**Executive Committee of the
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Update on global programmes

A. Introduction

1.   UNHCR continues to improve the quality of its global programmes which include: public health; food security and nutrition; water and sanitation; shelter and settlements; site management; education; livelihood activities, self-reliance and economic inclusion; and the use of cash-based interventions. This paper reviews progress in these areas as well as identity and information management, and in efforts to improve data and evidence.

B. Strengthening technical quality, capacity and impact

2.   UNHCR's global programmes have a strong protection and solutions orientation, and seek to strengthen delivery and ensure equity, access and community empowerment through the utilization of the age, gender and diversity approach. Technical interventions range from life-saving responses and measures to mitigate sexual and gender-based violence to strengthening the attainment of durable solutions for refugees and other persons of concern in both urban and camp settings. In line with the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), the programmes encourage linkages between humanitarian interventions and development efforts to support both refugees and host communities.

C. Updates on technical sectors

3.   Establishing a solid technical response capacity, coupled with efficient coordination mechanisms, is vital in addressing the immediate needs of people in crisis settings. UNHCR continued to provide support in the form of technical expertise to field operations through strategic advice, capacity-building activities and the deployment of experts from both within the organization and standby partners.

Public health

4.   Significant progress was made in country operations in Asia and the Middle East to expand opportunities for the inclusion of refugees in national health systems, health insurance schemes and other pillars of social protection. UNHCR continued to focus on mental health and psychosocial support, a cross-cutting area long neglected in humanitarian response. Key priorities for UNHCR were: i) strengthening the integration of mental health in refugee health care; ii) introducing scalable psychological therapies; and iii) promoting the provision of focused psychosocial care in activities for community-based protection, child protection and sexual and gender-based violence. In Bangladesh, UNHCR has significantly invested in mental health and psychosocial support, with a dedicated team to promote activities in these areas.

5.   Emergency interventions remained at the centre of UNHCR's public health response in new refugee situations. Public health staff were deployed to the Venezuela situation,

countries affected by cyclone Idai, as well as other emergencies. In support of the coordinated efforts against Ebola, UNHCR increased monitoring and technical support to UNHCR operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and surrounding countries affected by the outbreak, and maintained close engagement with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other key stakeholders. Availability and quality of health data was improved with the roll-out of the new standardized health information system. Currently 11 countries have transitioned to the new system. The updated version of the balanced scorecard to assess quality of services in health facilities was rolled out, and 10 operations have already conducted assessments in 80 refugee sites.

6.   UNHCR supported improved access for refugees to national human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) programmes, including counselling and testing, as well as access to antiretroviral treatment. The Global Fund for HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) continued to be instrumental in supporting national programmes with funding for the inclusion of refugees. A review of 37 countries where there is a GFATM grant showed that refugees are included in 100 per cent of the grants for tuberculosis (TB), 86 per cent of the malaria grants and 93 per cent of the grants for antiretroviral treatment. In collaboration with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), 12 country operations, mostly in Africa and South America, received support to implement HIV, TB and reproductive health activities. In addition, guidance notes on promoting treatment adherence for refugees and persons of concern in health care settings were finalized and disseminated to improve the access of refugees to treatment services.

Food security and nutrition

7.   Ensuring food security and adequate nutrition remained challenging for several operations. Underfunded protracted situations and deteriorating food security situations negatively impacted the ability for many populations to cope. This resulted in rising malnutrition levels, including global acute malnutrition levels (GAM), which rose above the emergency threshold in 12 refugee sites that hosted new arrivals in Ethiopia, Niger and Sudan. GAM improved or remained acceptable in 46 out of the monitored refugee sites. UNHCR assisted country operations to enhance joint programming with the World Food Programme (WFP) and supported operations facing shortfalls or projected funding gaps for food assistance, including in Chad, Cameroon, and Mauritania, with targeting and prioritization. Based on the global data-sharing agreement between UNHCR and WFP, country level agreements have been facilitated in Bangladesh, Cameroon, Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania.

Water and sanitation

8.   UNHCR continued to work towards ensuring that refugees have access to safe water of sufficient quality and quantity, as well as adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene services at home and in public spaces. In Bangladesh, urban sanitation solutions such as piped sewerage networks to refugee settlements were implemented with the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. UNHCR worked towards cost efficient water programmes and reduced environmental impact by expanding solar energy for water pumping and sustainable management of groundwater aquifers in Angola, Bangladesh, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The roll-out of the real-time water monitoring system, which aims to mitigate risk associated with water trucking, continued in Iraq and Uganda.

Shelter and settlements

9.   UNHCR continued to facilitate access to dignified and secure shelter solutions across its operations. Throughout the Americas, specifically in the contexts of the north of

Central America and Venezuela situations, UNHCR provided support to over 200 emergency response facilities and reception sites. Rental assistance was provided in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru as part of the basic needs provided through cash-based interventions. The new rental assistance guidelines complement the scale-up of other cash-for-shelter assistance methods that are being implemented across operations in both refugee camps and out of camp situations. UNHCR has further deployed around 8,000 refugee housing units to eleven operations in the first half of 2019, including 2,000 units in response to the Venezuela situation and 1,500 units to support the emergency transit mechanism in two humanitarian sites in Niger.

10.   In the Diffa region in south-east Niger, UNHCR implemented an urbanization programme granting access to durable shelter solutions to 4,000 families. In Ethiopia, innovative drone mapping technologies were utilized to map settlements for long-term upgrading with the purpose of ensuring sustainability. Upgrades, including integrated infrastructure options also benefit the surrounding host communities. In parallel, UNHCR has invested in systems to facilitate the cataloguing of spatial data for some 690 refugee and internally displaced persons (IDP) settlements worldwide, improving predictive analysis and data across a range of programs.

11.   In situations of internal displacement, UNHCR led 14 and co-led one out of the total 29 country-level shelter clusters, coordinating around 300 partners to provide shelter and non-food items to some 3.3 million IDPs. As co-lead of the global shelter cluster, UNHCR endeavoured to take into consideration concerns related to energy and the environment and further mainstream cash approaches as part of the inter-agency coordination process for shelter and settlements.

Site management

12.   In the first half of 2019, UNHCR coordinated site management activities through (co-)leadership of 15 out of 22 country-level clusters or sectors. UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted a joint global camp coordination and camp management (CCCM) cluster training of trainers, with participants from both agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and governments. UNHCR strengthened its localization approach to displacement management in communal settings, including in urban environments, and used lessons learned from Brazil to address the Venezuelan displacement to Colombia by setting up a similar transit facility and capacitating local authorities for its management. In Bangladesh, UNHCR developed a joint capacity-sharing initiative that consists of a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary training, capacity-sharing and skills transfer platform, which supports the progressive hand-over of camp management and coordination functions.

Education

13.   UNHCR continued to support States in enhancing the quality and inclusiveness of national education systems for the benefit of refugee and host communities. Against this backdrop, UNHCR's Education Strategy (2019-2030) is consistent with the objectives of the GCR, and focuses particularly on addressing protracted refugee situations. UNHCR's education programming also builds on the 2018 UNESCO Global Education Meeting commitment to include refugees in education and facilitate the recognition of their qualifications, skills and competencies. As part of UNHCR's commitment to the SDGs, engagement in global and regional steering committees and working groups contributed to the inclusion of stateless people and the forcibly displaced into the SDG #4 education commitment declarations for the 2019 High Level Political Forum. Board membership and country-level engagement with the Global Partnership for Education have allowed UNHCR

to influence systems-building and joint humanitarian and development engagement in 32 country programmes.

14.   UNHCR increased access to quality primary education through a number of programmes, and continued to lead pioneering work in the field of accelerated education. The organization further expanded the provision of access to higher education through scholarships and Connected Education. In the first half of 2019, UNHCR, with the support of Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI), provided university scholarships to over 5,700 students with a foreseen increase to 7,000 by the end of the year. An additional 4,000 refugee students accessed tertiary education through certified connected learning programmes.

Livelihoods, self-reliance and economic inclusion

15.   UNHCR worked closely with partners to advance the economic inclusion of refugees. Eleven livelihoods trainings were conducted to strengthen partners' capacities for the promotion of economic inclusion. Recognizing the important role of the private sector in facilitating access to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, private sector fora were organized in Brazil, Ecuador, Mozambique and Ukraine. In Brazil, the forum hosted the launch of the "companies with refugees" initiative, which provides guidance on hiring refugees and showcases the experiences of the private sector with refugees.

16.   In Brazil, Ecuador and Kenya, cooperation agreements are being prepared with financial service providers to increase access of refugees to banking services. UNHCR, together with NGOs and the Partnership for Economic Inclusion, which is hosted by the World Bank, launched the Poverty Alleviation Coalition. This new initiative seeks to enhance the economic inclusion of some 500,000 refugee and host community households in 35 countries over five years. Refugee-made products were promoted through the participation of MADE51. This global, multi-partner initiative links refugee artisans with national and international markets through four global tradeshows, generating sales leads with major retailers.

17.   Preparations are underway to launch the UNHCR-World Bank Joint Data Center. The Center will expand cooperation between the two organizations in the area of forced displacement by combining UNHCR's experience, knowledge and data on refugees and displaced persons, with the World Bank's global experience in poverty reduction and socio-economic analytics. The Center is expected to become operational in the second half of 2019. Arrangements are being made in core priority areas such as data curation and access platforms, initiatives to enhance the use and quality of registration data for socio-economic analysis and data collection, the development of poverty survey methodologies, and staff recruitment.

Cash-based interventions

18.   In line with its "grand bargain" commitments, UNHCR continued to scale up cash-based interventions and has delivered $2 billion in cash assistance since 2016, including some $570 million in 2018, representing a 14 per cent increase over the previous year. Between January and July 2019, some $288 million was delivered and the value of cash assistance exceeded that of in-kind assistance. UNHCR used cash for a wide range of purposes, including protection, basic needs, education, shelter, health, livelihoods and protection against winter conditions. Most of the cash assistance, some 95 per cent, was disbursed without restrictions, giving persons of concern the choice to decide how best to meet their needs.

19.   Monitoring in operations has shown that cash, together with in-kind assistance and access to services, contributed to preventing displaced populations from resorting to negative coping strategies, such as removing children from schools, survival sex, child labour and begging. UNHCR also used cash in the context of increasing social cohesion. Studies in several countries showed that cash delivered to refugees produced an income multiplier for host communities. UNHCR also invested significantly in capacity- and systems building and since 2016, and some 5,000 UNHCR and partner staff have been trained on cash. The success of the capacity-building strategy was confirmed by an external evaluation. UNHCR continued to roll-out its cash assist management system and ensured that cash assistance was delivered in a timely, efficient and accurate manner while avoiding duplication, improving accountability and minimizing fraud.

20.   In December 2018, UNHCR, WFP, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) committed to deliver cash assistance through a common cash system. This initiative was in accordance with UNHCR's common cash delivery approach for cash transfer mechanisms, which has increased efficiency and predictability, ensured effective coordination, leveraged the expertise of all partners and maximized economies of scale. Where appropriate and feasible, UNHCR increased the use of cash in emergencies and for protection purposes, while at the same time moving from short-term assistance to sustainable approaches. Cash assistance will increasingly be delivered digitally and continue in partnership with host governments, United Nations agencies, the private sector, NGOs and other relevant partners.

Energy and environment

21.   UNHCR has strategically partnered with development and private sector actors in order to strengthen its technical expertise in field operations and improve the delivery of energy and environment programming.   In collaboration with NORCAP, UNHCR deployed nine energy experts to Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania to support the design, planning and implementation of sustainable energy projects, and one roving expert for data collection and assessment, to support the establishment of a database on global energy needs. The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and UNHCR have strengthened their collaboration to improve energy access for refugees in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.

22.   In the first half of 2019, UNHCR made further efforts to reduce its environmental footprint. In partnership with Engineers Without Borders Norway (N-EWB) and the Norwegian Geotechnical Institute (NGI), refugees in Melkadida, Ethiopia, were trained on local plastic waste remolding. This initiative contributed to economic growth locally while helping to address an environmental problem. In Jordan, two environmental experts supported by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) were deployed to design UNHCR's first ever environment management system, a model that will be replicated in other operations. In line with the commitment made by United Nations agencies to achieve climate neutrality, UNHCR has further expanded its environmental inventory to 68 country operations, covering 101 offices. This global inventory has allowed UNHCR to offset its carbon emissions, estimated at 134,000 tons and, for the first time ever, achieve climate neutrality.

D. Improving data for evidence-based decision-making

23. UNHCR continued to enhance its capacity to make quality and real-time data available on displaced populations, stateless persons and host communities, including with respect to their protection situations and living conditions.

Registration and identity management

24. Between January and July 2019, the enhanced UNHCR registration system proGresv4 was deployed to an additional 13 countries, including large operations such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Jordan. The offline registration module of the population registration and identity management ecosystem PRIMES[1] was deployed to nine country operations, the PRIMES global distribution tool to three country operations and PRIMES biometrics to four country operations. The total number of individuals registered in proGresv4 reached 9.3 million across 65 country operations. Over 8 million individuals were biometrically enrolled across 63 country operations. UNHCR partnered with the United States of America to establish an interoperability platform between PRIMES and the country's resettlement database, in order to streamline data-sharing in the context of resettlement submissions.

25. Seven out of eight modules of the "Guidance on registration and identity management" have been revised and published online. UNHCR conducted a training on emergency registration, and established a roster to enhance rapid deployment of registration staff. Six staff were deployed to support the emergency in Bangladesh and Ecuador. UNHCR also partnered with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) to establish a roster of deployable staff for registration support in the field.

26. UNHCR partnered with the World Bank and published anonymized registration data sets to the World Bank microdata library, in order to support the inclusion of refugee needs in national development programming in 10 host countries. The organizations also worked together in Kenya to adapt the national poverty survey so that the verification exercise also applied to refugees. UNHCR and the World Bank continue to collaborate on how to enhance UNHCR registration to provide socio-economic data needed to engage with development partners.

27. In partnership with Canada, UNHCR brought together 22 experts from humanitarian, development, academic, civil society and the private sector at the global virtual summit on digital identity for refugees, to discuss digitalization and technology for refugees. The recommendations from the summit will help outline the contours of a good digital identity ecosystem for refugees, in line with the GCR.

E. Information management and statistics

28. UNHCR is working towards becoming a centre of excellence for data on refugees, stateless persons and forcibly displaced populations. Work streams in the fields of strategy, governance, workforce, systems, and innovation are underway to enable a data transformation that supports the delivery of trusted protection and solutions for persons of concern. UNHCR also revamped its Population Statistical Reference system, which is the main source for the organization's official statistics, the Global Trends report on population statistics and planning figures.

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[1] PRIMES is UNHCR's suite of interoperable registration, identity and case management tools. The core applications of PRIMES include proGresv4, the biometrics system BIMS, the offline registration tool RApp and the Data Port.

29.   UNHCR developed and launched a microdata library in order to foster responsible approaches to open data. The internal version, the Raw Internal Data Library, is in its test phase. Both systems will ensure that UNHCR and partner data is known, available for analysis and securely stored and protected in accordance with data protection and privacy standards.   UNHCR's investment in mobile data collection continued to generate efficiencies, support analysis and visualization. It has been used in 69 countries, with over 7,800 data collection exercises completed by over 5,800 users, since February 2016.

30.   UNHCR continued its collaboration with the international humanitarian data community, including with IOM on data collaboration and OCHA on the new centre for humanitarian data. UNHCR also worked with IOM and UNICEF on a joint project to improve data on children on the move. In February 2019, UNHCR co-hosted the 3rd meeting of the Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics in Ankara, bringing together over 25 experts from national statistical offices and international agencies. A kick-off meeting of an expert group on statelessness statistics was also held in the margins of the meeting.

31.   UNHCR's results-based management renewal project continued and the future results framework was planned to be completed by 2022. A comprehensive approach that links impact and outcome with those of UNHCR's partners and other stakeholders has been developed and includes the ability to align UNHCR's work to non-UNHCR specific frameworks for reporting, such as the SDGs or the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, as well as outcomes from the GCR. Key field operations were consulted on the proposed framework structure and the conclusions will support country operations in defining and managing context-appropriate and strategic operations plans.