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Report of the seventy-fifth meeting of the Standing Committee (18-20 June 2019)*

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I.

Introduction

1. The meeting was opened by the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, His Excellency Ambassador Geert Muylle (Belgium).

II. Adoption of the agenda

2. The Committee adopted the agenda of the meeting (EC/70/SC/CRP.9).

III. International protection

3. The Assistant High Commissioner (Protection) introduced the agenda item on international protection, sharing his personal reflections after 30 years of working for UNHCR and prior to leaving the organization. He highlighted the primacy of the individual and communities, the primacy of the law, the primacy of both protection and solutions, and the primacy of multilateralism. He also underscored the importance of enhancing resilience and supporting social transformation.

A. Note on international protection

4. The Director of the Division of International Protection (DIP) presented the note on international protection (EC/70/SC/CRP.10). She outlined a number of positive developments, including in the context of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), as well as the challenges faced, notably in ensuring protection for refugees and other persons of concern in complex mixed movements. She also stressed the need to place protection at the centre of humanitarian action.

5. The Committee welcomed the advancements made over the past year as well as the emphasis placed on the centrality of protection in humanitarian responses. The principle of international responsibility-sharing was underscored, with support expressed for the continued efforts of neighbouring States hosting large numbers of refugees. Implementation of the GCR through concrete pledges and contributions at the first Global Refugee Forum in December 2019 was crucial going forward, and States were encouraged to contribute to its success. The Forum would not only provide an important opportunity to take stock of progress but also to demonstrate and mobilize broader global support for refugee protection and solutions. Implementation of the GCR would require UNHCR to play an important role in convening and catalysing others. UNHCR was urged to continue strengthening partnerships with a wide range of actors, including the private sector, in order to ensure stronger and more comprehensive responses for refugees and host communities.

6. The cardinal principle of non-refoulement and the right to seek asylum were underscored by numerous delegations. Several States noted the challenges related to the capacity of their national asylum systems to receive large numbers of asylum-seekers and the need to take into account security considerations. The return of individuals who were assessed not to be in need of international protection was key to ensure the credibility of asylum. UNHCR was encouraged to prioritize its work to develop and strengthen asylum systems. The importance of regional approaches was stressed, including the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (also known by its Spanish acronym, "MIRPS"). The Quito Process was highlighted as an example of coordinated efforts in managing displacement in the region. At the same time, one delegation underscored that regional initiatives must be respectful of international legal frameworks. There was also a call for effective coordination and common positions in addressing mixed movements in the Mediterranean region.

7. On solutions, UNHCR was commended for its three-year strategy on resettlement and complementary pathways, which should be given priority. At the same time, the limited number of refugees returning to their countries of origin was lamented, and UNHCR was urged to redouble its efforts in supporting voluntary repatriation. Prevention was said to be

key however, and returns not possible without lasting solutions to the crises. Addressing the root causes of conflict to prevent refugees from having to flee in the first place, and to enable those who sought refuge elsewhere to repatriate to their home country, was also underscored. In terms of successful integration, the importance of social and economic inclusion in local communities was stressed. Collaboration with a wide range of actors, such as the World Bank and other financial institutions, as well as with development partners, was indispensable to support solutions.

8. The need to ensure humanitarian access to enable assistance and protection for vulnerable individuals and communities was highlighted. One delegation queried whether UNHCR might explore the possibility of a thematic evaluation on delivering protection for urban refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). In relation to cash assistance, protection was emphasized as a central element that must be taken into account when assessing whether to use this form of assistance in specific displacement contexts. The Committee applauded UNHCR's increased attention to the needs of persons with disabilities, as well as to mental health and psychosocial support. UNHCR was encouraged to continue prioritizing measures to prevent and address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), both at the strategic and operational level but also in the allocation of resources in specific crises. Education was underscored as a critical protection tool for both refugees and the local population. Support was also expressed for UNHCR's efforts to advance gender equality in its operations and for its revised age, gender and diversity (AGD) policy. UNHCR's work on climate change, environmental degradation and natural disasters, which increasingly interacted with the drivers of forced displacement, was welcomed.

9. Support was expressed for UNHCR's renewed attention to situations of internal displacement, with a call for core protection activities for both refugees and IDPs to be prioritized. The importance of collaboration and coordination among United Nations agencies in the field was critical, as this was a task that should not be shouldered by UNHCR alone. UNHCR was also encouraged to demonstrate leadership on protection in the cluster context. UNHCR's efforts to support humanitarian country teams (HCTs) in developing protection strategies were recognized, however the challenge was in the implementation of these plans and ensuring ownership by the HCTs. Numerous States welcomed UNHCR's efforts to combat statelessness, including in the context of the high-level segment to be held during the annual session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme in October.

10. In response, the Director thanked delegations for their expressions of support, but also for the constructive attention they drew to the gaps in protection. Referring to the numerous calls for upholding the principles of non-refoulement, she noted that this was at the heart of international protection. She took note of the concerns expressed about national asylum systems becoming overburdened, but urged that the return of people not in need of international protection be done in a responsible manner. While acknowledging the legitimate national security concerns of some States, she stressed that there was no inherent contradiction between this and an effective, functioning asylum system.

11. With respect to solutions, the Director noted the concern expressed about the low numbers of returns. At the same time, solutions could not be premature. They had to be sustainable and investments were needed. It was important that UNHCR be in a position to monitor returns and, thus, to have access to areas of return. The Director underscored that the provision of assistance and services had to take place through an AGD lens across all actions. A community-based approach was also key. She spoke about the numerous activities UNHCR was engaged in to support persons of concern with disabilities, including in the inter-agency context, and assured delegations that the Office would continue the momentum in this area. Responding to concern expressed about the increasing trend towards urbanization and the displaced becoming invisible, she acknowledged the challenges to UNHCR in terms of the traditional ways of providing protection and assistance. However, this also challenged UNHCR to find innovative ways of reaching populations and, with the support of host States, presented opportunities such as increased access to the labour market and services.

B. Update on UNHCR's engagement with internally displaced persons

12. The Director of DIP presented the update on UNHCR's engagement with IDPs (EC/70/SC/CRP.11). She framed UNHCR's efforts to improve its response capacity and engagement with other agencies in the context of broader initiatives such as the three-year multi-stakeholder plan of action ("GP20 Action Plan"), launched on the twentieth anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, and the establishment of a High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement. The Director also provided an update on progress made towards the revision of UNHCR's policy on internal displacement. She assured the Committee that the policy would make UNHCR more accountable, both in the context of its responsibilities in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and through its operational footprint.

13. Delegations commended UNHCR and its partners for the range of activities being carried out under the GP20 Action Plan, including those supporting the active participation of IDPs in decision-making processes and in relation to the development of new legislation on internal displacement. They also welcomed the update on UNHCR's new policy on internal displacement, and the efforts to improve predictability and early engagement, and to ensure consistent programming across all sectors. While appreciating UNHCR's financial and operational imperatives, there were numerous calls for its programming for IDPs to be equitable to that of refugees. The Office was encouraged to engage closely with Member States, both donors and host countries, to ensure sufficient support for the implementation of the policy. UNHCR was also asked about what changes it was making internally and about its staffing capacity to increase its engagement in situations of internal displacement.

14. The importance of having data in order to inform IDP responses was underscored. In this context, UNHCR was commended for its work to improve its data collection means, including through the establishment of the Joint Data Centre on Forced Displacement with the World Bank. Delegations stressed the importance of inter-agency cooperation in making comprehensive and disaggregated data readily available to all partners, allowing for the provision of targeted assistance and protection. They insisted on the need to engage other agencies and civil society partners to promote the interoperability of data and ensure coherence and complementarity to improve the evidence base on internal displacement.

15. There was a query as to how UNHCR's policy would evolve, in light of the ongoing IASC discussions pertaining to increased engagement with the clusters as a whole. In this respect, a number of delegations called attention to the importance of ensuring that protection remained a strategic priority across all clusters and in the context of returns. They also encouraged the Office to adopt a more holistic approach by linking humanitarian and development programming. Owing to the increasingly protracted nature of internal displacement, delegations encouraged UNHCR to identify longer-term strategies.

16. The Director thanked delegations for their interest in the updated IDP policy and suggested that an informal meeting might be organized in conjunction with its release. She assured the Committee that despite the timing of the policy's issuance, the 2020 planning process would take into account its key directional elements, allowing UNHCR to ensure sufficient capacity. To facilitate internal coherence and ensure that the policy would deliver as planned, the High Commissioner had instituted the position of Senior Adviser on Internal Displacement. She echoed the Committee's call for quality credible, evidence-based data as essential to any humanitarian response, noting also that the new policy placed emphasis on the need for agency-wide coherence in data collection and processing.

17. In terms of the inter-agency division of labour, the Director emphasized that the fundamental area where UNHCR brought added-value was in ensuring that protection was streamlined across all elements of the IDP response. She highlighted the collaboration between UNHCR, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs on the GP20 Action Plan, in which partnership was so essential. Concerning the formation of a High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, the Director said this initiative would help ensure momentum following the GP20 Action Plan as well as renewed efforts from the IASC.

C. Solutions

18. The Director a.i. of the Division of Resilience and Solutions presented the paper on solutions (EC/70/SC/CRP.12), updating the Committee on developments over the past year. He noted that, despite increasing displacement trends, a collective pursuit for solutions had continued to result in positive outcomes, which had reduced costs and aid dependency. In particular, he highlighted the inclusion of refugees in national systems and services in countries where the comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF) was applied, as well as the importance of partnerships with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank, among others, to address socio-economic vulnerabilities.

19. UNHCR's ongoing efforts to ensure returns were voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable were welcomed. At the same time, addressing the root causes of displacement remained key to finding sustainable solutions to refugee crises. UNHCR and the international community were called upon to do more in order to create the conditions conducive to return in countries of origin and to encourage voluntary repatriation. UNHCR was asked to provide future reporting and analysis on return monitoring activities, and there was a query as to how the Office shared this information to ensure other actors could support the relevant conditions for return. The importance of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in addressing the major drivers of displacement was also underscored.

20. With respect to resettlement, concern was expressed over the growing needs while the number of places offered globally was declining. Delegations welcomed the three-year strategy on resettlement and complementary pathways, looking forward to the increased availability of places and more predictability. It was also necessary to increase the resettlement pool to prevent the burden from being shared by a limited number of countries. It was hoped that the upcoming annual tripartite consultations on resettlement would help broaden support and engagement in this area.

21. Delegations commended the important steps taken to promote the inclusion of refugees in national systems, such as those for health care and education, including in the context of the CRRF and through partnerships with development actors. There was a request for UNHCR to provide future updates on how lessons learned from development partners were being used in programme design and implementation. The contributions of host countries for making inclusion possible through legal and policy measures were also recognized. At the same time, one delegation noted that inclusion in national systems should not result in the deterioration of standards for protection and assistance to refugees. The need to support host countries and communities alongside refugees, one of the main objectives of the GCR, was also underscored. Efforts to build refugee resilience would impact future returns, and programming should reflect this.

22. The Director recognized the operational and financial challenges facing host countries in their efforts to include refugees in national systems. He underscored the difficulties inherent in putting a system in place to meet the needs of both refugees and local populations, and agreed with the statement that insufficient progress had been made in the domain of voluntary repatriation. He appreciated the call for measures aimed at encouraging self-reliance. Responding to queries related to the quality of national service delivery, he stressed the fact that this responsibility could not be UNHCR's alone but that work with development and government partners would continue in this respect. In response to a question on UNHCR's collaboration with the United Nations Development Plan (UNDP), he informed the Committee that a work plan had been developed and was available for dissemination. The Director also provided an update on the establishment of the Joint Data Centre, which was expected to be operational in September.

D. Oral update on the preparations for the high-level segment on statelessness at the seventieth plenary session of the Executive Committee

23. The Special Adviser on Statelessness presented the oral update on the preparations for the high-level segment (HLS) on statelessness at the seventieth plenary session of the

Executive Committee. As the ten-year #IBelong campaign to end statelessness reached its midway point, the HLS, would provide an opportunity to review successes, share ideas and make renewed commitments ahead of 2024. The HLS would be a pledging event and the culmination of numerous preparatory meetings and other efforts aimed at making it a success. The Special Adviser added that the HLS would be complemented by a treaty event for any State accessions to the statelessness conventions.

24. Delegations appreciated the preparatory measures UNHCR had carried out to date, expressing the hope that these would lead to firm commitments and that efforts would be stepped up in order to achieve the goals of the campaign's global action plan. One delegation echoed the Special Adviser's call for concrete, time-bound pledges to be taken in the five remaining years. High-level participation was encouraged with a view to giving the HLS due recognition and success. More broadly, UNHCR was commended for its engagement on statelessness with a wide range of stakeholders, though concern was expressed by one delegation that the Office's prioritization of the issue remained inconsistent and weak in some countries.

25. The Special Adviser thanked delegations for their constructive feedback, echoing comments on the value of the preparatory meetings as catalysts of the campaign. She further explained the actions that had been taken by UNHCR Representatives around the world to ensure States were made aware of the extraordinary nature of the upcoming HLS session. The Senior Legal Coordinator expressed appreciation for one delegation's comments concerning the added-value of UNHCR's regional protection officers as a model to be maintained, especially in the current regionalization context. She took note of a request for an update on financial resources and operational capacity for statelessness at the September meeting of the Standing Committee. The Director of the Division of International Protection added that staffing needs would be addressed. It was also stressed that advance notification of the pledges for the HLS would be key in ensuring effective communication around the event.

E. Oral update on the Executive Committee conclusion on international protection

26. The Rapporteur of the Executive Committee briefed delegations on the outcomes of the two informal preparatory consultations on the conclusions process, which she had recently convened. During these meetings, it had been agreed that with three out of the four proposed topics of the existing workplan having resulted in conclusions on international protection in 2016 and 2017, the workplan had run its course. Delegations further agreed not to pursue a conclusion on international protection in 2019 but rather to start discussions on developing a new multi-year workplan in 2020.

IV. Programme/protection policy

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

27. The Director a.i. of the Division of Resilience and Solutions presented an overview of UNHCR's coordination efforts to measure the impact arising from hosting, protecting and assisting refugees (EC/70/SC/CRP.14). He described the partnerships established to identify suitable methodologies to advance the work, in particular with the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and technical experts from different Member States. He highlighted the importance of solid and comparable data in this exercise. The Director also described the progress made in developing indicators for the Global Compact on Refugees. A first report on the coordination efforts undertaken by UNHCR would be presented at the Global Refugee Forum in December.

28. Delegations expressed appreciation for UNHCR's coordination efforts to measure the impact of hosting refugees and for reaching out to a wide group of Member States to

participate in the process. Many highlighted the need for appropriate technical resources and methodologies to measure impact and costs to host countries, but also noted that contributions made by refugees should not be overlooked. The partnership with the World Bank and the OECD was welcomed. With regard to the Joint Data Centre, several delegations took the opportunity to convey concern over the composition of the Steering Committee, indicating that host countries should be included. Many delegations emphasized that the overarching objective of the efforts to measure the impact should be to obtain more equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing. They expressed hope that this would result in more States doing more. At the same time, it was also noted that measuring impact had to go beyond the fiscal aspects of hosting refugees, as their presence also had social, political and sometimes security implications.

29. The Director thanked delegations for their constructive engagement in this complex process. He emphasized that participation was voluntary and that any State wanting to participate would be welcome. He concurred that the objective of the efforts to measure the impact remained advancing more equitable and burden- and responsibility-sharing in support of refugees and host countries and communities. In response to a question on data, the Director noted that many national statistics systems did not include data on refugees. The Joint Data Centre aimed to support the inclusion of anonymized and comparable data on refugees in the collection of national statistics. Efforts were underway in eight major refugee host countries to include refugees in national data collection on poverty. He acknowledged that measuring the fiscal aspects of hosting refugees would not provide the full picture, but that it was a good starting point.

B. Oral update on the Global Compact on Refugees and on preparations for the first Global Refugee Forum

30. The Director of the Global Refugee Forum provided an update on the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees and the arrangements for the Forum. A number of key developments at the national and regional levels were highlighted as tangible evidence of the ways in which the GCR was enhancing support for refugees and improving their lives. Efforts were underway to expand the application of the CRRF through a series of workstreams. With regard to the Global Refugee Forum, the early announcements of co-sponsorship from States and other stakeholders were welcomed, and delegations were encouraged to consider supporting the focus areas, such as education, jobs and livelihoods, and others. Additional informal briefings would be scheduled in the month of September to discuss the different workstreams, including the three-year resettlement strategy, the global academic network and the methodology for tracking pledges and contributions of the Global Refugee Forum. The Head of the Global Refugee Forum Coordination Team then briefed the Committee on next steps in preparation for the Forum. Host countries were encouraged to become co-sponsors so that they could inform the formulation of pledges and contributions under the different areas of focus and help develop the respective sessions at the Forum. The various measures undertaken to ensure the inclusion and participation of refugees in the lead up to and at the Forum were also presented.

31. Delegations emphasized that the Forum presented a momentous opportunity to turn the principles of solidarity and responsibility-sharing that underpinned the GCR into concrete action. Numerous States expressed commitment to making the event a success and announced their co-sponsorship of specific areas of focus for the Forum. The significance of engaging new actors in the process was noted as a key factor in ensuring its success. There was also a call for concrete and time-bound pledges that would address the needs identified through multi-stakeholder consultations and that would advance the four objectives of the GCR. Delegations underscored the need for including disability as a cross-cutting issue in all areas of focus for the Forum. It was also essential for UNHCR to apply innovative approaches to ensure consultations with refugees, particularly women and girls, on the pledging process at the national and regional levels and to ensure their participation in the Forum. The need for higher quality and interoperable data on forced displacement was noted as crucial to promoting evidence-based decision-making and enhancing the accountability of all stakeholders in realizing the commitments of the GCR. The importance of collaboration

with different stakeholder groups through the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in expanding the application of the CRRF was also emphasized.

32. The Director of the Global Refugee Forum extended his appreciation to delegations that announced their co-sponsorship of the areas of focus for the Forum. In addressing remarks about preparations at national and regional levels, he assured the Committee that UNHCR country and regional offices had commenced efforts to support to States and other stakeholders in the development of pledges and contributions. He underscored the need for concrete pledges that would have a significant impact. With regard to accountability for the implementation of the GCR and pledges made at the Forum, the Director assured delegations that work was underway to develop robust monitoring, follow-up and review mechanisms to achieve this.

C. Report on UNHCR's global strategic priorities

33. The Director of the Division of Programme Support and Management (DPSM) introduced the update on the global strategic priorities (GSPs) (EC/70/SC/CRP.13), providing a report on the progress made against UNHCR's GSPs for 2018-2019 during the first year of the biennium. He outlined the progress across many critical areas and noted that the GSPs for the 2020-2021 biennium would remain the same until the revision of the results-based management (RBM) framework had been completed and implemented, thereby helping to strengthen UNHCR's reporting against the GSPs.

34. Appreciation was expressed for the progress made against both the operational and the support and management GSPs, as well as with respect to the "grand bargain" commitments. The latter included increases in channelling funding through local partners and helping to build their capacity. Delegations also noted the progress achieved in identity management and registration, including through the use of biometric systems, and in the development of new technological solutions to support more efficient delivery and reporting. The increase in participation of persons of concern was welcomed, in line with the GCR, particularly women in leadership and management structures. The Committee was pleased by the measures taken to promote gender equality as well as to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment. UNHCR was encouraged to implement related policies in contractual arrangements with implementing partners and to keep the Committee updated on further efforts in this area.

35. Delegations also commented that some of the gains achieved were fragile and required continuous investment and innovation in order to be maintained, in the face of growing and evolving needs. There was widespread interest in the revision of the results-based management (RBM) project and its timeline, and UNHCR was requested to provide an update on the matter. The need for more linkages between the RBM project and the GSPs, the GCR indicators, the strategic directions (2017-2021) and the sustainable development goals (SDGs), including by streamlining reporting and measurement processes, was highlighted. There was also some concern that the focus seemed to be on outputs rather than impact in many instances, with delegations requesting more concrete examples of what had been achieved. One delegation asked why the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) evaluation was not mentioned in the report and how this could be done in future updates.

36. The Director thanked the delegations for their positive comments, but also acknowledged that more needed to be done to ensure focus on impact rather than outputs. In response to the enquiries regarding the revision of the RBM project, he replied that a briefing would be organized to provide States with an update including how it was aligned with the multi-year multi-partner (MYMP) strategy and UNHCR's overall reporting system. The Director emphasized that a thorough revision was needed to ensure that the tools were fit for purpose and that they were aligned with those of key partners, including other international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and development actors. On localization and how UNHCR was moving forward with the "grand bargain" commitments, the Director noted that the Office had 865 national partners around the world and was moving towards its goal of allocating 25 per cent of funding through national partners, which

currently stood at 22 per cent. He also informed the Committee that UNHCR undertook 128 joint assessments last year, noting the probability of an increase in the future due to regionalization as well as realignment with United Nations Country Teams and host government development plans. Responding to comments made in relation to sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment, the Director noted that there had been an increase in the number of reported cases, reflecting the fact that people were more comfortable in coming forward and felt confident in raising their voices when abuse had occurred. He stressed that UNHCR was committed to a zero tolerance policy. Responding to questions as to why some GSPs were not on track, the Director highlighted that most of these instances were explained in the GSP progress report. In relation to concerns by several delegations that the progress report was made available too late, the Director noted that UNHCR would endeavour to release it in a timelier manner next time.

V. Programme budgets and funding

37. The Deputy High Commissioner briefed the Committee on the financial and funding situation, outlining the importance of unearmarked funding which provided flexibility when responding to emerging needs. She provided an update on UNHCR's regionalization process, including the establishment of the newly configured regional bureaux. A number of measures were being implemented to mitigate the impact of the change on UNHCR's workforce and to ensure that the processes and policies were adapted to the new structure. She expanded on project management tools to monitor the transition using key performance indicators. She also underscored the efforts to safeguard against sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment.

38. The Deputy High Commissioner briefed the Committee on UNHCR's assessed contribution from the United Nations regular budget in relation to the Standing Committee's review of its use for UNHCR's programme activities. Due to the shift from a biennial budget to an annual budget cycle, and revamped reporting requirements issued in New York, it was not possible to include the item on the Standing Committee agenda this year with a view to having it reviewed and submitted in time. She indicated that UNHCR would be looking at the modalities for doing so next year, in line with the updated budget cycle in New York.

A. Update on budgets and funding for 2019 and reporting for 2018

39. The Controller and Director of the Division of Financial and Administrative Management (DFAM), and the Director of the Division of External Relations (DER) jointly presented the update on budgets and funding for 2019 and reporting on 2018 (EC/70/SC/CRP.15). The Controller reported the final financial results for 2018 and the requirements for 2019, while the Director of DER provided an update on funding trends and improvements in donor recognition and reporting. She also thanked the donor and host States for their generous support.

40. Delegations recognized the significant challenges associated with the growing divide between the needs and available resources, resulting in difficult programmatic decisions and the prioritization of emergency assistance over long-term interventions. With this in mind, they stressed the importance of adequate funding, noting that this was also a way of sharing the responsibility for refugees and showing solidarity with host countries. UNHCR was asked to provide more information on the methodology used to develop budgets and prioritize programmes across countries and responses, various displaced populations, sectors and activities, and within a given refugee population. It was important for donors to see a more transparent and evidence-based approach to prioritization. The Global Refugee Forum was seen as an opportunity to strengthen support, including in financial terms, for countries hosting refugees.

41. Particular concern was expressed for the protracted situation in the camps near Tindouf. One delegation called for humanitarian assistance commensurate with the number of vulnerable Sahrawi refugees. Another delegation made a call for UNHCR to proceed with

registration in accordance with its mandate, and in line with relevant Security Council resolutions.

42. Also of concern was the persistence and impact of earmarked funding. Numerous States highlighted the importance of predictable and flexible funding to ensure a needs-based response as well as multi-year funding, in line with the “grand bargain” commitments. They also noted that unearmarked funding enabled UNHCR to use the operational reserve to support operations, global programmes and headquarters costs. UNHCR was commended for the increased expenditure compared to the previous year and the increased funds allocated to field operations in 2018. Going forward, the Office was encouraged to adopt a more transparent and inclusive approach towards donors and to provide further updates on trends in both earmarked and unearmarked contributions. This was critical to ensuring that the levels of unearmarked funding were maintained. UNHCR was urged to continue expanding the donor base and diversify funding sources, including through engagement with the private sector and individual donors. There was also an interest expressed in knowing how investments from development actors would be reflected in UNHCR’s budget. There were also requests for UNHCR to report on its regionalization process and public funding received.

43. Responding to questions on the impact that regionalization and decentralization would have on the budget structure, the Controller explained that the support provided by the regional bureaux in Geneva was currently treated as headquarters costs. However, with headquarters functions moving to seven field locations, the definition of headquarters would need to be revised and aligned in existing policies. He also described how cost classifications were being reviewed. Responding to questions on prioritization, he echoed explanations provided in previous meetings, adding that earmarked funding partially removed UNHCR’s ability to prioritize and adjust to the needs. He also expanded on how data and the new results-based management tool would be used to improve reporting on prioritization. Further information would be provided later in the year. In underfunded situations, UNHCR remained committed to delivering aid commensurate with all needs and reinforcing fundraising efforts to respond.

44. The Director of DER highlighted that persistent underfunding led to difficult decisions and cuts in the provision of assistance. She noted that the GCR and the Global Refugee Forum aimed to help address the needs, particularly in underfunded situations, and to help match the generous contributions of host communities and countries. In response to a question about supplementary budgets in 2019, she noted that increases were not expected. The Head of the Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service described how the amount and per cent of multi-year funding declined in previous years. Efforts were being undertaken to promote multi-year programming. The Head of the Private Sector Partnerships Service added that nearly all of the income growth in the private sector came from individuals, who mainly provided unearmarked funds. He emphasized the importance of making further investments in this area of fundraising. Efforts to expand private sector fundraising activities among the general public at the global level, with particular interest and growth recorded in the Americas, were ongoing. He noted that multi-year funding was also being pursued with multinational companies.

45. The Committee adopted the decision on budgets and funding for 2018 and 2019, as contained in the annex to the present document.

B. Global Report 2018

46. The Director of DER presented UNHCR’s Global Report on activities in 2018, highlighting UNHCR’s key achievements and challenges. Noting the contributions of host countries, donors and other partners, she described efforts to provide life-saving assistance, safeguard fundamental rights and build better futures for persons of concern to UNHCR.

47. Delegations thanked UNHCR for its detailed report on programmes and activities, which focused on meeting the urgent needs of increasing numbers of displaced persons in new and protracted situations. They conveyed their gratitude for reporting improvements, including online, and expressed appreciation for chapters dedicated to operations in each region and lessons learned from the implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response

Framework. Of particular interest to delegations was the detailed description of the Global Compact on Refugees. The Office was encouraged to devote further attention to under-reported refugee situations, the “one refugee” approach, and refugees living in urban and non-camp settings. More reporting on the measurable impact of assistance and protection was also requested. Expressing concern over the costs of addressing humanitarian crises, States highlighted the importance of comprehensive responses and shared responsibility, and looked forward to the Global Refugee Forum to broaden the funding base, generate support and ease the burden on host countries. They also stressed the need for helping refugees achieve solutions through voluntary repatriation and the expansion of resettlement programmes.

VI. Governance

48. The Chairperson reminded the Committee that the High Commissioner’s opening statement at the seventieth annual plenary session of the Executive Committee would form the basis of the general debate. Delegations were invited to propose topics for inclusion in the High Commissioner’s statement, noting that suggestions could also be transmitted to the Secretariat in writing at a later date.

49. It was proposed that the High Commissioner share his views on the role UNHCR has played and intends to play on the topic of solutions, with an emphasis on voluntary repatriation given the decreasing numbers highlighted in the Global Trends 2018. His statement could highlight the efforts being made in countries of origin to create an environment conducive to return. Another delegation suggested that the High Commissioner highlight the importance of multilateralism.

VII. Any other business

50. In line with the practice of adopting the reports of the Standing Committee meetings through an electronic circulation process, the Chairperson indicated that the report on the seventy-fifth meeting would be prepared by the Secretariat and circulated for comments by 8 July. Following a two-week review period, any comments or corrections from Member States in relation to their interventions would be incorporated, and the report would be subsequently recirculated and considered adopted.

Annex

Decision on budgets and funding for 2018 and 2019

The Standing Committee,

Recalling the Executive Committee's decisions, at its sixty-eighth and sixty-ninth sessions on administrative, financial and programme matters (A/AC.96/1176, para. 14, and A/AC.96/1187, para. 13, as well as its discussions under the programme budgets and funding item at the seventy-fourth meeting of the Standing Committee in March 2019,

Reaffirming the importance of responsibility-sharing in solidarity with countries hosting refugees,

Recalls that the Executive Committee, at its sixty-eighth session, approved original programmes and budgets for regional programmes, global programmes and headquarters under UNHCR's 2018-2019 biennial programme budget, amounting to \$7,508.4 million and \$7,352.3 million for 2018 and 2019 respectively;

Recalls that the Executive Committee, at its sixty-ninth session, approved revised programmes and budgets for regional programmes, global programmes and headquarters under UNHCR's 2018-2019 biennial programme budget (revised), amounting to \$8,275.3 million and \$8,591.1 million for 2018 and 2019, respectively;

Notes that the final 2018 supplementary budgets amounted to \$712.0 million for programmes benefiting UNHCR's global refugee programme, and projects for reintegration and for internally displaced persons;

Takes note of the increase in UNHCR's annual budget for 2018 to a final total of \$8,220.5 million, representing the sum of the revised budget of \$7,508.4 million and the total supplementary budgets of \$712.0 million;

Takes note of the financial and budgetary performance in 2018;

Notes that the supplementary budgets for 2019, which amount to \$107.4 million as at 30 April 2019 are for programmes benefiting UNHCR's global refugee programme and for internally displaced persons;

Notes the budget reduction of \$62.6 million in 2019;

Takes note of the increase in UNHCR's annual budget for 2019 to a current total of \$8,635.9 million as at 30 April 2019, representing the sum of the revised budget of \$8,591.1 million and the supplementary budgets of \$107.4 million, as well as the budget reduction of \$62.6 million;

Recognizes that emergencies and unforeseen activities unfolding in 2019 may result in the need for additional or expanded supplementary budgets and that additional resources, over and above those for existing budgets, would be required to meet such needs; and

Urges member States to continue to respond generously, in the spirit of solidarity and in a timely manner, to the High Commissioner's appeal for resources to meet in full the annual budget for 2019.