding of the climate-conflict nexus in South Sudan, prioritising environmental sustainability and climate sensitivity in all its operations, as well as systematically looking for opportunities to strengthen the peace dimension of the HDP nexus in its work, and mainstreaming approaches to gender equality and social inclusion, with a strong focus on building transformational partnerships.</b></p> <p>Proposed actions:</p>	HIGH	CO/ SOs/ FOs

Recommendation	Priority <sup>5</sup>	Action by <sup>6</sup>
<p>a. Strengthen national as well as state and local level partnerships across the HDP nexus to build trajectories out of humanitarian crises and conflict towards peace and development, with a strong focus on development and peace-oriented partnerships, and optimising relationships with key partners such as the World Bank and UNMISS</p>	MEDIUM	CO/ RB also FO/SO level important
<p>b. Develop an overall strategic framework on climate adaptation at CO level, cascaded to SO/ FO levels, aligned to relevant government and UN strategies on climate change, engaging actively in joint UN and government initiatives on climate change, building climate adaptation objectives into sectors/clusters where UNHCR plays a lead role (e.g. NFIs, CCM) as well as government capacity-building, accompanied by an action plan to assess and reduce its carbon footprint in South Sudan, working towards net zero targets at the level of the CO, and SO/FOs</p>	HIGH	CO
<p>c. Consider creating a small hub/ unit within the CO, with the mandate and expertise to support the country operation at all levels in building nexus working, including (i) specialised climate change expertise, (ii) expertise to support conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding (as per recommendation 7), and (iii) expertise to underpin stronger approaches to gender sensitivity</p>	MEDIUM	CO
<b>THEORY OF CHANGE; MONITORING, EVALUATION &amp; LEARNING – Recommendation 9</b>		
<p><b>UNHCR should ensure its work is informed by a robust, integrated Theory of Change, which pulls together all the lessons from the CSE to inform the MYSP, as well as building a better and more insightful results management system to develop a strong evidence base, and fostering a reflective learning culture.</b></p> <p>Proposed actions:</p>	HIGH	CO
<p>a. Review and strengthen the ToC for the MYSP (visual plus consolidated narrative), strengthening the contextual understanding, building clearer synergies between thematic pathways, and giving greater emphasis to cross-cutting approaches</p>	HIGH	CO
<p>b. Revisit and review the ToC at regular intervals, e.g. to update assumptions and risks, through a joint, collaborative mechanism involving key partners</p>	MEDIUM	CO
<p>c. Strengthen the results management framework, specifically to include more robust and disaggregated outcome level indicators pertaining to all key MYSP outcome areas (building on those contained in the UNHCR Results-Based Management (RBM) system where required), and thus more effectively reflect achievements and challenges, evidence of transformational change, and good practice, to support adaptive management</p>	HIGH	CO



