

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

Distr.: Restricted  
8 March 2016  
English  
Original: English and French

**Standing Committee**  
65<sup>th</sup> meeting

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**UNHCR's programme in the United Nations  
proposed strategic framework for the period  
2018-2019**

*Summary*

This paper presents UNHCR's draft programme (Annex I) in the United Nations proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019. It is provided to the Standing Committee for information. The Committee is asked to take note of the programme through the adoption of a draft decision (Annex II).

1. UNHCR has submitted the attached biennial programme plan for the period 2018-2019 to the United Nations Secretariat. It will be incorporated into the proposed strategic framework for the United Nations for the period 2018-2019 as Programme 21, “International protection, durable solutions and assistance to refugees.”

2. It is anticipated that the proposed strategic framework will be presented to the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) in June or July 2016, following which the CPC will issue a report with conclusions and recommendations (A/71/6) for approval by the General Assembly. The consolidated strategic framework will be issued as A/71/6/Rev.1 and will form the basis of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019. The corresponding programme budget proposals will be considered by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) during their session in June or July 2017. The Fifth Committee of the General Assembly will consider the budget proposals in the final quarter of 2017

# ADVANCE COPY

**Seventy-first session**

Item 131 of the preliminary list\*

**Programme planning****Proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019****Part two: biennial programme plan****Programme 21****International protection, durable solutions and assistance  
to refugees**

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\* A/71/50.

## Overall orientation

21.1 The overall objective of the programme is to ensure international protection to refugees and others of concern to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and to seek permanent solutions to their problems in cooperation with States and other organizations, including through the provision of humanitarian assistance.

21.2 The mandate for the programme is contained in General Assembly resolution 319 A (IV), by which the Assembly established UNHCR as from 1 January 1951, and resolution 428 (V), which sets out the Statute of the Office. The Assembly has also called upon the High Commissioner to ensure that refugees returning voluntarily to their countries of origin (“returnees”) receive assistance to help sustainable reintegration, as well as to monitor their safety and well-being upon return. UNHCR has also been mandated to address the situation of stateless persons in accordance with the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (1954) and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (1961). UNHCR provides protection and humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons, working in cooperation with the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator or at the specific request of the Secretary-General and with the consent of the State concerned. In its work for internally displaced persons and as part of the collaborative response of the United Nations system to internal displacement, UNHCR has been given lead or co-lead responsibility for protection, emergency shelter and camp management and coordination cluster areas.

21.3 The basic provisions of the UNHCR statute were built upon by the General Assembly in its resolution 832 (IX). Through the adoption by the Assembly of its resolution 58/153 on implementing actions, UNHCR was given a renewed mandate to address the challenge of forced displacement through a mission based on a spirit of solidarity, responsibility and burden-sharing, with an abiding commitment to make the Office a truly multilateral institution.

21.4 The international legal basis for the protection of refugees finds its principal expression in the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees and is supplemented by regional instruments, such as the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (OAU Convention) and the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. The international legal basis for addressing the situation of stateless persons stems from the 1954 and 1961 Conventions. In addition, other international human rights instruments, such as the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, are relevant in providing international protection to refugees, stateless persons, internally displaced persons, returnees and others of concern.

21.5 The overall strategy for the period 2018-2019 covers a range of activities that UNHCR will undertake in cooperation with States and various organizations. It will be guided by the global strategic priorities set by the High Commissioner and incorporate concerted responses to the challenges met by the Office in the previous biennium, including responding to large-scale refugee emergencies, providing protection to populations living outside of camps in urban and rural settings, reinforcing linkages with development actors and engagement in a coordinated response to the problems faced by internally displaced persons. It will contribute to international efforts to achieve progress against the Sustainable Development Goals set under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

21.6 Notable among the activities to be implemented for the period 2018-2019 are the following:

(a) Pursuing comprehensive strategies, in cooperation with States and organizations, for achieving durable solutions for refugees and others of concern, while promoting effective protection of displaced persons;

(b) Strengthening the legal regime for international protection, including through the promotion of accessions to international and regional instruments relating to the status of refugees or otherwise benefiting refugees, the effective implementation of refugee rights and the promotion and dissemination of refugee law and protection principles;

(c) Enhancing and reinforcing host country capacities to provide asylum and protection;

(d) Ensuring that UNHCR fully participates in and supports the strengthened collaborative response of the United Nations to situations of internal displacement;

(e) Continuing to develop contingency planning, emergency preparedness and response capabilities, in coordination with other organizations, so as to respond effectively and efficiently to situations of forced displacement;

(f) Promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and ensuring that UNHCR and its partners mainstream into all aspects of programme delivery full consideration of the rights of persons of concern, as well as the particular needs and capacities, ascertained through participatory assessments and the age, gender and diversity approach, of refugee women and children, elderly refugees, refugees with disabilities and other persons with specific needs;

(g) Ensuring the security of refugee camps, settlements and areas of return, as well as the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum, and exploring further concrete ways of enhancing the safety and security of UNHCR staff and other humanitarian workers working with refugees, returnees and internally-displaced persons. In this regard, due consideration should be given to the obligation of United Nations officials to observe fully both the laws and regulations of Member States and their duties and responsibilities to the Organization;

(h) Systematically following up on relevant recommendations in the plans of action emanating from international conferences and involving other humanitarian and development organizations, in the provision of assistance to persons of concern to UNHCR, as well as in the search for durable solutions;

(i) As part of UNHCR's 10 year campaign to end Statelessness (the *#I belong* campaign), advocating for the prevention and reduction of statelessness as well as the protection of stateless persons by promoting the accession by States to the relevant international instruments and working with States to facilitate the acquisition, reacquisition or confirmation of nationality by stateless persons.

21.7 The programme is under the intergovernmental guidance of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in accordance with its terms of reference, as adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 1166 (XII). The Executive Committee was formally established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 672 (XXV) and came into existence on 1 January 1959. Reaffirming the terms of reference laid down by the General Assembly, the Council decided that the Executive Committee, being entrusted with the terms of reference set forth in General Assembly resolution 1166 (XII), should:

(a) Determine the general policies under which the High Commissioner should plan, develop and administer the programmes and projects required to help solve the problems referred to in its resolution 1166 (XII);

(b) Review at least annually the use of funds made available to the High Commissioner and the programmes and projects being proposed or carried out by the Office of the High Commissioner;

(c) Have authority to make changes in and give final approval for the use of funds and the programmes and projects referred to in subparagraphs (a) and (b) above.

21.8 Although established by the Economic and Social Council, which elects its members, the Executive Committee functions as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly and is the key advisory body of UNHCR. The annual cycle of meetings of the Executive Committee consists of one annual plenary session and a number of intersessional meetings of the Standing Committee. Reports on the sessions of the Executive Committee are submitted to the General Assembly as addenda to the reports of the High Commissioner. The High Commissioner, who is elected by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Secretary-General, provides the overall direction, supervision and management of the activities under this programme. The functions of the High Commissioner are set out in the annex to the statute of UNHCR. The High Commissioner is assisted by a Deputy High Commissioner and by two Assistant High Commissioners, for Protection and for Operations, respectively.

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**Objective of the Organization:** To ensure international protection to refugees and, as applicable, other persons of concern to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and to achieve durable solutions to their problems in cooperation with States and other organizations, including through the provision of humanitarian assistance.

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| Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat                                                                                       | Indicators of achievement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (a) Improved overall protection environment for refugees and others of concern                                                    | (a) (i) Increased number of ratifications/ accessions to the 1954 and 1961 Conventions related to Statelessness<br><br>(ii) Increased number of ratifications/ accessions to the 2009 Convention for the Protection of and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons in Africa<br><br>(iii) Increased participation of government and partner staff in learning activities concerning international protection standards |
| (b) Refugees and others of concern are treated fairly and efficiently when seeking protection, and receive adequate documentation | (b) (i) Increased percentage of refugees and asylum seekers who are registered on an individual basis<br><br>(ii) Increased percentage of refugees and others of concern who receive individual identity and civil documentation                                                                                                                                                                                          |

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- (c) Increased safety from violence and exploitation for refugees and others of concern, especially women and children
- (d) The basic needs of refugees and others of concern are met and essential services are provided without discrimination and with specific consideration to age, gender and physical condition
- (e) Refugees and others of concern, both men and women, participate equally within their communities and their self-reliance is promoted
- (f) Progress in finding durable solutions for refugees supported by sustained international cooperation
- (c) (i) Increased number of operations in which support to survivors of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, has improved
- (ii) Number of operations with an increased percentage of unaccompanied and separated children for whom a “best interests” process has been initiated or completed
- (d) (i) Increased number of sites where global acute malnutrition levels meet acceptable standards
- (ii) Increased percentage of households of refugees and others of concern with adequate dwellings
- (iii) Increased number of sites where the mortality rate of children of concern under 5 years of age meets acceptable standards
- (iv) Increased number of operations in which percentage of refugee children aged 6 to 13 enrolled in primary education has improved
- (e) (i) Increased number of sites where participation of women in leadership/management structures have improved
- (ii) Increased number of operations implementing comprehensive strategies to promote the self-reliance of refugees and others of concern
- (f) (i) Increased number of countries where refugees and others of concern benefit from joint programming on durable solutions between UNHCR and other agencies
- (ii) Increased number of operations where percentage of persons of concern identified in need of resettlement submitted for resettlement has been maintained or increased
- (iii) Increased number of operations supporting national authorities with the local integration of refugees

- (iv) Increased voluntary repatriation of refugees, where conditions permit, and their sustainable reintegration in the country of origin
  - (g) Strengthened emergency-response capacity to meet the needs of refugees and persons of concern
  - (g) (i) Increased percentage of emergencies in which first delivery of protection and relief takes place within three days of the onset of an emergency
  - (ii) Increased number of appropriately trained staff (including partners) deployed to emergencies
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## Strategy

21.9 The implementation of the programme falls under the overall responsibility of the High Commissioner and is overseen by the Deputy High Commissioner, Assistant High Commissioners for Protection and Operations, the Regional Bureaux of UNHCR and the Divisions at Headquarters. The Office will continue to strive to further improve accountability, financial and programme control as well as risk management.

21.10 Further accessions to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, as well as to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness will be promoted. Monitoring of the observance by States of international legal standards for the treatment of refugees, especially the right to seek and enjoy asylum and the fundamental principle non-refoulement, will contribute to ensuring the effective implementation of refugee rights by the States concerned. This will involve promoting that States establish fair and efficient procedures for the determination of refugee status and to ensure that all persons seeking international protection are granted access to those procedures and mechanisms. UNHCR will also embark on implementing its new approach towards Refugee Status Determination. Continued attention will be given to ensuring that State asylum systems and procedures incorporate an age, gender and diversity perspective. The Office will deliver appropriate training and capacity-building services to support national capacities in building effective asylum systems, including refugee status determination. UNHCR will work with Governments to raise awareness that gender-related forms of persecution and discrimination and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) persons of concern require a concerted protection response and may also be grounds for granting refugee status.

21.11 The Office will encourage States to ensure the protection of refugees and others of concern within broader migration movements. UNHCR will also continue to be involved in meeting the challenges posed by irregular maritime movements, improve rescue and disembarkation, ensure proper reception conditions, the fair treatment of protection claims and international cooperation on responsibility sharing in providing solutions for those rescued at sea or found as stowaways and who are in need of international protection.

21.12 The promotion and dissemination of refugee law and protection principles, particularly through training of governmental officials and staff of non-governmental agencies, will be another means of achieving the stated objective. To strengthen international refugee protection, UNHCR will continue to build partnerships and promote collaboration on refugee protection with a wide range of actors,



especially from civil society, within the framework of the Refugee Coordination Model. UNHCR will ensure the protection of internally displaced persons and the organization's engagement will be based on criteria enumerated in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and undertaken in close collaboration with other concerned entities and agencies.

21.13 UNHCR will undertake concerted interventions to ensure the centrality of protection in humanitarian operations and make further progress in the implementation of global protection strategies. The special protection needs of boys and girls in displacement situations will be carefully analyzed and appropriate child-sensitive interventions will be developed in line with the objectives set out in the three protection strategies on children, education and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), namely: *A Framework for the Protection of Children, 2012-2016 Education Strategy* and *Action against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence: An Updated Strategy*. These strategies will be updated to align with changing needs and contexts in the future. High priority will also be accorded to devise comprehensive protection interventions to prevent and respond to risks of sexual exploitation and abuse and gender-based violence in line with the action areas developed in the *Updated SGBV Strategy*. UNHCR will also continue implementation of the *Beyond Detention Strategy 2014-2019*.

21.14 UNHCR will strive to ensure the optimal alignment of its operational resources with the needs of refugees and others of concern. The Office continues to build upon the positive results of comprehensive and participatory approaches to planning to ensure that the needs and capacities of men, women and children of concern form the foundation of programme design. This will include the use of standards and indicators across the work of the Office as a means of identifying protection and assistance gaps and of channelling resources to ensure that acceptable standards are met in critical situations. Tools for recording operational data, including demographic, registration and profiling information, situational analysis and planning will be further enhanced.

21.15 UNHCR will build on the achievements of the *Global Strategy for Public Health 2014-2018*, which provides a comprehensive approach to address challenges facing refugees in the areas of public health, HIV and reproductive health, nutrition and food security, and water, sanitation and hygiene. UNHCR will seek holistic approaches towards settlement and shelter, better linking refugees to the local development, economy, services, markets and communities, in line with UNHCR's *Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter 2014-2018* and the *Policy on Alternatives to Camps*. UNHCR will continue pursuing environmental conservation efforts and the use of renewable energy, drawing from successful practice under the *Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy 2014-2018*. Programme delivery will benefit from the expanded and systematic use of cash and cash alternatives as part of UNHCR's institutionalization of Cash-Based Interventions.

21.16 Finding durable solutions for millions of refugees and internally displaced persons will be central to the programme of work. UNHCR will work with Member States to raise awareness about the dramatic reality of refugees, which requires urgent and durable solutions. The Office will seek opportunities to resolve complex and protracted displacement situations that require comprehensive, and often regional, approaches through voluntary return, and, where appropriate and feasible, through local integration and resettlement. UNHCR will also work with partners to ensure that durable solutions to displacement form part of broader development and peacebuilding agendas. To foster the self-reliance of populations pending solutions, UNHCR will continue to explore opportunities for greater access to employment including labor mobility through

the *Global Strategy for Livelihoods 2014-2018*. UNHCR will focus on ways to increase positive economic impact of refugees on host communities, especially through working with development actors and the private sector.

21.17 Effective operational and strategic partnerships will remain a priority for the Office, as a means of enhancing protection, increasing efficiency and strengthening local capacities for response. The Office will continue to promote the implementation of its programmes through partners, with special emphasis on supporting national partners. Efforts will continue to strengthen information-management, coordination and support capacities to facilitate a predictable and accountable inter-agency engagement.

21.18 The Office will continue to strengthen its emergency preparedness and response capacity, including through strong emergency management and the coordination role of the Division of Emergency, Security and Supply. The focus for the period 2018-2019 will be to continue to strengthen senior leadership capacity for emergency operations, the speed and efficiency of UNHCR's delivery of assistance, and provide analysis and advice which enables operations in areas where security risks are present. UNHCR will continue to expand strategic partnerships, to broaden the capacity and networks of expertise with which to respond to emergencies. UNHCR will build on and, where appropriate, improve its emergency and security policies, tools, and capacity-building initiatives and training to ensure that its staff and partners are as best equipped as possible.

## **Legislative mandates**

### *Conventions and conference declarations*

Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and its Protocol (1967)

Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (1954)

Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (1961)

Organization of African Unity Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa (1969)

Cartagena Declaration on Refugees (1984)

Convention on the Rights of the Child (General Assembly resolution 44/25) (1989)

San José Declaration on Refugees and Displaced Persons (1994)

African Union Convention for the Protection of and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (2009)

### *General Assembly resolutions*

319A (IV) Refugees and stateless persons

428 (V) Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

538B (VI) Assistance and protection of refugees

1166 (XII) International assistance to refugees within the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

- 50/152 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- 58/153 Implementing actions proposed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to strengthen the capacity of his Office to carry out its mandate
- 70/134 Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa
- 70/135 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

## **Annex II**

### **Draft decision**

The Standing Committee,

*Takes note* of the attached *Programme 21: International protection, durable solutions, and assistance to refugees* of the biennial programme plan of the United Nations proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019.