

**DESS Director's statement in the Standing Committee**  
**Emergency Preparedness and Response and Security of UNHCR workforce**  
**and operations**  
**(28 June 2022)**

**Introduction**

*Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,*

I have the honour to update you on UNHCR's efforts with respect to emergency preparedness and response, supply and security of the workforce and its operations.

As reported in this month's Global Trends report, forced displacement worldwide has passed the 100 million mark and is at the highest level since records began. At the same time, the complexity of humanitarian crises is growing year by year, exacerbated by deteriorating access and security constraints. In many regions, such as the Horn of Africa, the above-mentioned impacts are interacting with climate-related challenges, which act as risk multipliers and deplete local communities' coping mechanisms. In addition, the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have reduced the resilience of many populations.

The impacts of the conflict in Ukraine are driving up commodity prices around the world, causing food shortages and increased vulnerability among those already at risk. Lower- and middle-income countries as well as fragility-, conflict- and violence-affected countries are likely to bear the heaviest burden from these ripple effects.

With the above risk factors triggering political instability and new conflict situations, refugees, IDPs, stateless people and returnees globally will continue to be affected by both new emergencies, and protracted ones which may become more acute.

**Emergency preparedness and response – partnering Regional Bureaux and operations**

*Distinguished delegates,*

As one of the High Commissioner's five strategic directions, UNHCR continues to prepare for and respond to complex, multi-hazard emergencies in challenging contexts. The Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS) plays a supportive role to Regional Bureaux and country operations in this important endeavour, through policy, guidance, emergency deployments of personnel and delivery of relief items.

Since the beginning of 2022, UNHCR has declared level 3 emergencies in 6 countries. This figure, which was reached in a three-month period, is the highest number of level 3 emergencies declared in any year since 2014. The recent developments have confirmed yet again the importance of the rapid mobilization of human resources and rolling out cash and in-kind assistance at speed in support of national authorities.

Currently, UNHCR is finalizing revision of its Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response. The new Policy will mainstream and reaffirm key protection principles, prioritize the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse from the outset of emergencies, and will ensure that persons of concern are at the centre of UNHCR's emergency activities. It embraces the decentralization & regionalization process, by empowering country operations to lead preparedness and response, with the Regional Bureaux and Headquarters divisions providing guidance and support.

Preparedness is fundamental to UNHCR being a predictable lead and a reliable partner in emergencies. The new policy is aligned with UNHCR's Enterprise Risk Management system and requires country operations to undertake emergency risk analysis and proactively monitor identified risks. Also, in line with UNHCR's commitment to localization, the new Policy highlights the importance of diversifying partnerships, with an emphasis on inclusive, and collaborative protection and assistance activities. Furthermore, the revised policy clarifies UNHCR's engagement in emergencies resulting from natural hazards and climate change, while the *Operational Strategy for Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability* issued in December 2021 further elaborates on the integration of environmental considerations into UNHCR's emergency preparedness mechanisms.

### **Agile and sustainable supply chain management**

*Distinguished delegates,*

The ongoing pressures stemming from global supply chain disruptions and volatile operating conditions of simultaneous emergencies have further intensified the challenges to prepare and respond with goods and services in a timely and efficient manner.

To respond to the growing number of emergencies, UNHCR has recently increased its Global Stockpile Management capacity to be able to assist anytime, everywhere up to 1 million people. To support faster deliveries, the organization has diversified transportation routes, reallocated contingency stocks and sourcing items from suppliers in proximity of the emergency.

Going forward, UNHCR will utilize a multi-faceted approach to streamline, simplify and strengthen supply chain management to support operations, thereby meeting ever-evolving needs. We are in the process of establishing a new service delivery model for its supply chain by reviewing and rethinking the way the supply function is managed, and to agree on a model which maximizes the efficiency of the limited resources required. The new enterprise resource planning system (ERP) is also expected to enhance the supply chain performance and accountability, as well as promote simplifications, and informed decision-making. Fostering a diverse and skilled global supply chain management human capital and tailoring its supply workforce to the complexity of operations are also part of such endeavours.

Climate action is a critical focus area in future supply deliveries. As part of the *Operational Strategy for Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability*, UNHCR will undertake major initiatives to improve the sustainability of the end-to-end supply chain, including the adoption of greener CRIs (Core Relief Items). As the strategy envisages, we have an ambitious target of GHG (greenhouse gas) emission reduction of 20% by 2025.

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

*Distinguished delegates,*

UNHCR strives to foster a robust culture of security, so that organization can stay and deliver for people in need even when risks remain. A key part of this is ensuring a high performing, agile, responsive and diverse workforce. UNHCR is continuing to make efforts to recruit more female security advisers and have been successful in recruiting 4 international and 9 locally recruited since 2021.

As face-to-face training resumes, Field Security Service (FSS) in DESS is coordinating and delivering women's security awareness training (WSAT). This is a specific training by women for women given the specific threats and risks that they face. Demand for this training has grown particularly, following COVID-19 where there was a surge in reports of domestic violence. At present 20 countries are on the training schedule in 2022.

To advance a person-centered approach in security management, our recently recruited and locally recruited security personnel are specifically receiving training on the threats and risks that our workforce may face because of their gender and/or sexual orientation. The content will now be expanded further to include disabilities and other factors (such as race, religion, ethnicity) that UN personnel are often subjected to but are not considered in the security risk management process. It is envisaged that this revised course will continue in the next two years, so that the entire security workforce has the appropriate training.

Finally, we continue to work and support the UN Security Management System (UNSMS) to be more robust to meet our needs in the field. UNHCR is leading in developing additional tools as part of the Inter-agency Security Management Network (IASMN) to ensure that this is embedded in all facets of the UNSMS, particularly at the field level.

I thank you very much for your attention and support. I will be happy to answer your questions.