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Update of UNHCR's operations in Africa**A. Situational context**

By the end of 2018, the number of persons of concern to UNHCR in Africa had reached 26.4 million, up from 24.2 million the year before. The total included 6.3 million refugees and 17.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). The rise in numbers was expected to continue as conflicts and other causes of displacement endured. Refugees in Africa mainly originated from South Sudan (2.3 million), Somalia (950,000), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (874,000), the Sudan (591,000), Eritrea (507,000) and Burundi (344,100).

Generally the rights of refugees were respected on the continent, with governments and populations receiving refugees and asylum-seekers generously. However, in some occasions, refugee protection standards were not fully upheld and there were instances of refoulement and physical and administrative obstacles preventing refugees from accessing protection and assistance. These situations are being addressed with governments through advocacy and interventions to strengthen asylum institutions. UNHCR's strong cooperation with the African Union is also helpful in this regard. In 2019, Africa is celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (the Kampala Convention). Africa remains the only region to have concluded a legally binding instrument addressing internal displacement. This year is also the 50th anniversary of the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, and the African Union declared the theme of the year 2019 as "Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa."

While the funding available to UNHCR for operations in Africa has grown in recent times the needs have also increased, resulting in less than 50 per cent of the requirements being met. The effects of the funding shortfall have been felt most acutely in the provision of food assistance, resulting in reduced rations below the minimum standards in several of UNHCR's operations.

UNHCR sought to move to a model of more sustainable responses, in particular in protracted situations. With the affirmation of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) in December 2018, the organization called for support and investments to benefit both host populations and refugees. In 2018, 11 countries across Africa were selected by the World Bank to receive grants and concessional loans. A number of bilateral cooperation initiatives were also increasingly working towards achieving benefits for both refugees and host communities. There was compelling evidence¹ that, if properly supported and planned, socio-economic inclusion strengthened the attainment of durable solutions.

East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes

The Revitalised agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan was signed in September 2018, with the objective of a Government of national unity being in place by 12 November 2019. The agreement rekindled the hope that one of the worst displacement crises in Africa was close to being resolved. To make future returns sustainable, post conflict recovery needs in South Sudan should be addressed. In April 2019,

¹ See the World Bank Report "In my backyard" (2016) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) Report "Kakuma as a market place" (2018).

UNHCR updated its position on returns to South Sudan by stating it is neither promoting nor facilitating returns, as the conditions for return in safety and dignity were not in place and human rights violations continued. Due to the conflict, some 4 million people, or almost half of the South Sudanese population, are currently forcibly displaced. This number includes 1.9 million internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The number of Somali refugees has been declining as a result of return movements. However, Somalia remains one of the largest refugee situations in the world with some 810,500 Somali refugees. For refugees to be able to return, basic services and infrastructure need to be improved. Inclusion and livelihood activities are also necessary to create conditions conducive for return, as part of the regional application of the comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF) through the Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and Reintegration of Returnees in Somalia (adopted by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)). A new wave of internal displacement took place in May 2019 in Somalia, with some 60,000 people leaving their homes. By the end of 2018, a total of around 162,000 people were newly displaced due to insecurity, drought and floods. Asylum-seekers and refugees from the Horn of Africa undertaking perilous journeys through the Gulf of Aden and other mixed movements continued to face serious protection challenges.

As of July 2019, there were close to 344,100 Burundian refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania (183,710), Rwanda (72,610), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (45,450) and Uganda (42,330). As one of the most neglected refugee situations, a significant increase in support is needed to fulfil the basic needs of Burundian refugees in these countries. Although the security situation in Burundi has improved, the underlying political tensions that caused people to flee remain unresolved. Returns are not actively promoted, but UNHCR and partners are working with governments to assist those who indicate they have made a free and informed choice to return voluntarily.

Other refugee situations in the region included the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with Congolese refugees hosted in nine neighbouring countries. Nearly half a million refugees from other countries are also present in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, making it one of the world's most complex displacement crises, compounded by the second-largest Ebola outbreak on record. Many parts of the country are subject to sporadic violence, and clashes involving various armed groups have caused over 4.5 million people to become internally displaced.

West and Central Africa

The ongoing humanitarian crisis in Mali has, as of August 2019, displaced over 138,000 Malians into Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger, and has resulted in some 170,000 people becoming displaced within the country. Burkina Faso, in turn, is grappling with an unprecedented humanitarian emergency due to an upsurge of violence in the eastern, central-northern, northern and Sahel regions. Armed attacks and insecurity have resulted in almost 290,000 becoming internally displaced, which included more than 240,000 people displaced in January to August 2019 alone.

The Lake Chad Basin is facing one of the world's most complex humanitarian and protection crises with nearly 3 million people affected across regions of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. Violent attacks by armed groups have increased in recent months, killing and injuring hundreds of civilians, displacing more people and preventing refugee returns to Nigeria. UNHCR is continuing its advocacy with the Governments of Cameroon and Nigeria to ensure that returns are facilitated within the framework of the tripartite agreement, making sure that refugee returns are voluntary, safe and dignified.

Five years into the crisis in north-eastern Nigeria, some 244,000 refugees are living either in camps or with host communities in Niger (120,000), Cameroon (108,000) and Chad (16,000). The ongoing conflict has also resulted in the internal displacement of more than 2.5 million people in the Lake Chad Basin, including almost 2 million people in Nigeria, over 260,000 in Cameroon, 174,000 in Chad and 104,000 in Niger, as of 31 May 2019.

The Central African Republic remains the country with most humanitarian needs per capita, with 50 per cent of the population having to rely on humanitarian assistance to survive. The signing of a peace accord between the Government and 14 rebel groups in February 2019

brought hope for peace, but the security situation remains fragile. In light of the prospect for situational improvement, tripartite agreements were signed with Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo.

Southern Africa

The region hosts asylum-seekers and refugees, the majority originating from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Somalia. There was an increase of over 8 per cent in the population of concern to UNHCR compared to 2018, mostly due to population movements from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to neighbouring Angola and Zambia, but also to the rest of the subregion. Refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo remained the largest number in the sub-region, with close to 214,000 refugees in the southern Africa region, and constituted the bulk of the new arrivals. The country also hosted the highest number of IDPs, a total of some 4.5 million. Internal displacement has recently intensified in the North Kivu and Ituri provinces, which are areas that are also hit by Ebola, thereby exacerbating the humanitarian crisis.

Tropical Cyclone Idai, which hit the subregion in March 2019, became one of the deadliest storms ever recorded to hit the Southern Hemisphere. The cyclone caused catastrophic flooding, landslides and large number of casualties and internal displacement across Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. An estimated 3 million people were affected, including around 2 million in Mozambique. As UNHCR was already present in these countries, the organization was able to join the collective United Nations system-wide response. Many countries in this region, such as Namibia and Zimbabwe, were also affected by drought, hampering their ability to host refugees as resources are becoming scarcer.

A number of refugees in Lóvua settlement in Angola expressed their interest to return to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Organized voluntary repatriation was scheduled to begin in September 2019, with a target of assisting 5,000 people to return by the end of the year.

B. Achieving the global strategic priorities

The GCR has provided the impetus for new opportunities beyond the three traditional durable solutions. Stronger collaboration, coordination and partnerships, including with regional organizations, have enabled more effective responses and benefited both the displaced populations and host communities in Africa.

The search for durable solutions

Voluntary repatriation

After the agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, the number of refugees spontaneously returning increased, with almost 200,000 South Sudanese organizing their own return as of end of July 2019.

Since December 2014, some 90,000 Somali refugees have voluntarily returned to Somalia from Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Lybia, Tunisia and Yemen, benefitting from travel and reintegration assistance by UNHCR. In 2019, only around 4,000 people had returned by July, but an increase in returns was projected for the upcoming dry season.

The voluntary repatriation of Central African Republic refugees began in 2016 following the general elections. While UNHCR was planning to organize the return of some 360 people per week, only approximately 1,000 individuals returned to Bangui in the first 8 months of 2019 due to security challenges.

A total of 72,000 refugees have returned to Burundi since September 2017, mostly from the United Republic of Tanzania. Organized repatriation movements from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Burundi are expected to take place during the last quarter of 2019.

As of 15 August 2019, some 272,900 refugees from Côte d'Ivoire have voluntarily repatriated since 2011. In 2019, around 1,320 people returned, of whom 930 were previously located in Liberia.

Following Presidential elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in January 2019, a number of Congolese refugees in Lóvua settlement in Angola have expressed their interest

to return to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. To date, over 12,000 refugees have spontaneously returned. Organized voluntary repatriation is scheduled to begin in late September 2019, with a target of assisting 5,000 people in returning by the end of the year.

Local integration

In Cameroon, Rwandan refugees have been offered an alternative legal status following the application of the cessation clause. Some 1,700 applicants obtained a two-year residence permit.

In 2018, around 310 naturalization certificates were provided to refugees from Sierra Leone by the Liberia Immigration Service and the Court for Sierra Leonean refugees. The President of Liberia certified the certificates which provided the refugees with Liberian citizenship.

In Guinea Bissau, as a result of a presidential decree issued in December 2018, national identity cards were to be issued to some 7,000 refugees. During the first half of 2019, around 4,280 national identity cards were issued and some 4,100 refugee children were registered at birth. During the second half of the year, efforts will be made to advance the naturalization of an additional 1,760 refugees.

In Kenya, the Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan was launched in Kakuma on 1 April 2019. While not geared towards legal local integration, the plan provided a framework to manage the presence of some 180,000 refugees (40 per cent of the population of Turkana West) in a manner benefitting both the refugees and host communities.

Resettlement

By the end of July 2019, some 18,160 refugees from Africa had been submitted for resettlement and over 12,700 refugees had been resettled. UNHCR sought to develop complementary pathways for admission and forged partnerships with various organizations to facilitate access to scholarships and employment opportunities for refugees from different nationalities living in Kenya and Niger. Through a pilot project in Ethiopia, Niger and the Sudan, increased legal assistance was provided to unaccompanied children to facilitate family reunification with parents and siblings in resettlement countries.

Resettlement needs are projected to remain high, with around 670,000 refugees residing in 32 countries of asylum estimated to be in need of this solution.

Promoting a favourable protection environment

As part of the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention and the 10th Anniversary of the Kampala Convention on IDPs, a series of six continental consultative meetings and other partner-led activities will be organized. They will address different thematic issues, including ratification and implementation of the conventions, mixed movements of refugees and migrants, statelessness, global responsibility-sharing and the role of parliamentarians in preventing and resolving forced displacement. At the end of 2018, Niger became the first State to ratify comprehensive national legislation on internal displacement and in June 2019, South Sudan became the 28th country to ratify the Kampala Convention.

A number of countries applying the CRRF enacted laws and regulations on the rights of refugees and expanded their access to national services. Ethiopia promulgated a new refugee proclamation in April 2019, which enabled refugees to acquire work permits, access primary education, obtain drivers' licenses, register life events and open bank accounts.

UNHCR is strengthening links with regional economic communities, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), to work towards harmonization of refugee and asylum management standards, address mixed migration, combat statelessness, build disaster risk resilience and develop approaches for climate-induced displacement. UNHCR has also consolidated a new partnership with the African Union Pan-African Parliament, based in Johannesburg.

Mixed movements

The emergency transit mechanism in Niger, established by UNHCR in 2017 with support from the European Union, continued to provide a lifeline to vulnerable refugees and asylum-

seekers evacuated out of Libya. By September 2019, nearly 3,900 people mainly from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and the Sudan had been evacuated mostly to Niger. Of them, 1,600 departed from Niger for resettlement in third countries.

A group of almost 70 vulnerable refugees was evacuated from Libya to Rwanda on a UNHCR-chartered flight in September 2019. They were the first to benefit from the emergency transit mechanism, set up by the Government of Rwanda, UNHCR and the African Union. Up to 500 refugees held in Libyan detention centres, as well as others identified as particularly vulnerable and at risk, will be transferred to safety to the transit centre in order to receive food, water, shelter and healthcare.

As a result of a retreat between UNHCR and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Nigeria in April 2019, a declaration was unanimously adopted on mixed movements. ECOWAS member States were encouraged to strengthen protection of refugees and of other persons of concern in mixed movements, create alternative pathways and redouble efforts to implement existing laws and standards through capacity-building and a community-based approach, as well as intensify the search for durable solutions.

Statelessness

In West Africa, member States of ECOWAS continued to implement the Banjul plan of action on the eradication of statelessness (2017-2024), with Guinea-Bissau adopting a national action plan to end statelessness. In December 2018, the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), in partnership with UNHCR, organized a regional workshop in the framework of the global campaign to end statelessness by 2024 and adopted the N'Djamena initiative on the eradication of statelessness in Central Africa. In May 2019 a regional meeting was organized by UNHCR and ECOWAS in Abidjan to help countries prepare for the high-level segment on statelessness of the 70th plenary session of the Executive Committee. All but three countries in West Africa had ratified the 1954 and 1961 statelessness conventions and UNHCR advocated for ratification by the remaining countries.

Birth and civil registration remain important tools in preventing statelessness and ensuring the protection of stateless persons. A number of countries have distributed birth certificates to children of refugees and refugee-hosting communities at risk of statelessness.

A number of positive strides have been made in the southern Africa region, where Angola is now in the last stages of accession to the two statelessness conventions. All 16 member States of SADC have appointed focal points for statelessness and a draft action plan to prevent statelessness has been submitted for endorsement. Eswatini, Madagascar, Namibia and Zambia are in the process of adopting national action plans to prevent and end statelessness.

C. Financial information

The comprehensive needs budget for Africa for 2019 that was approved by the Executive Committee at its annual plenary session in October 2018 amounted to \$2.67 billion. By August 2019, the budget had decreased by \$10.1 million, with a revised budget of \$2.66 billion.

The reduction was mainly attributed to the results of the verification exercise in Uganda. The figures for the total assisted population were revised downwards and budget adjustments of over \$60 million were made to reflect a reduction in the planned number of new arrivals from South Sudan, the projected influx from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as supplementary budgets established in response to the situation in Cameroon (\$44.6 million).

Of the activities carried out in 2019, some 98 per cent were related to protection and solutions, emergency response and reintegration. Around 48 per cent of activities were related to basic needs and essential services such as education, health, shelter, sanitation and energy. The provision of protection, activities to combat sexual and gender-based violence and durable solutions amounted to 26 per cent of the budget.

As of 10 September 2019, the needs for Africa were 41 per cent funded after the consideration of the allocations of unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions. This presented an indicative funding gap of \$1.58 billion.