

*Check against delivery*

## **Standing Committee Presentation on Coordination and Partnership**

*DER Director, September 2013*

Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At a time when the humanitarian world is stretched to its limits, strong partnership and coordination are more important than ever. Consequently this year has been characterised by massive joint efforts among humanitarian actors to strengthen humanitarian and transition response in a coordinated way. Due to its scale and complex nature, the Syria crisis has dominated UNHCR's current coordination and partnership efforts and brought **new and enhanced approaches to leadership and coordination.**

In all refugee operations, UNHCR strives to **improve its leadership and coordination role**, to find inclusive, pragmatic and partner-friendly ways to manage operations, to facilitate joint planning processes, to provide a platform for all partners to mobilise resources, and to ensure effective information management. Following a Real-time Evaluation of UNHCR's Response to the Syrian Refugee Emergency, further measures to improve UNHCR's coordination and leadership role have been initiated.

The current **Regional Response Plan (RRP)** for the Syria situation is the **result of an inclusive and strategic coordination effort by UNHCR** based on a broad consultative planning process with all stakeholders. The RRP benefits from the participation of 84 partners including some 70 NGOs bringing their knowledge, expertise and resources to the table. Currently the planning parameters for the next iteration of the RRP, the RRP6, are being discussed and UNHCR, together with its partners, is further adapting the process to ensure it is fully aligned with the needs of the ever evolving situation. The experience gained in coordinating the Syria Regional Response Plan and appeal - coordinated by the Regional Refugee Coordinator - alongside the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan which covers activities inside Syria and is coordinated by the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator, will inform inter-agency response plans for emergencies, involving refugees, in the future.

The Syria crisis response has also strengthened **partnerships** with key humanitarian and development counterparts. For example, in Jordan and Lebanon, where host communities also need significant support and local services are over-burdened, UNHCR is working closely with **WFP** on cash and voucher schemes.

UNHCR is working with **UNICEF** at all levels to find the optimal operational partnerships in these settings, and in July our Assistant High Commissioner for Operations travelled with UNICEF's Deputy Executive Director and WFP's Assistant Executive Director to the region to support and encourage

strong operational collaboration, urging further concerted efforts to identify and build on complementarities between the three agencies. Letters of Understanding between UNHCR and UNICEF have now been jointly developed and signed in both Lebanon and Jordan. **UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP** in both countries are currently engaged in an assessment and targeting initiative to draw in and better inform development resources appropriately.

Through a **dialogue process with NGOs**, several recommendations were made to strengthen UNHCR-NGO partnership and to improve the application in practice of the principles of partnership. This included enhancing joint planning, information-sharing, and collaboration in specific areas such as advocacy and the response to urban refugee situations. **Many of the recommendations are being put to the test in the context of the Syria crisis.**

Our review and development of a new **Implementing Partnership Framework**, which is led by the Implementing Partnership Management Service under the Division of Financial and Administrative Management, has been a consultative process, taking into the consideration **the views and concerns of a range of our NGO partners**. The result will be more predictable and transparent management of projects, clearer accountabilities and healthier partnership expectations when it comes to implementation of UNHCR-funded activities.

## UNHCR's role in the Transformative Agenda

UNHCR was very **actively involved in shaping the Transformative Agenda**, including the development of protocols and reference modules, and their testing via simulation exercises. **UNHCR as an organisation** has reviewed and adjusted policies and procedures to **align with the main commitments** made under the Transformative Agenda, and we are now applying these in practice in our training and preparedness for large scale emergencies and in our deployment to leadership and coordination positions.

The Transformative Agenda requires UNHCR to **strengthen its engagement at all levels in cluster coordination** for internal displacement situations, and we continue to consolidate our leadership and coordination roles in this regard and are keen to see a **collective focus on roll-out to the field**. In the context of developing the Transformative Agenda, the IASC recognized and reconfirmed UNHCR's mandate, as conferred by the General Assembly, to lead and coordinate the refugee response. As many actors are currently developing long term strategic plans, it is important that the fundamental elements of the humanitarian architecture are well understood and in consultation with partners, UNHCR is preparing documentation to better explain this role.

In refugee emergencies, **UNHCR's leadership role is embedded in a clear accountability framework, which goes well beyond an initial emergency response**. UNHCR's coordination model is based on a **multisectoral response** guided by an overarching protection and durable solutions

strategy. UNHCR Representatives are accountable for establishing appropriate coordination and sectoral leadership mechanisms, as well as for ensuring results are achieved in close collaboration with partners through the following activities: preparedness and contingency planning; multisectoral needs assessment and analysis; development of an operations plan; information management; monitoring and evaluation; and advocacy and fundraising.

The two distinct accountability and coordination systems for refugees and internal displacement are now being more closely aligned to adjust to mixed situations and to better meet the expectations of partners. We will build on good experience from both cluster and refugee emergency response to date. To improve UNHCR's leadership and coordination role on a more systematic basis at country level and to maximize complementarity and efficiency, Representatives are engaging with the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and the IASC during all stages of a refugee operation, involving regular consultations and information-sharing.

In February 2013, UNHCR took the opportunity of its **biennial global meeting of representatives to discuss partnership and coordination** in the inter-agency context, ensuring that its leadership was well briefed on the principles of the Transformative Agenda and the respective accountabilities of Representatives under the cluster system and in refugee contexts. Continuing to guide and support these efforts at field-level are an organizational priority.

## **Partnerships for solutions / concluding remarks**

Finally allow me to say a few words on **partnerships in the context of solutions**. Within UNHCR headquarters, a Solutions Steering Group was established in June to ensure that UNHCR's solutions activities address policy, legal, economic and development issues holistically and strategically, and that projects are evidence-based and results-oriented.

A number of examples of partnership for solutions are outlined in the SC paper on coordination.

I'd like to conclude by re-emphasising that UNHCR is learning, adjusting and constantly working to improve our participation in inter-agency assessment and planning and our capacity and investment in our respective leadership and coordination roles. We want to compliment the enormous efforts made by partner organisations working alongside UNHCR on very challenging issues and in difficult situations, and we want to be the best partner possible to all our friends and colleagues. Thank you.