

## **DESS Director's statement in the Standing Committee**

### **Emergency Preparedness and Response, Supply and Security of UNHCR workforce and operations**

**(15 March 2024)**

#### **Introduction**

*Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,*

I am delighted to provide you with an update on UNHCR's endeavors related to emergency preparedness and response, supply chain, and security of the workforce and its operations.

#### **Emergency preparedness and response**

Since the new Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response and the new Guidance on Emergency Preparedness were issued in 2023, the Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS) continued with the rollout across the whole organization.

UNHCR is committed to strengthen the right people in the right place at the right time approach, adapting its global emergency deployment rosters to respond to increasingly complex and diverse emergency staffing needs. This year, we introduced a French-specific cohort who will be trained in the French-speaking Workshop on Emergency Management (WEM) next week. We thank Germany and Norway for hosting the WEM for over 20 years. These efforts are strongly complemented by UNHCR's 21 global Emergency Standby Partners who continue to provide in-kind expert deployments and service package support. We are sincerely grateful for their commitment, collaboration and partnership.

*Distinguished delegates,*

UNHCR continues the engagement with private sector entities to strengthen its emergency capacity. In 2024, we welcomed CISCO Crisis Response as a new emergency response standby partner. It is UNHCR's second private sector emergency partner ensuring capacity to deploy ICT services.

Our recently re-launched Emergency Handbook is now fully online with improved features. The Handbook is also open to partners and available in 6 languages. Furthermore, based on the successful example of Asia, we are establishing a new virtual training center (eCentre for Africa) to enhance the capacities of local actors and NGOs in Africa in emergency preparedness and response. We thank especially the Government of Japan for its generous support for the eCentre as announced at the Global Refugee Forum in December and for the timely support to the Emergency Handbook.

*Distinguished delegates,*

The fragility of the international supply context in the last few years has placed tremendous pressure on our supply orchestration as seen in current security challenges in the Red Sea. In this regard, UNHCR benefitted last year from partner support such as the EU humanitarian air bridge, the Dubai International Humanitarian City (IHC), but also from private sector partners such as Kuehne and Nagel, MAERSK, the Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) and the United Parcel Service (UPS). Their donations of airlifts and sea shipments significantly enhanced UNHCR's ability to provide effective emergency response solutions.

To meet the ever-growing needs of forcibly displaced people faster and better, we have comprehensively reviewed our supply chain capabilities. We are getting ready to launch UNHCR's new supply strategy, which aims to transform our supply chain between 2024 and 2030, making it simpler, swifter and more sustainable.

As part of the Strategy, UNHCR is stepping up its climate action to minimize the environmental impact of our humanitarian assistance. We have already developed greener specifications for seven core relief items, with better packaging, palletization and labelling. In the framework of inter-agency cooperation, three additional vital items will be reviewed: tents, mattresses and tarpaulins. We are well on our way to surpass our initial target of 20% reduction in our carbon emissions from core relief items by 2025. In line with our new strategy, we will aim for a 30% CO2 reduction by 2030.

### **Strengthening the culture of security**

#### *Distinguished delegates,*

UNHCR remains committed to ensuring the safety and security of its personnel and actively engages with host governments and other stakeholders, while undertaking lessons learned reviews to adapt and strengthen security management practices. In this regard, building the knowledge and skills of UNHCR personnel in security management remains crucial. Last year, more than 2,000 staff members and managers from high-risk duty stations were trained bolstering the capability of personnel to operate in complex environments and to fulfill UNHCR's responsibility for the duty of care.

Of note, the Women's Security Awareness Training plays an important role in managing gender-related security incidents, assisting women in understanding available organisational supports and referral pathways. We have experienced an increase in support requests from individuals affected by gender-based security incidents, and DESS continues to provide confidential and victim-centered security support.

Finally, we reiterate our strong commitment to strengthening the UN Security Management System through proactive engagement and coordination. To this end, we were represented in over 22 interagency working groups in 2023 contributing to the successful development of security policy and guidance documents.

I thank you for your attention and we look forward to our continued collaboration.