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

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Standing Committee

Ninety-first meeting

12-13 September 2024

Held at Palais des Nations • Room XVIII

Summary record*, Thursday, 12 September 2024, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Dr. Katharina Stasch..... (Germany)

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The meeting was called to order at 10:06 a.m.

Opening of the meeting

1. The **Chairperson** declared open the ninety-first meeting of the Standing Committee. She informed the Committee of the passing away of the Permanent Representative and Ambassador of Peru, Ana Cecilia Gervasi Diaz. She remembered her as a dedicated colleague, a member of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Council Bureau, fighting for the dignity of many, including migrants and refugees, and engaging in the fight for gender equality.

2. The Deputy Permanent Representative of **Colombia**, aligning his delegation with the Chairperson's statement in memory of the late Ambassador of Peru, Madame Gervasi Diaz, called for one minute of silence in her memory. The Chairperson invited the Committee to observe a minute of silence.

The members of the Committee observed one minute of silence.

3. The **Chairperson** informed the Committee that during the inter-sessional period since the seventy-fourth plenary session of the Executive Committee in October 2023, the Standing Committee had considered a number of important issues at both formal and informal meetings. In March, it discussed the regional operations and global programmes of UNHCR, among other issues. In June, the session focused on international protection. To facilitate the work of the upcoming seventy-fifth plenary session of the Executive Committee, the deliberations on both days would focus on issues related to programme budgets and funding, management, financial control, administrative oversight, human resources and international protection. She informed the Committee that the budget item had been moved to the beginning of the agenda.

1. Adoption of the agenda (EC/75/SC/CRP.18)

4. The **Chairperson** drew the Committee's attention to the draft decision on budgets and funding in the document EC/75/SC/CRP.21 and invited any delegation wishing to submit amendments to the proposed decision do so in writing at the earliest opportunity following consultations amongst themselves. She informed that the Secretariat would ensure that the suggested amendments would be promptly brought to the Committee's attention for consideration. She also informed that the Secretariat had been approached by several delegations interested in proposing a technical correction to the language contained in the decision that referred to unearmarked contributions. However, it was also her understanding that those delegations planned to hold bilateral consultations on that matter with concerned States after the Executive Committee meeting to agree on the language of the text ahead of the update on budgets and funding at the March 2025 meeting of the Standing Committee.

5. With respect to the annual programme budget for 2025, she said that the item would be discussed in conjunction with the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. An English language advance copy of that report had been circulated to delegations on 29 August 2024. The French language advance copy of that report was made available on the Standing Committee's secure site on 4 September 2024.

6. The Chairperson invited comments or modifications on the agenda, and since there were none, she declared the agenda adopted.

7. The representative of **Peru** thanked the Chairperson for her warm words in memory of Ambassador Ana Cecilia Gervasi Diaz. He thanked the delegation of Colombia for his kind remarks, as well as all other delegations for their condolences and messages of solidarity. He stated that Ambassador Ana Cecilia Gervasi Diaz was the first woman to lead Peru's diplomatic service. She fought for gender equality, for women's empowerment, especially in multilateral arenas and would always be remembered for her dedication to service.

Opening remarks by the Deputy High Commissioner, (UNHCR)

8. The **Deputy High Commissioner** (UNHCR) extended her condolences to the delegation of Peru and to the Ambassador's family, friends, and colleagues. She said that every time the Committee met, it reaffirmed what brought them together, their common efforts to protect and find solutions for people forced to flee and for stateless persons.

9. Pointing to the increasingly critical mission of the organization, she drew attention to the over 120 million people who had been forcibly displaced across the globe due to longstanding conflicts and new violence. Noting that in 2024 alone, UNHCR had responded to 35 emergencies, 18 of which were new, she provided an overview of the multiple emergencies that many countries were simultaneously addressing, such as in the Sudan, where over 10 million people had been forced to flee their homes since the start of the conflict; in Chad and South Sudan ; where the organization's teams were reporting an increase in cases of malaria in refugee sites that was exacerbated by alarming levels of malnutrition and outbreaks of measles and other acute illness; in Myanmar, where increasing violence had uprooted 3.3 million people; and in Ukraine, where the laws of war were being ignored and populations were facing a third winter of uncertainty. In all of those countries, and in a total of 136 countries around the world, UNHCR and its partners were providing emergency aid to affected civilians.

10. With regard to the proposed programme budget for 2025, she informed the Committee that the budgetary requirements stood at \$10.2 billion, which was a decrease compared to the budget of nearly \$10.8 billion as of the end of July 2024. She stressed that the decrease was not due to falling needs but reflected the ongoing efforts of UNHCR to streamline operations. While announcing that the organization had received \$4.151 billion in funding as of the previous month, she thanked donors and member States who continued to support UNHCR, in particular, the European Union, Germany, Japan and the United States of America who had consistently been among the largest donors. She also acknowledged the generous unearmarked contributions made by Denmark, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Norway and Sweden, which meant that UNHCR could deploy immediately in emergencies and deliver protection in overlooked crises. She underlined the essential role of host countries, in particular those who included refugees into their local economies and services and stated that their support was crucially important.

11. The organization had continued its efforts to broaden its donor base. It was engaging new and emerging donors and exploring innovative ways, including climate financing, innovative financing, and Islamic philanthropy. However, despite these efforts, the gap between the organization's needs-based budget and available funds remained large, and the outlook for 2025 and beyond remained uncertain. Regarding independent oversight, she emphasized that the organization had improved its implementation of outstanding audit recommendations from the Board of Auditors and noted that the Board had concluded that the organization's financial statements for 2023 fairly represented its financial position, performance and cash flows for that year. She noted that this was the first reporting period using the new cloud ERP environment.

12. In line with the Global Compact on Refugees, UNHCR was changing the way it programmes and delivers by advancing sustainable solutions, strengthening partnerships, and expanding impact. She stated that UNHCR was aiming to maximize self-reliance and reduce dependency on humanitarian aid, and increase investments going to emergency response, protection, social economic integration, and solutions. This was being achieved through a whole-of-society approach, engaging development actors to support sustainable service delivery and partnering with the private sector to create employment opportunities for those forced to flee. She noted that the approach was not new, and that it had already been used in countries such as Costa Rica, Kenya and Mauritania. She indicated that the High Commissioner would speak more about the operational shift during the upcoming Executive Committee meeting.

13. In collaboration with other United Nations agencies, UNHCR was finding more opportunities to cut needless costs through joint procurement processes. UNHCR was working closely with the private sector to learn from their experiences in achieving efficiencies. To meet present and future challenges, the organization was developing a comprehensive efficiency agenda supported by a new "Design and Development Service" that would advise it on how to best achieve its strategic priorities, as outlined in the Global Compact.

14. She informed that, over the past eight years, UNHCR had gone through a massive transformation and modernization process, decentralizing operations and bringing decision-making closer to operations and had become more agile and faster in its response as a result. The organization had commissioned an independent evaluation of its decentralization and regionalization reform, which looked at how the new organizational design and ways of working had affected its ability to meet the growing needs of forcibly displaced and stateless persons. The final report of the evaluation would be shared for discussion before the Executive Committee in October.

15. She noted that UNHCR had embedded innovation, data, and technology into its processes and remained committed to strengthening the culture of efficiency within the organization. Through its Business Transformation Programme, it had eliminated inefficient paper-based processes, becoming one of the first agencies in the United Nations to move entirely to cloud-based services. The organization's innovative efforts in using financial technology to improve how it managed its treasury functions had been recognized with the 2024 Treasury Excellence Award for Technology Transformation. By using advanced digital platforms, UNHCR had made its cash-based programmes more efficient and set a new standard in the humanitarian sector. She said that the organization was also investing in greening its operations, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from its buildings, fleet, and travel and was on track to reach a 30 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

16. Recognizing the organization's diverse and dedicated workforce, consisting of nearly 19,800 colleagues working across 588 locations, and the personnel of its over 1,200 partners, she recalled that, in April 2024, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Framework for 2024-2026 was launched, setting clear strategic directions in every aspect of the organization's work. Similarly, as of the end of August 2024, UNHCR had achieved gender parity at all levels of its international workforce and was further strengthening efforts, along with the United Nations system, with the development of a new Gender Equality Acceleration Plan to promote equal opportunities for women in leadership, strengthen gender-sensitive policies, and promote an inclusive workplace culture that empowered all colleagues. She stressed that UNHCR was committed to personnel welfare, in particular following the realignment process to reach affected individuals, teams, and managers. UNHCR had also considerably strengthened the culture of accountability, trust, transparency, and the systems for reporting possible misconduct and abuse, which had resulted in a rise in both formal and informal complaints, evidencing growing awareness and trust in its integrity systems.

17. With regard to the 120 million forcibly displaced people with whom UNHCR worked, she stated that if they were included and given a chance, they would have the potential to contribute significantly to their host societies. She highlighted that during the Olympic and the Paralympic Games, refugee athletes such as Cindy Ngamba won the first-ever medal for the Refugee Olympic Team in boxing, and Zakia Khudadadi and Guillaume Junior Atangana of the Refugee Paralympic Team won bronze medals in taekwondo and athletics. While quoting Zakia Khudadadi, who said "The medal was for all the refugees in the world," she informed the Committee that UNHCR had received the Olympic Laurel, which was given to the High Commissioner in recognition of the crucial role sport played in the inclusion and physical and mental well-being of refugees. The organization also received the Fair Play for Peace Award for its work in spreading positive values of peace and solidarity around the world through sports.

2. Programme budgets and funding

(a) Update on budgets and funding for 2024

18. The **Director of the Division of Strategic Planning and Results (UNHCR)** introduced her presentation by highlighting priorities and changes to the budget. She pointed out that at its seventy-fourth plenary session in October 2023, the Executive Committee had approved an original budget of \$10.622 billion for 2024, however, as of 30 April 2024, the annual budget stood at \$10.765 billion to reflect a supplementary budget of \$143.7 million that had been established in support of the Sudan situation. In addition, as of 31 July 2024, the supplementary budget was increased by an additional \$20 million, amounting to \$163.7 million, and bringing the total budget for 2024 to \$10.785 billion.

19. After providing detailed information on how the organization was responding to 35 emergencies in 22 countries in 2024, including 14 active emergencies in 11 countries, such as in response to the Sudan Situation, flooding in Brazil, Burundi, Haiti, and in the countries surrounding the State of Palestine, she drew attention to the situation in the Sudan, where over 3 million internally displaced persons had received various forms of emergency assistance and protection through the supplementary budget. She emphasized that approximately 1.1 million Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries were being supported with food, shelter, health care and other basic needs, including 400,000 refugees in Chad, 300,000 refugees in South Sudan, 100,000 refugees in the Central African Republic and about 30,000 refugees in Uganda. In addition, 616,000 returnees were being supported with their reintegration in South Sudan.

20. With regard to funds available, she expressed the expectation that the total estimated funds available for the budget year 2024 would reach approximately \$5.4 billion, including a carryover of \$549.4 million from 2023 and contributions from the United Nations regular budget, to allow

UNHCR to achieve many of its targets for 2024. As of the end of July 2024, the expenditure was about \$2.8 billion, compared to approximately \$3 billion the previous year. When compared to 2023, regional expenditures for 2024 showed a pattern of stability. and other countries in response to the Sudan situation. For this reason, there was very little change in the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region, an 8 per cent increase in the Southern Africa region and a slight reduction in the West and Central Africa region as a result of reduced expenditure in Chad and other countries affected by the Sudan situation. There was a 14 per cent increase in the Americas region, and a slight reduction in the Middle East and North Africa region and in the Asia and the Pacific region in 2023, because of the earthquake emergency response, the Pakistan flood response respectively. There was a similar reduction in the Europe region due to the high supplementary budgets that were issued in 2023 for the Ukraine situation.

21. Global programmes and headquarters expenditure had also decreased slightly due to increased support for country operations, but this was offset by investments in private sector partnership and the supply chain management. There were decreases primarily in the areas of well-being, largely driven by shifts due to the Sudan situation, which covered cash, core relief items, distribution of non-food items, and housing and shelter. However, in spite of the decreases, UNHCR provided core relief items to some 2.5 million people, representing approximately 51 per cent of its target for 2024. She stressed that expenditures by outcome areas related to protection and their solutions displayed few variations, reflecting the continued prioritization of work in those areas.

22. Turning to the core output indicators, she noted that in terms of achievements from 2024 against resources spent, the organization had spent \$279 million on access to territory, registration, and documentation; \$89 million on resettlement which contributed to the submission of 103,000 resettlement cases, with 51,000 already having departed; \$75 million on child protection, which enabled 69 operations to provide child protection services to 636,000 children; and supported 2.2 million people in 2024 to obtain civil status, identity, and legal status documents in 75 operations. She also stressed that the UNHCR operations had reported achieving 48 to 65 per cent of targets set for 2024.

23. The **Director of the Division of External Relations (UNHCR)**, after reviewing the protection and humanitarian impact of the war in the Sudan, as well as the threats it posed to international peace and security, began her presentation by drawing attention to the Underfunded Report 2024, which highlighted 17 operations, five of which made up the Sudan situation, and identified large funding gaps faced by those operations. Up to 78 per cent of needs were not funded, with UNHCR receiving \$425 million less in new voluntary contributions in 2024 compared to 2023. While flexible funding stood at \$835 million, 18 per cent less than the previous year, she informed that 45 per cent of the organization's available flexible funding had been allocated to those 17 operations to enable effective delivery of protection.

24. Pointing to a recent survey conducted by UNHCR teams in Lampedusa, Italy, where 40 per cent of new arrivals had been registered with UNHCR in at least one country before arriving in Lampedusa, she explained that without sufficient humanitarian support and assistance, forcibly displaced persons were unlikely to stop at their first country of asylum where they usually want to stay to return home, increasing the risk of more people remaining on the move.

25. While noting that the budget of UNHCR stood at \$10.7 billion and was, so far, 38 per cent funded, she thanked donors who had made the largest contributions to the organization's programme during the year, in particular Denmark, the European Union, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Highlighting the enormous effort made by the Republic of Korea to increase its official development assistance, she further thanked donors who were expanding their support in 2024, such as Poland.

26. She said that the organization's increased reliance on a small number of donors was even more concerning as contributions from pooled funds had dropped significantly in 2024 and were expected to continue that downward trend in 2025. As of August 2024, while funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund stood at \$29 million compared to \$97 million in 2023, funding from country-based pooled funds was \$8 million compared to \$33 million at the end of 2023.

27. Emphasizing a growth in private sector funding, which was continuing on an upward trend, she said the organization would continue to encourage support from emerging donors and consider innovative financing to diversify its sources of income. In that regard, and in relation to the Global Islamic Fund for Refugees, an endowment fund that had been set up in collaboration with the Islamic

Development Bank, was operational with an initial contribution of \$50 million from the bank and \$10 million from the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre. She also announced that the organization's approach to innovative financing had enabled it to mobilize over \$110 million in new funding since 2019, with a renewed aim to catalyse \$500 million towards projects that bridge humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts. Funding was also coming through for climate response to cater to the 75 per cent of forcibly displaced people, including refugees and internally displaced persons who were living in the most climate-vulnerable countries. The organization was seeking to obtain \$100 million in climate funding by the end of 2024, including from donor governments, the private sector, pooled funds, multilateral development banks such as the African Development Bank Group, climate vertical funds like the Green Climate Fund, member States and other development actors to ensure an appropriate response to the climate crisis. Drawing attention to the importance of flexible funding and unearmarked funds, she pointed out that an estimated 90 per cent of unearmarked funding came from individual donors, highlighting a commitment to the cause of millions of refugees.

28. Finally, underlining the crucial contribution of refugee-hosting countries, she noted that low- and middle-income countries hosted 75 per cent of the world's refugees, and the least developed countries were responsible for hosting more than 21 per cent of all refugees worldwide. She stressed that those countries needed meaningful and sustained support to continue to host refugees.

29. The representative of **Uganda, speaking on behalf of the Africa Group**, joined all in the room to send sincere condolences to the mission of Peru. She drew attention to the decline in voluntary contributions in recent years, and said that the reduced funding would exacerbate pressure on refugee-hosting countries, many of which were developing countries on the African continent and already grappling with socioeconomic challenges. She drew attention to the growing number of emergencies which were funded by a small number of donors, the declining funds could lead to donor fatigue. She stated that the hosting countries continued to deal with the protracted burden but remained resolute in assisting forcibly displaced persons. In this context, she called on the missing middle for support, especially States that were economically viable to support the humanitarian cause. With reference to the Global Refugee Forum, she stated that African States that are mainly hosting countries and who had made concrete policy pledges were already under implementation. A year after the Global Refugee Forum, she expressed concern that very few of the announced pledges had been fulfilled. The Africa Group further called for urgent focus on the root causes of displacement and to support and fund durable solutions, including involving countries of origin. With regard to sustainable programming, the Africa Group requested this Global Compact on Refugees programme to be approached like all other initiatives, emphasizing that the guiding principle for this initiative should remain burden- and responsibility-sharing. She requested UNHCR to share all relevant work plans or roadmaps to be shared with the Executive Committee members in a transparent, inclusive, and effective manner. She reaffirmed the Africa Group's support for the draft decision attached in Annex VI of the conference room paper EC/75/SC/CRP.21.

30. The representative of **Chad** conveyed, on behalf of African Ambassadors, their condolences to the Peruvian mission. He provided detailed information on the influx of refugees from the Sudan into Chad and stressed that there were more than 1 million Sudanese refugees in Chad following the latest events in Darfur. He requested UNHCR that a more up to date figure of Sudanese refugees in Chad be provided. He highlighted various difficulties being encountered in Adre due to the influx of refugees, such as lack of agricultural land, but emphasized that the borders would remain open despite these difficulties. While emphasizing that Chad was doing everything it could to support refugees, he thanked and appealed to partners for additional support for both refugees and the host communities. He pointed out that the World Bank, for instance, had built a school in the refugee camp even though in the city of Adre the host community lacked a school.

31. The representative of **Ethiopia** aligned itself with the statement delivered by Uganda on behalf of the Africa Group. He noted the unprecedentedly high number of refugees and that the projected funding gap would worsen the economic situation of host countries, which already had their own development challenges. He said that Ethiopia was among those affected by the perennial challenge of underfunding despite its efforts at implementing progressive refugee laws and policies. He underlined that the massive refugee influx from the Sudan and Somalia was hampering refugee response by Ethiopia and called on donors to review funding and encouraged UNHCR to diversify its funding sources by reinforcing engagement with the private sector, among others.

32. The representative of **Switzerland** said his country remained concerned about the capacity of UNHCR to fulfil its mandate in the context characterized by the gap between needs and funding

resources for the second consecutive year. He noted that the budgets for the Europe and Middle East and North Africa regions were decreasing by 15 and 9 per cent, respectively, or \$440 million in total, while the latest developments in Ukraine and Gaza predicted a further degradation in the regional humanitarian situation. He asked whether UNHCR had taken that into account in its planning, given that the programme budget of the organization was never financed more than 50 to 60 per cent. He expressed concern about the increase in the financial gap by 1 billion and requested an explanation on the basis of its calculations and if the indicated figures were a forecast of the expected generosity of the usual donors or the implementation of the principle of more equitable responsibility sharing. He welcomed efforts undertaken to ensure increased efficiency, in particular as part of the Business Transformation Programme and said he looked forward to the results of the upcoming independent evaluation on decentralization. He also encouraged UNHCR to implement recommendations from the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network.

33. The representative of the **European Union**, speaking on behalf of its member States, and the candidate countries Armenia, Georgia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova Serbia and Ukraine took note of the 2025 proposed programme budget and the projected figure of 139 million forcibly displaced and stateless persons by the end of 2025. She stated that the increasing humanitarian and protection needs were alarming, with the Sudan situation adding to the already stretched humanitarian and development funds. The European Union called on UNHCR to maintain a strong focus on emergency response and protection besides the solutions agenda. Expressing concern about the growing funding gap and the risk implied by reliance on only a limited number of donors, UNHCR was requested to continue sharing details about efforts to increase efficiencies and effectiveness in the management of the resources at hand, together with insights on the process of selection and prioritization based on assessments of the severity of needs. She stated that the efficient and effective use of funds and clear prioritization benefited refugees, host communities, and donors alike while creating the trust to incentivize new donors to step forward.

34. The European Union welcomed regular updates on the funding situation of UNHCR and its operational consequences, including the Underfunded Report 2024, which demonstrated the importance of being able to deliver life-saving protection and assistance in key crises. The European Union and its member States remained steadfast in their commitment to provide support to all regions affected by forced displacement. It reiterated the need to mobilize additional humanitarian and development funding globally and called for other donors to contribute to achieving a more balanced funding structure. It encouraged UNHCR to further explore partnerships and solutions with private and emerging donors in order to enhance the scope of their funding. The European Union said that it was necessary to leverage financial mechanisms with the private sector, not only for funding but also for technical expertise and innovation to achieve sustainable and scalable solutions.

35. The European Union underlined the need for enhanced coordination with other United Nations agencies, particularly the International Organization for Migration, to ensure a more integrated and effective humanitarian response. Positive examples of such coordination included engagement with the Office of the United Nations Special Advisor on Solutions to Internal Displacement, as well as targeting through the UNHCR-World Food Programme Joint Hub.

36. The European Union appreciated the efforts to optimize processes and underlined the importance of a continued focus on cost-effectiveness and interoperability of systems and data. As conflict was the main cause of forced displacement worldwide, the European Union was deeply committed to the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus and aimed to address the root causes of conflict, including through conflict resolution and humanitarian diplomacy.

37. The European Union welcomed the sustainable programming approach and efforts to promote durable solutions for displaced populations in the context of protracted crises, which also benefited host communities. It looked forward to the implementation of the approach at the field level, with the aim to minimize dependence on short-term humanitarian funding, increase self-reliance, and inclusion in national systems, in close coordination with international development actors, host country authorities, and the private sector.

38. The European Union commended the increasing use of new technologies by UNHCR and the implementation of the transformation process to enhance its overall effectiveness and efficiency. It supported efforts to further improve transparency and audit the expenditure of humanitarian aid to uphold accountability. It appreciated the commitment to strengthen independent oversight and integrity activities, notably through the strategic oversight and investigative functions, and called for continued exchanges with the Inspector General's Office.

39. The representative of **Sweden** offered condolences to the Peruvian delegation for the loss of their Ambassador. She said that her country aligned itself with the statement made by the European Union. She stated that while moving into another budget year with tremendous challenges, Sweden recognized the important role and work of UNHCR in providing fundamental humanitarian support and protection to the many millions of people in need. The growing financial gap that had been described reflected the need for increased cost efficiency. It also served as a reminder of the shared responsibility to contribute flexible and multi-year funding. Sweden was one of the world's top humanitarian donors and would continue to support UNHCR. In 2024, Sweden had contributed nearly \$ 97 million and urged other donors to increase their share of flexible funding to bridge the critical financial gap.

40. Sweden also recognized the prioritization efforts that UNHCR had undertaken and understood the challenge of that exercise when needs surpassed available financial resources. She said that Sweden would continue to support principled life-saving assistance, and expected humanitarian partners to strengthen the needs assessment processes and to prioritize based on the severity of needs. She requested further insights into needs assessment findings by UNHCR and how those inform prioritization decisions, as well as on efficient strategies to manage available resources.

41. The representative of Sweden commended the efforts to implement the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network N recommendations. While acknowledging the significant efforts made so far, she encouraged UNHCR to strive for greater efficiency and strengthened oversight. Sweden appreciated improvements to reinforce partnerships with refugee- and women-led organizations, and looked forward to following the progress of UNHCR in becoming a better partner in funded relationships.

42. As a strong supporter of the route-based approach of UNHCR, Sweden was also positive about the reinforcement of the principles of the Global Compact on Refugees, reflected in the sustainable programming initiative. As humanitarian response continued to be overstretched, she said that development actors, international financial institutions, and the private sector must be involved in a whole-of-society approach to ensure greater self-reliance for refugees and enable safe and dignified voluntary repatriation.

43. Sweden looked forward to the presentation of the sustainable programming initiative by the High Commissioner at the Executive Committee meeting in October and for further clarity on how the mandate of UNHCR fits within that approach, how funding streams were expected to be redirected, and how it could be ensured that host communities did not bear the full burden of integrating refugees. She emphasized that Sweden would remain an advocate for a rights-based, efficient, and sustainable refugee response by contributing flexible and multi-year support.

44. The representative of **Australia** said that her country welcomed the presentation at the Standing Committee and prior consultations on the 2024 budget. Already providing predictable multi-year and flexible funding to UNHCR, Australia also sought to provide specific support to underfunded crises through flexible funding, and was pleased to contribute a further \$8 million to the Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan in June, in addition to the \$7 million it had announced at the Global Refugee Forum in 2023.

45. Australia acknowledged the high number of newly declared emergencies to which UNHCR had responded in 2024 and appreciated the way in which it had handled the increased workload, including the difficult prioritization that was required to support evolving crises alongside existing and protracted crises. Given this reality, she said Australia welcomed an ongoing conversation to ensure that the funding received was used most efficiently and expressed concern that the projected funding gap for 2024 was the highest since 2015. It remained particularly alert to the funding needs for the scale of displacement in Asia and the Pacific, including as a result of the deteriorating situation in Myanmar.

46. The representative of **the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** noted the need to strengthen efforts to ensure international protection and support of communities and highlighted the difficult situation faced by developing countries. Although her country had made great sacrifices to open its doors to refugees, it was now under increased pressure, notably with the imposition of multilateral measures, which prevented providing support and dignity to people who needed it.

47. Regarding the 2024 Underfunded Report, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela noted that the funding gap was expected to be almost 50 per cent of the funds needed, putting the lives and

dignity of refugees in danger because of the critical situation it created for developing countries that were hosting them. The support of UNHCR was needed to manage these refugees. She said that, for example, the situation in the Middle East and North Africa region had been exacerbated by the aggression against Palestine, which had created an unprecedented humanitarian situation.

48. There was also a worrying trend that resources allocated to international protection were increasingly conditional, earmarked, restricted, and fragmented. These kinds of restrictions limited the capacity and operational flexibility of UNHCR to act in the field and to respond urgently to new developments. Earmarking contributions and conditional funding also undermined neutrality in the field, leading to unequal protection and perpetuating vulnerability in refugee communities. For this reason, she called for greater generosity and fewer restrictions.

49. The representative of **Kenya** conveyed condolences to the mission and people of Peru. He said that his country aligned itself with the statement by the Republic of Uganda on behalf of the Africa Group. Kenya thanked all donors for the financial and in-kind contributions which made the life-saving work of UNHCR possible and took note of the 34 emergencies responded to in 2024. It was deeply concerned about that situation, which underlined the need to address root causes, end protracted situations and prevent latent situations from flaring up. Kenya encouraged UNHCR to work with other partners, including development and peace actors, to address the situation.

50. He said that the 2023 Global Refugee Forum provided a unique opportunity to have tangible and practical modalities to unite the strengths of the member States for refugees. However, most of the pledges had not been matched. In order to give them life and to actualize them, it was crucial to match them with the requisite financial and material sources. Kenya was ready to work with partners to explore those possibilities.

51. He noted the prioritization decisions that had been made, including in the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region, that would result in a decrease for Impact Area 4 on securing solutions. As reflected in the update for budgets and funding for 2024, this impact area still remained the least funded in 2024 at 11 per cent. Kenya requested further details on how that would affect specific country operations within the region and encouraged UNHCR to amplify collaborative efforts to support more countries of origin as part of the work of securing solutions to enable return and reintegration in safety and dignity, in line with the Global Compact on Refugees. It took note of the reduction by 7 per cent of the budget for child protection and requested the rationale behind that decision.

52. Following the recent roundtable discussions on sustainable programming in Berlin in July 2024, Kenya noted that since programming aspects touched on operational and technical aspects, it was imperative to ensure that operational and technical decisions happened before any strategic engagement. While it was important to ensure that discussions on refugee affairs at the global level took place in Geneva for continuity and synergy, conversations should not be delinked from related ongoing processes. References to sustainability needed to be agreed upon by consensus, highlighting that what was sustainable or not was different for different stakeholders. Kenya also took note of the shift to sustainable programming in the advance copy of the programme budget for 2025 and the vision to guide country operations and requested more details on the extent of consultations with governments and on the assessments of the merits and demerits of such a shift.

53. Kenya was concerned over the proposed 2025 budget reduction by \$21.9 million for the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region, while the number of forcibly displaced and stateless persons was projected to increase by 5 per cent to 27.2 million. Kenya requested clarification on measures to be undertaken to address that shortfall, including cuts in the Kenya Country Office by 5 per cent for the proposed 2025 budget. Kenya welcomed the focus on climate action and requested more details on the Climate Resilience Fund. Stressing that unearmarked funding remained crucial to ensure the agility of UNHCR to address needs, he appealed to all donors to ensure that financing of the humanitarian sector was unearmarked.

54. The representative of **the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** said that in the face of a greater gap between humanitarian needs and available resources, efficiency and cost-effectiveness had become even more important. The response of UNHCR to 34 emergencies in 2024, out of which 18 were newly declared, was demonstrative of the increasingly crowded humanitarian landscape and budgetary pressures faced by the organization. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland acknowledged the challenging prioritization decisions that had to be made in the context of a stark projected funding gap and commended the efforts to ensure efficient and effective use of available resources to reach those in greatest need. It was imperative

that those decisions were made transparently and collaboratively to ensure the coherence of the collective humanitarian response of the member States.

55. He said that despite financial constraints, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was pleased to note that its funding to UNHCR in 2024 had already surpassed its total funding for 2023. The United Kingdom also noted that it had sustained its core unearmarked funding in recognition of the crucial role the UNHCR played in supporting the most vulnerable and encouraged others to provide flexible contributions. The United Kingdom supported the draft decision on budgets and funding for 2024.

56. The representative of **the Republic of Korea** conveyed his condolences to the Peruvian delegation. He noted that the estimated minimum funds for 2024 was \$5.4 billion which was similar to the 2023 funds of \$5.7 billion. He said that amidst the uncertain funding gap, that was a fairly good achievement and asked that UNHCR keep prioritizing its programmes based on the available funding over the actual budget.

57. He said that as of 31 July 2024, his country's contribution to UNHCR had reached \$62 million, placing it as one of the top 10 donors. His delegation noted with appreciation that the Republic of Korea had been mentioned as one of the impactful donors during the year. He further noted that the Republic of Korea could surpass \$100 million in contributions for the first time in 2024.

58. By way of minor suggestions, he said that the table on flexible contributions in Annex 5 on page 14 showed the volumes and ranks of unearmarked contributions and softly earmarked contributions, but it was difficult to check the combined contribution and rank for both government and private donors. He said that this comprehensive data was useful and in line with the format of Annex 4 contributions to UNHCR and, therefore, suggested that the format be adjusted to include those integrated figures.

59. The representative of **the Sudan** expressed condolences to the delegation of Peru. She said that her country aligned itself with the statement delivered by the Africa Group and the statements that would be subsequently delivered by the Arab Group and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation group. She said that it had been more than 16 months since the rebel Janjaweed militia launched the ongoing war against the State and the people of the Sudan, which had caused one of the most severe humanitarian crises globally. The scale of the resulting humanitarian crisis was overwhelming. According to the latest statistics, over 12.7 million people had been forcibly displaced, including more than 10 million internally displaced persons and over 2 million people who had sought refuge in neighbouring countries. The infrastructure of the host communities, with an already fragile economy and inadequate health systems, was not sufficiently prepared to accommodate such large numbers of displaced persons.

60. She said the recent floods in many parts of the country, along with the outbreak of cholera in some parts, had exacerbated the pressure on the already overloaded health system and required urgent humanitarian intervention and immediate medical response. The floods and heavy rains had caused extensive damage; 20 villages had been totally damaged, while 50 had been partially damaged, along with more than 12,000 collapsed households. The total number of fatalities was 148 persons, in addition to 30 fatalities caused by the collapse of the Arba'at Dam in the Red Sea State. She said that to implement the multi-sectoral response plans for the floods, more resources were urgently needed, but the humanitarian response plan, as well as the regional response plan, remained severely underfunded.

61. She said that the Government of the Sudan was making all efforts to better respond to the situation and remained fully committed to facilitating aid delivery and ensuring the safety of humanitarian workers, as well as maintaining delivery through nine cross-border routes with neighbouring countries, including the recent decision of the Government to reopen the Adre border corridor. The Sudan urged the international community and donors to fulfil their commitments by providing more flexible and unearmarked funding to enable UNHCR to better plan and respond to the emergent crisis in a timely and effective manner.

62. The representative of **Uganda** said that her country aligned with the statement delivered by Uganda on behalf of the Africa Group. Since the previous Committee meeting in July 2024, the total number of refugees in Uganda was at 1.74 million, of which 75 per cent were children, and over 70 per cent were women and girls, and if this trend continued, it would be disastrous. She regretted to note that Uganda remained among the most underfunded operations, even when it continued to be

acclaimed as one of the most generous and inclusive countries. She said it was for that reason that Uganda would continue to advocate for unearmarked funding - not to cater to Ugandans, but to fund the refugees who were everyone's collective responsibility.

63. She noted that Uganda had made concrete pledges during the Global Refugee Forum, and had been waiting for those pledges to be matched. It was grateful to donors, in particular the European Union, Japan, the Nordic countries and the United States of America, that continued to match Uganda's pledges. She was encouraged by listening to delegations, especially donor partners, that continued to call for unearmarked funding and hoped that calls for the improvement of the related decision were only asking to improve and strengthen the language on unearmarked funding.

64. She asked for further clarification about what 'sustainable programming' meant in practice and whether it referred to the sustainability of responsibility- and burden-sharing or the sustainability of the burden on host countries. She further asked how sustainability would impact the way humanitarian and development actors work together. She requested that discussions on topics that concerned humanitarian causes be centred in Geneva and that missions there would be kept engaged in the process.

65. The representative of **France** conveyed his condolences to the Peruvian delegation. He said that his country aligned itself with the European Union statement. Highlighting the more than €2 billion raised by the European Union, 66 per cent of which had already been pledged to humanitarian action, he said the Global Forum on Refugees had been another opportunity for France to make pledges, which it intended to keep. He pointed out that Paris hosted the Olympic and Paralympic Games, which showcased the inspiring contributions of refugee athletes. He said that France supported efforts being made to improve the financial situation of UNHCR and encouraged the Secretariat to strengthen its work on transparency, expanding the donor base, and mobilizing its donors.

66. The representative of **Zambia** said that his country aligned with the statement by Uganda on behalf of the Africa Group. He said that 2024 had been a particularly challenging year for Zambia due to severe drought conditions, which had put immense pressure on its resources. Hosting refugees in such a difficult situation had placed a further strain on its ability to provide essential services. Zambia was concerned about the reduction in funding for the UNHCR operations, and even more so as further cuts were anticipated. He reiterated that the funding shortfall would hinder the ability of Zambia to integrate refugees into local communities because integration required financial and logistical support in critical areas such as housing, health care, education, and livelihoods.

67. He said Zambia firmly believed that a robust emergency preparedness framework was essential for managing humanitarian crises effectively. While acknowledging the urgent humanitarian needs in other parts of the world, Zambia felt it was equally vital that African emergencies receive the same level of prioritization and adequate resource allocation. To meet the growing demands across the continent, Zambia urged UNHCR and international partners to allocate sufficient resources to African operations, particularly in regions where the ongoing drought situation had placed additional strains on local resources.

68. He noted that Zambia continued to advocate for the inclusion of unearmarked funding for refugee-hosting nations and stated that the flexible funding model would position host countries to adapt quickly to evolving crises and provide a more effective response during emergencies. He said that despite the financial and environmental challenges, Zambia remained resolute in its commitment to supporting refugees and displaced persons. It was hopeful for a continued collaboration with UNHCR and other member States to collectively build resilient systems capable of addressing future humanitarian crises.

69. The representative of **Brazil** extended condolences to the delegation of Peru. She said that her country remained concerned about the funding cuts to the budget allocated to the Americas region. The 2 per cent decrease in the budget proposed for 2025 added to the previous reduction recorded last year. While recognizing the invaluable assistance UNHCR had provided to Brazil during the floods in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, she said that, in Brazil, the funding gap was already impacting ongoing humanitarian responses because less than 13 per cent of Brazil's chapter of the R4V Response Plan had been funded. That situation was worsened by the steady influx of migrants through northern border of Brazil which remained at around 400 people every day.

70. With regard to the sustainable programming approach, Brazil welcomed further discussions on the topic following the roundtable held in Berlin. She said that while the priority given to

integration, inclusion, and refugee self-reliance coincided with the national policies of Brazil, it was concerned about the impact the new approach could have on emergency assistance.

71. She said the presentation on budgets and funding showed an important decrease in the funds allocated to housing and shelter in 2024 compared to 2023 and enquired if that shift was already a reflection of the sustainable programming approach. She requested clarification regarding the connection between the new financial model referenced in the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions report and the needs-based methodology. She also asked for clarifications on how sustainable programming would impact, or already was, impacting the budget and funds allocation.

72. The representative of **Germany** conveyed his condolences to the delegation of Peru. He aligned his country with the statement delivered by the European Union on behalf of its member States and said expressed concerned about the record numbers of forcibly displaced people in 2024 and the predicted further increase in 2025. Germany expressed its appreciation for other host countries, saying that their efforts underpinned the global protection system. He reasserted the continued engagement of Germany in support of refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide, both as a major refugee host country and the second-largest donor to UNHCR.

73. While expressing concern regarding the growing funding gap, unprecedented needs, and strained donor budgets, he said that it was vital to continue to broaden and diversify the sources of funding. Germany encouraged expanding early collaboration and common approaches with other United Nations agencies, as well as with development and peace actors according to their respective mandates. He said that unearmarked contributions were part of ensuring a more efficient use of funds, which Germany explicitly encouraged. He said that those needed to go hand in hand with enhanced transparency and reporting, and welcomed the continued dialogue with UNHCR in that regard. He underscored the need to focus on increasing the efficiency of operations in close coordination with other humanitarian, development and civil society partners from the onset of a crisis. He also appreciated and expressed steadfast support for making sustainable programming a systematic feature of the work of UNHCR and looked forward to the continuation of the consultations and discussions on the way forward, including at the upcoming meeting of the Executive Committee.

74. The representative of **Belgium** expressed sincere condolences to the Peruvian delegation. She said that her country aligned itself with the statement made by the European Union. She stated that the situation of refugees and forcibly displaced persons in the world looked bleak, and expressed concern about the difficulties UNHCR was facing because of the funding gap. She welcomed the budget review update and commended the slight decrease in the budget due to efficient streamlining. Reflecting on the budget model, she asked whether a budget based on comprehensive needs assessments was still the optimal instrument. She highlighted that given the financial constraints, choices had to be made regarding prioritization, and asked whether those choices should not be better reflected in the budget. She further enquired how different weights were given to varying needs. In the context of a large gap between needs assessments and funding levels, she requested detailed information on how the budget was adapted over the course of the year and how priorities changed according to the available budget. She acknowledged that the Underfunded Report 2024 was already a part of the response she needed and welcomed details on shifts towards local, national, and development actors.

75. She stated that it was important to stay focused on finding durable solutions and providing protection and emergency response to alleviate the suffering of those in need. Belgium supported those tasks and the search for more localization solutions to empower refugees and enhance their self-reliance through sustainable programming while building upon the pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum. She noted that humanitarian assistance could no longer operate in isolation, and cooperation within the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus and with private partners was crucial, as was close coordination with other international and United Nations organizations, in particular with the International Organization for Migration.

76. Referring to protracted conflict situations, she said that forgotten crises were a priority for Belgium, as were crises resulting from the cumulative effect of recurring natural hazards and the challenges of addressing a shrinking humanitarian space. It was in this context that she expressed concern about the decrease in the budget for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, among other countries. She informed that Belgium would contribute €33 million over a period of three years to the general budget and would like to encourage all member States to follow this example of

unearmarked multi-year funding of the general budget. In partnership with UNHCR, as well as through efforts in humanitarian diplomacy, Belgium hoped to contribute to safeguarding a qualitatively strong humanitarian system that placed protection at the heart of its action, based on humanitarian principles and with respect for international humanitarian law.

77. The representative of the **United States of America** expressed her sincere condolences to the Peruvian delegation. She expressed support for the work of UNHCR and stood in solidarity with refugees and the generous communities hosting them. She said that the United States of America urged collaboration across humanitarian, development, and private sector stakeholders to advance solutions and to help UNHCR focus on life-saving operations as new crises emerged.

78. She noted that as of 31 July 2024, private donors contributed over \$627 million, more than twice the amount recorded in the first half of 2023. The United States of America applauded the efforts to diversify funding and welcomed the progress on inclusion, for example, in Europe, where greater refugee inclusion in public services had led to budget adjustments. She encouraged continuing the organization's work with States, in partnership with development actors and international financial institutions, to enable forcibly displaced persons access to social protection systems, employment, and economic opportunities. The foundations for successful integration lay in strong legal frameworks and documentation processes, which her country strongly supported.

79. While highlighting its commitment and support to humanitarian efforts in 2024, she pointed out that the United States of America did not believe that humanitarian assistance alone was the answer to the current complex humanitarian crises, including especially protracted refugee crises. When refugees lived in exile for decades, that also required a development and private sector response. With this in mind, the United States appreciated the increased focus on solutions, reflected by the 16 per cent increase in solutions programming in the 2025 budget and looked forward to additional information on the implementation of its sustainable programming initiative.

80. She said that her country was committed to doing its part to build new partnerships, using its funding more innovatively, and collaborating more effectively inside its government and with others, and looked forward to continued partnership with UNHCR to tackle those challenges. At the same time, the United States expected UNHCR to more effectively and transparently prioritize its activities and its appeals, which would enable donors to better advocate for UNHCR and demonstrate accountability and effectiveness to those it endeavoured to serve.

81. The representative of **Japan** expressed his condolences to the Peruvian delegation. He expressed appreciation for UNHCR for making efforts to reduce its budget by improving efficiency in the face of rapidly increasing numbers of displaced persons and the humanitarian needs around the world, as well as seeking a more sustainable approach by promoting the self-reliance of displaced persons, including women, in cooperation with development agencies.

82. He said that at the Global Refugee Forum in 2023, the Foreign Minister for Japan emphasized three main points: promoting refugee self-reliance, the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus approach, and the Women, Peace, and Security perspective. In those respects, he observed that the approach of UNHCR was mutually compatible with policy of Japan. This approach was not for the purpose of shifting funds from humanitarian to development agendas, but rather to expand the potential of individually displaced persons through support for self-reliance, such as education and vocational training and mid- to long-term livelihood opportunities, which would also lead to future potential for resettlement in a third country or future return to the country of origin. This was important from the perspective of realizing a society in which no one was left behind.

83. The representative of **South Africa** joined other member States to convey a message of condolence to the delegation of Peru. She said that her country aligned itself with the statement delivered by Uganda on behalf of the Africa Group. She expressed her delegation's appreciation to UNHCR for making efforts to dialogue with member States of Southern Africa region to understand the dire concerns and challenges in the subregion and to strengthen international protection. She said that her country would like such initiatives to intensify and called for increased engagement with UNHCR on financial documents produced at a country level so that member States could ensure accountability transparently and provide inputs to the documents.

84. With reference to the programme budget for 2025, she highlighted that the Southern Africa region had continued to be allocated the least budget for four consecutive years, despite the increasing number of crises and the increasing impact of environmental hazards in communities that hosted persons of concern to UNHCR. Even though the majority of the Southern Africa States were

low-income countries, especially those under the mandate of the South Africa multi-country office, the allocation of funds remained minimal. Given the rising numbers of those forcibly displaced, she said it was unsustainable to continue requesting poor, low, and middle-income countries to take on more while the allocated resources kept shrinking for the African region.

85. She said that South Africa continued to believe that advancing the nexus between development, peace, and security to prevent and minimize the root causes of displacement should be a concern for all to safeguard the protection of human dignity. She said her country was also joining other delegates to raise concerns over proposed terms such as ‘sustainable programming’ and ‘route-based approach’, which were not clearly articulated to member States. She said that South Africa would like increased engagement on matters that were proposed for implementation by member States. While South Africa remained seized on ensuring the international protection of persons fleeing persecution, it also required, as an affected member State, to be consulted on those matters.

86. The representative of **Canada** offered her condolences to the delegation of Peru for the loss of their Ambassador. She recognized the efforts of UNHCR in ensuring the strategic allocation of resources to meet urgent needs, particularly in response to the Sudan crisis, which reflected its dynamism and flexibility in navigating the complex and evolving humanitarian landscape. She encouraged the organization to continue prioritizing resources based on needs, with a particular focus on the needs of the most vulnerable, including women and girls. She also acknowledged the challenging yet necessary prioritization decisions made in 2024, which focused on immediate life-saving and protection outcomes.

87. In reviewing the 2025 proposed budget, Canada noted the approximately 5 per cent reduction to the total budget, which aligned with a strategic move towards more sustainable programming. While appreciating that the largest share of the budget was dedicated to the impact area on immediate humanitarian response, Canada remained mindful of the \$587.4 million reduction in that area, representing a 12 per cent decrease. She said that as fiscal constraints were likely to persist into 2025, Canada would be interested in understanding how UNHCR would continue to prioritize limited resources and make allocation decisions, as well as the impact that might have on its ability to deliver on its core protection mandate.

88. She noted that an ongoing focus on self-reliance, inclusion, and durable solutions for displaced populations remained critical. However, Canada emphasized the importance of a balanced budget approach that addressed both immediate humanitarian needs and long-term objectives, providing comprehensive support to the growing number of forcibly displaced persons worldwide. She said that Canada looked forward to continued engagement on the important issues of sustainable programming and the advancement of new financing models.

89. She said her country fully supported the initiatives described for 2025, in particular towards promoting the Global Compact on Refugees and bolstering the areas of intervention in terms of protection. The commitment to strengthening the obligation to ensure accountability, in particular in combating sexual misconduct, was remarkable. She appreciated the proposed use of artificial intelligence to manage complaints and looked forward to its efficient implementation. Welcoming the emphasis on risk management, she further noted that it was vital to invest in those areas and to meet the risk management criteria to ensure resilience and empower the organization.

90. The representative of **the Republic of Iraq** conveyed its condolences to the delegation of Peru. She commended the effort of UNHCR to support displaced persons and refugees and all other persons under its mandate. She pointed out that current crises required a doubling of efforts and the sharing of responsibilities by donor countries and international organizations. She further called on the international community to increase its efforts to end the bloodshed of innocent persons in the Gaza Strip and in the Sudan and increase humanitarian assistance in Yemen and Libya, particularly due to worsened situations due to natural hazards. She said that while Iraq highly appreciated the invaluable efforts of UNHCR, it was concerned about the reduced budget for 2025 compared to the budget for 2024. She called for increased international support to host countries and to consider the historical, cultural, and religious sensitivities of such host countries in order to eventually establish peace and stability.

91. The **Director of the Division of Strategic Planning and Results (UNHCR)**, responding to questions from member States, thanked donors and host countries for noting the importance of unearmarked funding. Regarding effectiveness, she said that UNHCR prioritized life-saving assistance and protection outcomes as those were its core protection activities. In many countries,

the organization took a very critical view with regard to identifying deeper vulnerabilities through vulnerability assessments, often working in partnership with the World Food Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund to ensure that its resources targeted those that were the most vulnerable.

92. Relative to the request for more information on sustainable programming, she explained that this was not a completely new approach. Since 2021, when UNHCR launched the new multi-year planning approach and the new results-based management systems and approaches through the Cooperation on Migration and Partnerships to Achieve Sustainable Solutions (COMPASS), the organization had undertaken multi-year planning with a view towards balancing the immediate humanitarian needs with the longer-term outcomes towards self-reliance and inclusion. This approach was more advanced in some countries than in others, and stressed that the budget was moving from being needs-based to needs-driven. She explained that budgets, plans, and activities on the ground were driven by humanitarian needs, yet, at the same time, the focus on longer-term solutions required it to leverage other types of activities, particularly in partnership with development actors, other United Nations agencies, and the private sector. She said that in future Standing Committee meetings, more information would be shared on how the organization leveraged partnerships to provide support for the communities, host countries, and forcibly displaced. She thanked the Southern Africa region delegations for the discussion on budget shifts in their countries and said that UNHCR would be increasing dialogue with member States on budgets and plans at the Geneva level, as requested.

93. The **Director of the Division of External Relations (UNHCR)** thanked the delegates for the request for more multi-year, more predictable, more flexible funding and for their understanding of what that meant in terms of the results that UNHCR could achieve. She informed the Committee that while there had been some diversification of funding sources, it was not enough, and more member States needed to step up efforts. With regard to showcasing private sector and government donor funding, she pointed out that in the Global Report, there was a column that incorporated both private and government funding.

94. The **Deputy High Commissioner (UNHCR)** said that the term 'sustainable programming' was still up for debate, including within the organization. The term was not new but was building on what the Global Compact on Refugees had asked for in terms of a whole-of-society approach, including shifting the approach to refugee burden- and responsibility-sharing, self-reliance, or the need to work. She emphasized that it included other related items, including a route-based approach and the need for a different financing model.

95. She reaffirmed that the organization would continue to work closely with member States in driving solutions. While emphasizing wide consultative process of UNHCR, she said there was a possibility for further discussions on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly ahead of discussions to be held at the Executive Committee in October. She informed that UNHCR was aiming to catalyse, facilitate and embody what the Global Compact on Refugees meant.

96. The **Chairperson**, reviewing the draft decision found in Annex VI of Conference Room Paper 21, and recognizing that no delegation wished to comment on the text of the draft decision on budgets and funding for 2024, deemed the draft decision to be adopted by consensus.

It was so decided.

a. UNHCR Programme Budget for 2025 and the Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ)

97. The **Director of the Division of Strategic Planning and Results (UNHCR)**, after providing an overview of the mandate of UNHCR, presented the Committee with an overview of the annual programme budget for 2025. The budget was developed on the basis of comprehensive assessments of the humanitarian, protection and solution needs, which were further prioritized based on what needed to be done more urgently. Those were subsequently discussed with all stakeholders to galvanize support for action and further refined based on what UNHCR should do in the context of either a regional response plan, a humanitarian response plan or the longer-term plans of development actors and governments.

98. She highlighted changes that had been necessitated by, for instance, the reduction in staffing that had taken place in 2023 to be reflected in the 2025 budget, supplementary budgets for earthquakes in the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye in 2023 as well as emergencies in the Sudan and elsewhere. In Europe, while there was a decrease in the budget in Ukraine, the decreases were

more substantial in the countries surrounding Ukraine to reflect efforts towards inclusion and self-reliance. In the Middle East and North Africa region, the decrease was driven by the shifts in operations addressing the needs of internally displaced persons. The budget increase in West and Central Africa region, in terms of its patterns and distribution, was stable with regard to the proportion of the budget that covered management and administration, programme support activities, and programme activities.

99. While noting that there had been a net decrease in the number of posts due to the global restructuring and realignment, as well as the consolidation that took place in 2023, she pointed out that there was a greater decrease in the budget for the headquarters as compared to country or regional programmes, due to greater efficiency and effectiveness of the organization's regional support through the regional offices. The enabling areas corresponded to 11 per cent, which was a decrease compared to 2024, largely driven by a reduction in the budget for systems and processes, which was partially attributed to the completion of the business transformation programme. She informed the Committee that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions recommended that UNHCR implement core enabling indicators for the enabling areas, which had been piloted and would be reported on in the Global Report in 2025.

100. She pointed out that while there was a decrease in the child protection budget in absolute terms, in relation to the total budget, it remained the same. The decrease was driven by a reduction in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq and Mexico, where there had been a mainstreaming of child protection activities across other protection activities. In addition, there were significant investments in child protection in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and South Sudan.

101. After providing detailed information on how UNHCR decides its programming and priorities, she drew attention to key observations made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the quality assurance and consolidation of the needs-driven strategies. She said that the Advisory Committee noted an increase in resource requirements for headquarters as compared to a decrease in requirements for country and regional programmes and said that UNHCR would carefully monitor the situation with a view to prioritizing field operations. The Advisory Committee had further noted that UNHCR was providing one-sided information in the budget document on cost categories, recommending the inclusion of the field, region, headquarters and global programmes, as well as outcome and impact areas. While the process of budget classification and expenditure between programme support, management and administration was based on post functions in conformity with the United Nations system-wide approach, she pointed out that only posts at the headquarters could be classified in terms of management and administration.

102. She said that UNHCR would continue to implement outreach programmes to increase unearmarked contributions and had noted the observation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in that regard and would also continue to report on geographic and gender parity.

103. On the key performance indicators for the Business Transformation Programme, she deferred to the presentation made by the Deputy High Commissioner on the impact gains assessment and noted that the organization would continue to report to the Committee on those with a final report to be delivered in November 2024.

104. Regarding procurement, she said the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions emphasized the need for the organization to expand its efforts in procuring from developing countries and countries with economies in transition. She informed the Committee that the organization had undertaken an exercise to this effect in the regions of East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes, Southern Africa, as well as in Latin America and would continue to report on it.

105. Relative to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions observation on continued implementation of the common back office, she said that UNHCR was part of the common back-office pilots in Brazil, Jordan, Kenya, Senegal, and the United Republic of Tanzania, with 43 per cent of its offices located in common premises out of the 292 offices that had been taken into consideration. With regard to the Global Service Centre and the Finance Hub, she explained that those formed part of the organization's efficiency gains, holding the potential to centralize functions as country offices digitized.

The meeting adjourned at 1:06 p.m.