

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

UNHCR's coordination efforts to measure the impact
arising from hosting, protecting and assisting refugees

Statement to the 75th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme

19th June 2019

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Mr Chairperson, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen

I am pleased to share a few remarks on UNHCR's coordination efforts to measure the impact of hosting, protecting and assisting refugees. Although the topic is an absorbing and complex one, I will be brief so as not to duplicate what is already in the paper that has been circulated. Moreover, as I am certain many delegates will have participated in one or other of the recent meetings or consultations on the same subject.

So as to adopt an efficient, value for money led approach, I take this opportunity, if I may, to share also a few observations on the indicators for the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR). These will focus particularly on areas where the two subjects intersect, most notably on the production of data and evidence.

Beginning in February last year and lasting through to December, UNHCR pursued three approaches to the task conferred on us by the Omnibus Resolution adopted at the General

Assembly on 17 December 2017. Firstly, to take stock of previous efforts to respond to Member States requests on this topic a. Secondly, to explore the most appropriate technical partnerships to identify some methodologies to advance collective work in this area. Thirdly, to identify a participatory process through which interested states could meet to reflect on and agree some suitable methodologies to advance thinking and practice.

In assessing previous efforts to measure the impact of hosting protecting and assisting refugees, the predominance of narrow sectoral or geographical studies was observed. Taking into account the ambitions of the consultations on the Global Compact to tackle the challenge of increased burden and responsibility sharing, it was concluded that the Measuring Impact exercise should be similarly global in its scope and coverage.

Building on the ongoing cooperation already established with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank Group (WBG), UNHCR explored the possible technical contributions of these valued partners to address the challenge of assessing the contributions of donor and host states to refugee situations. From the preliminary exchanges it was quickly evident that our partners had the necessary expertise, and, more importantly, the willingness to engage substantively on the subject. During subsequent consultations we reviewed approaches and possible methodological content.

Through 2018 UNHCR organized a series of informal consultations to determine how best to approach the subject with interested Member States. At these meetings, the proposal to pursue three lines of approach were shared. There was broad consensus that (i) capturing data on donor contributions, (ii) on host country contributions and (iii) designing a metric to look at how any identified gaps could best be met, would be a helpful way to proceed.

In parallel, the aspiration to embrace the measuring impact process and the commitment to design indicators for the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) was formally captured in

Paragraphs 102 and 103 of the GCR text. Thus, in addition to responding to the original request contained in the GA Omnibus Resolution on UNHCR, the Measuring Impact process will also produce a report for the first meeting of the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) on 17-18 December 2019.

So, what have our collective process produced so far. Rather than repeat *verbatim* what was contained in the update shared with Executive Committee members and observers, let me rather highlight what UNHCR considers the achievements to date have been, where further engagement is necessary ahead of the first Global Refugee Forum, and how we anticipate this process evolving in future.

From UNHCR's perspective the process to date has progressed in four respects. Firstly, building understanding that measuring the impact and measuring costs are two rather different exercises requiring different approaches. Secondly, reaching agreement on key methodologies to calculate contributions from both donor and host governments thereby providing a useable data set for the purpose of identifying the main "gaps". Thirdly, a recognition that data would likely be incomplete and some proxies would need to be found. This would particularly be the case for assessing impact which requires estimating what would have happened to socio-economic existing conditions had a refugee emergency not taken place, comparing it with data on what actually happened, and then estimating the difference. Fourthly, an understanding that sourcing information and data would likely require the engagement of other parts of government – for example, Ministries of Finance, Economy and Planning and individual line Ministries (Health, Education) – in order to arrive at a more comprehensive assessment.

In aggregate, therefore, I believe that the exercise will reveal some useful insights for a report to be compiled for the first Global Refugee Forum (GRF). I do believe, however, that I can safely state that all participants have understood that the exercise is pioneering in nature and will certainly not produce conclusive results at the first attempt. It will rather be an iterative process that will improve over time as we are able to gather more data.

As data and evidence are the principal link between the Measuring Impact and the work on the GCR Indicators, let me conclude by addressing one or two points that have emerged during our recent deliberations on the topic. Member States have consistently recalled that the purpose of the GCR is to address the long standing gap on burden and responsibility sharing. As the existing international legal and protection framework and instruments for refugees have remained robust and relevant for over six decades, the GCR deliberately focuses on the missing dimension – the absence of predictability around burden sharing and how to improve our collective efforts in that area.

Notwithstanding the technical integrity with which the UNHCR team has worked on the GCR indicator document, the theme of responsibility sharing remained central to all our reflections. That the document's content has assumed a more quantitative expression – and in the interests of efficiency, a more concise format - should not be interpreted as any loss of commitment to refugee protection. At the global level, however, it is necessary to concentrate on those systemic areas which are most easily measurable and reflect most visibly our collective efforts to improve burden sharing.

But the qualitative outcomes, for example, of a significant increase in development assistance reaching local and refugee households in some of the poorest regions of the developing world

should not be underestimated. We are already starting to see evidence of the difference that this will make to individual lives.

It is axiomatic that reducing poverty is a multi-dimensional and complex endeavor. It requires improvements in health, education, household assets, energy, clean drinking water, and adequate housing. It also implies progress in securing the rights and opportunities for marginalized populations, including refugees, to gain access to employment opportunities and to move freely to find them. These are not outcomes that can be achieved over the short term. But with the optimal mix of pro-poor policies, capable institutions and an increase in well targeted resources we can expect to see measurable progress at both macro and individual levels.

The GCR indicators document draws deliberately on some of the existing SDG indicators both for their normative relevance and because they speak to goals and targets already agreed to by Member States. It is, of course, our hope that in future we shall be able to draw on existing data to reduce the effort and costs of collection and analysis. That was also the logic that compelled us to reduce the number of indicators and outcomes to what we consider the most critical issues and areas related to the four objectives.

Of course, some additional effort will be required from us all if we are to provide evidence of the GCR's progress in future. That will no doubt require further discussion. Needless to say, UNHCR stands ready to further advance the cooperation we have enjoyed with all stakeholders in this endeavor. We are confident that the time and effort invested in the Measuring Impact exercise will also contribute to ensuring that data in the most critical areas highlighted for the GCR's objective of burden sharing is collected and can be made systematically available for a range of other purposes as well.

