

**Solutions  
(EC/73/SC/CRP.13)  
Remarks by the Director of the Division of International Protection,  
Mrs. Elizabeth Tan  
Standing Committee of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme  
(84<sup>th</sup> meeting)**

Geneva, 29 June 2022

Mr Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to provide the Standing Committee with this Paper on UNHCR's efforts to support solutions for refugees. The paper is drafted jointly by DIP with the Division of Resilience and Solutions and with country operations and regional bureaux who are deeply committed to achieving more solutions for those displaced worldwide.

My colleague, Sumbul Rizvi, Principal Advisor on Internal Displacement, will address solutions for internally displaced persons in the next session.

Seeking solutions, including from the onset of a displacement crisis, and continuing to do so despite multiple challenges, remains a core responsibility - and priority - of the High Commissioner under his mandate - in close collaboration with States, other stakeholders and displaced and host communities themselves.

Durable solutions necessitate national leadership, ownership and political will. The Global Compact on Refugees calls for effective and predictable burden and responsibility-sharing to create conditions enabling refugees to exercise their right to return and access other solutions. Ongoing efforts to fulfil the commitments made at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) have helped ensure important progress in this area, including, for example through the support platforms, which have fostered partnerships dedicated to achieving solutions for some of the largest and most protracted refugee situations. But much more needs to be done – and we are looking forward to working with States and other partners to advance further in addressing these, including in the leadup to next year's second GRF.

The solutions paper highlights positive ongoing work at regional level to facilitate solutions. Among these, IGAD (the Intergovernmental Authority on Development) is supporting a joint comprehensive plan on solutions in South Sudan and the Sudan. We also see highly impactful collaboration to address the root causes of displacement and achieve solutions in Central America and Mexico through the MIRPS (*Marco Integral Regional para la Protección y Soluciones*). Notwithstanding the formidable challenges facing the country – including last terrible earthquake, which has inflicted tragic losses and hardship on communities in highly vulnerable situations – UNHCR continues to work to support priority areas for return and reintegration in Afghanistan, pursuant to the SSAR (Solutions Strategy for Afghan refugees).

We have seen encouraging developments in West and Central Africa where, following a regional conference organized by the Government of Cameroon and UNHCR, States formally declared their commitment to take concerted action to achieve solutions for nearly 1.4 million displaced Central Africans. Signatories to the declaration agreed to establish a regional cooperation framework to this end, with the support of the international community.

On Voluntary Repatriation, 429,300 refugees returned home in 2021, a 71% increase compared to 2020. This positive trend was due largely to easing up of border restrictions introduced to contain the spread of the pandemic. While the number of returns remains limited in absolute terms, UNHCR's commitment to work with States to enable more refugees to repatriate voluntarily in safety and dignity remains undiminished. At the last GRF, some 60 pledges were made towards supporting conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity. We welcome these and hope to see redoubled efforts to fulfil and increase these over the coming months.

Positively, we have seen the return of some 310,000 refugees to Côte d'Ivoire since 2011, representing 96 per cent of those who have fled. In light of the fundamental and durable changes in Côte d'Ivoire, the High Commissioner in 2021 recommended a general cessation of refugee status for Ivorian refugees to take effect on 30 June this year. This example proves that achieving durable solutions is possible and can enable hundreds of thousands of people to restart their lives and give their families a better future.

In East Africa, a cumulative total of over 500,000 refugees have spontaneously returned to South Sudan since 2017. To support these returnees, UNHCR has adopted a solutions-oriented, area-based approach called "Pockets of Hope", which targets high return areas through investments in medium- to long-term development and peace interventions.

Looking ahead, UNHCR has commissioned an external evaluation of its repatriation and reintegration activities covering the period 2015-2021. We look forward to sharing the results with ExCom members, and to strategically strengthening its work in this area based on the findings and recommendations.

UNHCR promotes a progressive approach to durable solutions through inclusion, greater enjoyment of rights and self-reliance. This can mitigate the harms of spending years on end in a limbo of deprivation and dependency and enables refugees to live with dignity, contributing productively to the communities and States that host them. Recognizing this, many host governments are committed to implementing integration and other local solutions, turning displacement into opportunity. Sustaining this political will with support is paramount.

In this context, in multiple locations, UNHCR has supported the capacity of government agencies to increase refugee self-reliance including with legal stay arrangements, assistance to issue national identity cards facilitating access to public services, pursuing out-of-camp strategies favouring social cohesion, supporting livelihood projects and advocating socio-economic inclusion.

UNHCR developed a roadmap (2022-2025) for inclusion of displaced communities in social protection systems. According to a survey conducted by UNHCR in 2021, 2.8 million asylum seekers and refugees had access to one or more social protection programs in 81 countries.

To support inclusion and integration in countries of asylum and of origin, UNHCR collaborates with a wide range of stakeholders, including peace and development actors. Among these, UNHCR works with UNDP on access to justice, rule of law, livelihoods and economic inclusion for forcibly displaced people and host communities; with the Peace Building Support Office on resilience and prevention, and with the World Bank on the socioeconomic development of impacted communities. UNHCR also works closely with other multilateral and regional development banks as well as with bilateral development actors to leverage development investments for protection outcomes and solutions.

Turning to resettlement and complementary pathways, capacity continued to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. Resettlement quotas provided by States remained well below the estimated needs of 1,45 million refugees. As stated in the note, however, UNHCR increased

submissions by 60% in 2021 compared to 2020. Resettlement departures also increased by 72% compared to the previous year.

As noted at the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR) last week, the Projected Global Resettlement Needs for 2023 has now reached 2million refugees, hosted across 73 countries. The five priority areas continue to include the Syrian conflict (including Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Türkiye) and the Central Mediterranean Situation (including 15 countries along the Central Mediterranean route and the Emergency Transit Mechanism in Rwanda). In addition, given the large and ongoing displacement of Venezuelan, Afghan and Rohingya refugees, UNHCR will also direct advocacy efforts to resettlement from these three refugee situations.

UNHCR strongly encourages States to focus on these priorities to maximize coordination, cooperation and potential strategic impacts. In this way, resettlement can continue to be a life-saving mechanism providing protection and solution for those who are the most at risk.

Third country Solutions also include Complementary Pathways, where we saw increased interest and support for both education pathways and labour mobility pathways in 2021. While limited in scale, they have great potential to increase and provide vital opportunities for talented refugees to develop and contribute. The Global Family Reunification network remained an important platform and was particularly relevant in the response to the Afghan emergency. Progress was made by using remote processing among others, allowing more persons to benefit from family reunification.

To conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support to UNHCR's work on solutions and to recall that a sustainable solution to refugee situations cannot be achieved without international cooperation.

Thank you.