

Remarks for the 75th meeting of the Standing Committee of the
Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme
Kelly T. Clements, Deputy High Commissioner
CICG, Room 2
18-20 June 2019

Mister Chairperson,
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of his UNHCR family I would like to, first and foremost, take a moment to toast my colleague, Volker Türk, for whom this Standing Committee meeting marks his final formal engagement with member states in his capacity of Assistant High Commissioner for Protection and whom I have known for many years prior to my current function and am grateful to call my friend.

Over the course of his three decade long career with UNHCR, Volker has touched the lives of countless people: refugees, stateless, displaced and colleagues alike. He has served in a range of capacities across the world, including postings in MENA, Africa, Asia and Europe, and missions across the globe, working tirelessly to provide protection to, and seek solutions for, displaced populations. He does it with heart, humility, and intellect. His dedication is mirrored by his calm serenity, and his ability to remain focussed on bettering the lives of the people under our care in these turbulent times.

Volker's contribution to improving the lives of displaced populations, and to shaping UNHCR into the modern, dynamic, and innovative institution it is today cannot be over-stated. His wisdom and counsel will be missed, within the Senior Executive Team and the organisation at large.

But while Volker leaves UNHCR, he remains a member of our family and will continue to serve displaced populations, and other citizens of the world, in his new role of Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination with the Office of the Secretary General. In this role, he succeeds and joins other illustrious UNHCR alumni in working to ensure that the United Nations continues to serve as a force for good in the world. Thank you Volker.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Controller and Director of the Division of Financial and Administrative Management, Mr. Baritt, and Director of the Division of External Relations, Ms. Hyde, will update in detail on budgets and funding so I won't go into detail on this myself though, as usual, I do want to highlight some key figures and brief you broadly on key management issues.

Our final budget for 2018 was US \$8.2 billion, comprising both the initial US \$7.5 billion budget approved by ExCom in October 2017 and six supplementary budgets totalling US \$712 million for new emergencies including the Venezuela, Myanmar, Syria and Central Mediterranean situations.

Funding available in 2018 amounted to US \$4.7 billion, up by 4 per cent on funding available in the 2017 budget year, though we remained with a substantial funding gap with 43 per cent of needs unmet.

Our budget for 2019 now stands at US \$8.6 billion comprising the ExCom approved budget of US \$8.5 billion, a further US \$107 million in supplementary budgets to meet previously unforeseen needs in the Venezuela and Cameroon situations and a US \$62 million reduction driven by the revision of population planning figures in the Uganda operation. As of mid-June of this year, UNHCR had an estimated US\$2.4 billion funds available, falling far short of requirements.

Worryingly, around 85 per cent of the voluntary contributions received by UNHCR come with some degree of earmarking. This has a detrimental effect on our ability to plan, and meet needs in a number of situations quickly and flexibly. The Controller and Director of DER will speak to this concern in their presentation and I want to echo this. Earmarking should not prevent us from meeting urgent needs in a timely manner in one location while funding is available but earmarked to other situations.

I reiterate our thanks to countries who provide wholly unearmarked funding, particularly Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany, Denmark, Switzerland who each provided over \$15 million in unearmarked funding this year. This complements a growing group of private sector contributors and gives us life-saving flexibility to respond quickly to emerging needs. Importantly, support from the United States through a \$60 million emergency reserve has also enabled a nimble response in these challenging and dynamic times.

Before I give the floor to my colleagues, I would like to give you a rapid update on some of the changes, and key initiatives, afoot within UNHCR.

Much was said about regionalization and decentralization as well as our broader transformation in the March Standing Committee meeting so I won't go into details now. In short, we have continued to work to effect the transition of the Regional Bureaux out of Geneva and into new locations, discontinuing positions in the existing Bureaux and regional platforms and re-creating positions and new functions in new Regional Bureaux. The selection process for senior positions within the new Regional Bureaux is now well under way and the selection of other team members is ongoing. All the while, every possible measure has been put in place to accompany personnel through this process, and mitigate the inevitable impact these changes have on their lives and those of their family members.

And while work continues to relocate the Bureaux themselves, we are setting the pace of work to ensure the decentralization of authorities and streamlined processes necessary to enable our organization to make the most of its new structure. This includes changes to our resource allocation framework as well as a host of other policies regulating human resources, supply, procurement, and other essential core functions.

A Transition Task Team manages the day to day Regionalization and Decentralization process by tracking, reporting and coordinating as well as escalating issues requiring decision to senior management. This team has introduced project management tools to monitor the transition and established key performance indicators to measure impact. All the while, we are working, with the support of *pro-bono* consultants, to set up a transformation governance structure to provide the necessary governance to the various strands of our change, including workforce realignment and results based management revision project. This Governance Board has first considered Regionalization and Decentralization, one of our most advanced strands of change, with a view to expanding to other initiatives in the near future.

But changing a global organization such as UNHCR to align to future challenges and opportunities requires more than merely moving people and changing policies. It requires a fundamental change to the way in which we work and relate to each other. To that end, we are undertaking a number of initiatives aimed at embedding a culture that is results-oriented, efficient, based on trust, and articulated around strong teams operating within a less rigid hierarchy. We will focus on culture, and the way in which our senior managers work together and with their teams in an upcoming meeting of our Senior Management Committee, and in meetings of new Regional Bureaux

personnel, prior to their relocation to new Bureau locations. The latter will set the tone for the new structures, promoting an equitable organizational culture that is collaborative, respectful and innovative and provide a first opportunity to ensure that headquarters and the new regional entities dovetail seamlessly.

The cross-cutting theme of our transformation is to create a renewed culture of accountability and integrity. The robust application of the 'Three Lines of Defence' significantly contributes to this effort as do a number of other undertakings. This includes the Risk Management 2.0 initiative, a targeted approach to improve the risk culture across the organization. Beyond additional personnel deployed to support operations, we have renewed investments in training personnel on risk management, embedded risk management into the regular processes of the organization, strengthened enterprise risk management tools and reporting, and ensured that best practices are identified and shared across the organization. This focus on risk is mirrored by our work in the interagency realm on risk maturity and appetite.

Improving our risk culture is an important step which must go hand in hand with an organisational culture which encourages all personnel to identify fraud, corruption and other forms of misconduct when they occur. This is why we have ensured clear and ongoing messaging on integrity and accountability throughout the organisation. We revamped our annual code of conduct refresher sessions. We rolled out an active bystander campaign. And we created a speak up helpline, piggybacking on WHO's experience, allowing all personnel to report concerns confidentially. Online training on fraud and corruption awareness is now mandatory for all personnel.

As you have heard from us before, particular efforts were made to reinforce safeguarding measures to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. This was done through a reiterated and clear articulation of our commitment to support and protect survivors and, importantly, to nurture behaviours, attitudes and practices conducive to a respectful workplace to prevent misconduct. We have fostered ongoing dialogue with all colleagues on these matters; issued a short guide for managers on the prevention and response to sexual harassment and launched a challenge on UNHCR's Ideas Platform – bringing innovative ideas from field teams to tackle the issue of sexual harassment. We put in place a psychosocial case management system to support victims and witnesses of sexual harassment and reinforced our network of PSEA focal points in the field through additional training and guidance and facilitated the exchange of good practices within the network through an online platform. We also issued new administrative instructions on protection against retaliation which now cover the organization's entire workforce, and expand the scope of protected activities, as well as the range of corrective measures in cases of retaliation.

Notwithstanding our long-term engagement to tackle the issue, we acknowledge that more can and should be done to strengthen our approach. This is why we commissioned an independent evaluative review of our PSEA policies and procedures which is now being finalised. The consultants' findings and recommendations highlight both some of the stronger aspects of our work, and areas where shortcomings remain, and will inform our activities to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse in the months to come. We will brief you on these efforts in the next couple of months.

However much we invest in prevention, we will continue to need strong systems to address misconduct if and when it occurs. We have further invested in strengthening our investigation and disciplinary processes to improve responses to allegations and, in 2018, our professionalised IGO was able to assess close to 80 per cent of all complaints within eight weeks and close investigations in over 50 per cent of cases within six months. As a result of this, and the work of a range of other entities in the disciplinary process, the High Commissioner imposed disciplinary measures on 35

UNHCR staff in 2018, 14 more than in the previous year and which included 21 instances of separation.

Our investment in oversight and accountability is a longstanding one and I have briefed you, the Standing Committee, on the work we initiated in 2016 to review and reform our oversight functions. I will not detail again the reforms which were carried out in the last three years but will limit myself to saying that these changes are bearing fruit and that we are seeing better integration of the internal audit function within UNHCR and an improved interface between UNHCR's management and oversight functions.

Our efforts to reform and strengthen oversight and accountability in the organization are done in tandem with efforts to bring greater efficiency to the management of our work. We are making efforts, across the board, to decrease costs and optimize resources to provide higher quality outputs and service delivery so that we can make the maximum impact on the ground. This requires improved use of data to measure efficiencies, identify challenges and determine the way forward; further streamlining to improve processes, reduce waste and work smarter; continued innovation to strengthen accountability and reimagine our systems, and; leveraging partnerships and economies of scale to deliver services more comprehensively. We briefed you last month on our initial work to consolidate these efforts so I won't repeat these here.

These are ongoing efforts which underpin much of our work, and which we are leading across the system, with the World Food Programme, through the UN's Business Innovations Group, or BIG, which I have previously briefed you about. Ultimately, these are a reflection of our commitment to you, and to the people we serve, to improve the way we work, and deliver better results with the resources which you so generously contribute. We will continue to keep you updated on developments.

Finally, we are facing an unusual situation this year regarding our assessed contribution from the UN regular budget and your consideration of its use for UNHCR's programme activities. We last reported to you on this in 2016 in relation to the 2018-2019 biennium and had not included this item on the Standing Committee agenda for this year owing to the annualisation of the UN budget cycle beginning in 2020, which has considerably compressed the time schedule for its preparation and review.

We have however, upon instructions received in December 2018, presented our submissions on this to UN headquarters in New York in the period between March and May of this year. Following this, our submission has already been reviewed by both the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the Committee for Programmes and Coordination (CPC).

Going forward, we are working to identify the best modalities and timing for the Standing Committee's review of future UN regular budget programme proposals, taking into consideration the full programme of work which has already been set for this year, and in view of ensuring due consideration by this body in a manner which conforms with the updated budget cycle in New York.

So in conclusion, dear colleagues, the agenda is a full one for the organisation at this mid-year point. And while the challenges and opportunities with escalating numbers of people of concern to UNHCR are many, we are optimistic about the future and the steps we are taking to ensure the strongest possible organisation for the future. Too many depend on our success to fail. Thanks you again for your unwavering support.