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Overview of UNHCR's global programmes and partnerships

A. Purpose

This paper reviews UNHCR's efforts to improve the quality of its programmes in the following technical sectors: data and information management; shelter; education; public health; reproductive health and HIV; nutrition and food security; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); information management; livelihoods; and the environment. It also updates on cooperation with development actors in enabling durable solutions for refugees and other persons of concern.

B. Strengthening technical quality, capacity and impact

UNHCR's global programmes are managed from headquarters and support operations at country level, in close collaboration with partners. Technical networks, which consist of experts from both UNHCR and partner organizations, enhance the Office's capacity to respond to emergencies and improve the technical quality of its interventions. The development of innovative approaches and the sharing of good practices further strengthen UNHCR's programmes.

During 2014, UNHCR will implement global strategies that will strengthen delivery and transform operational approaches in key areas of intervention. UNHCR's Education Strategy¹ and Information and Data Management Strategy, both initiated in 2012, will be complemented this year by the launch of new global strategies for public health, settlements and shelter, livelihoods and safe access to fuel and energy, each covering the period 2014 - 2018.

These new global strategies have a strong protection and solutions orientation and are shaped by common guiding principles that seek to ensure equity, access and community empowerment by utilizing the age, gender and diversity approach. They also promote the sustainability and appropriateness of interventions. The global strategies follow common approaches, including focusing on communication and advocacy, partnership and coordination, capacity-building and evidence-based decision-making and the measurement of impact.

¹ Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/4af7e71d9.html>

C. Updates on the technical sectors

Public health

UNHCR's new Global Strategy for Public Health seeks to increase refugees' access to quality primary health care, including through national health care systems; enhance access to specialist care; improve integrated prevention and control of non-communicable diseases; and improve child health and survival rates. The Strategy builds upon the Strategic Plans 2008-2012² and covers HIV and reproductive health, nutrition and food security, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Progress will be measured through the use of *Twine*³, UNHCR's public health information system.

UNHCR will strengthen its public health response in the case of new emergencies and disease outbreaks in 2014. The key focus will be addressing the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases in the Middle East and Africa through the introduction of clinical tools for diagnosis and guidance for preventative activities, which are being tested in Burkina Faso, Iraq, Jordan and Kenya. UNHCR will integrate the Operational Guidance for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in refugee operations, developed in 2013, more widely into programmes to mitigate risks and consequences for mental health and promote psychosocial well-being among refugees.

HIV and reproductive health

UNHCR will enhance family planning programmes and work to reduce mother to child transmission of HIV. These interventions will build on improvements that were made during 2013 in antenatal care coverage and the increase in deliveries supported by skilled birth attendants. Findings from UNHCR's assessment on the causes of neonatal mortality in refugee communities have also informed 2014 objectives, which include improving access to antenatal care; improving management of normal delivery by skilled attendants and access to emergency obstetric and neonatal care when needed; and supporting timely post-natal care for both mothers and new-borns. Expanded primary health care activities will include gynaecological care, such as cervical cancer screening, as well as the broader use of SMS technology to reach communities with health- messages.

UNHCR will maintain focus on access and adherence to quality antiretroviral therapy (ART) for people living with HIV, with an emphasis on continuity of treatment in emergencies. An inter-agency mapping exercise, coordinated by UNHCR in the Central African Republic in 2013, enabled approximately 3,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) to resume treatment. UNHCR plans to lead similar assessments in 2014 as the co-convener, together with WFP, of the Task Team on Addressing HIV in Humanitarian Emergencies under the UNAIDS Division of Labour.

Nutrition and food security

In regard to nutrition and food security, the Strategy prioritizes infant and young children feeding (IYCF) and the reduction of anaemia. Advocacy for the youngest infants in nutrition and child protection programming, based on accurate data, is essential. UNHCR will reinforce IYCF programming by exploring synergies with existing reproductive health services, establishing standard operating procedures for the use of breast milk substitutes, and developing of an IYCF framework with Save the Children. A joint training programme

² See: <http://www.unhcr.org/488600152.html>

³ See: twine.unhcr.org

with UNICEF will improve the capacity of standby partners to plan for and respond to the nutritional needs of refugees and others of concern in emergencies.

Mobile devices are increasingly being used for data collection during standardized expanded nutrition surveys (SENS), with the completion of seventy-eight SENS during 2013. UNHCR and the Feinstein International Famine Center at Tufts University will develop a sampling methodology for nutrition assessments in urban settings.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

Through the new Strategy, UNHCR will review and improve the impact and cost-efficiency of WASH interventions. The WASH Monitoring System has now been introduced in sixty-four camps worldwide, and indicator monitoring at the household level has been piloted in Ethiopia and Kenya. This household-level data will contribute to a deeper understanding of the impact of WASH interventions.

During 2014, UNHCR will launch the Cost of Water Project, which includes a tool to better understand the interaction between capital investment and the running and maintenance cost of water systems. Building on good practices, the project is meant to inform strategic planning decisions in operations. The Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development will second an expert in hydrogeology to UNHCR to strengthen capacity of technical staff in sustainable, non-exploitative use of groundwater resources and cost-efficient strategies.

Education

In 2014, twenty countries with substantial education programmes will implement UNHCR's Education Strategy. UNHCR provides support to country-specific five-year implementation plans with partners, holistically ranging from pre-primary through primary, secondary, tertiary and non-formal education and addressing issues including literacy, enrolment and quality. The focus will be on a solutions approach, looking at refugee population groups across countries and at how education can strengthen their skills for an eventual return home, local integration or resettlement. Challenges in education quality will be addressed through assessment of learning achievement, particularly children's capacity to read, and targeted programmes implemented to improve quality. This will include concerted efforts to strengthen the teaching cohort and UNHCR staff and partner capacity in effective education programme management.

Provision of support for education in emergencies will be a priority, recognizing that immediate resumption of schooling for displaced children is a crucial protection measure. Innovative approaches to technology will be expanded to strengthen teacher quality, access to reading material, language learning and distance education. Baselines established in 2012 will be used to monitor progress and to inform improved programme planning and implementation. A continued focus will be placed on including refugees within national education systems, especially in urban environments.

Settlements and shelter

UNHCR's new Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter aims to ensure that all refugees and other people of concern are able to meet their shelter and settlement needs in a safe, dignified and sustainable manner.

The Strategy introduces the "master plan" concept, which seeks to link refugee camps and settlements to surrounding communities in a more holistic and sustainable way, taking into account socio-economic dynamics, environmental considerations and local resources, services and infrastructure. UNHCR will pilot a set of tools developed to support the master plan approach in Rwanda, working in collaboration with Stanford University and Ennead Architects International, LLP.

UNHCR is pursuing a range of cost-effective and practical shelter options utilizing locally-procured shelter materials and commercially-available shelters as well as promoting innovative research and development projects. UNHCR, IFRC and ICRC are developing a tent that will perform better in terms of cultural suitability, space and other essential considerations.

UNHCR and the Refugee Housing Unit (RHU), a subsidiary of the Swedish non-profit foundation Stiffelsen Svensk Industridesign, supported by the IKEA Foundation, are continuing field testing the RHU prototype in Ethiopia, Iraq and Lebanon.

UNHCR is developing a monitoring system for shelter and settlements to support effective measurement under the new Strategy. The monitoring system will be field tested in Kenya, Lebanon and Myanmar. UNHCR will also launch a new e-learning programme on settlements and shelter.

UNHCR co-leads the Global Shelter Cluster, together with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and leads shelter clusters in eight countries. With important support from the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection of the European Commission, the global cluster is implementing a five-year strategy (2013-2017) aimed at strengthening emergency deployment capacity, which included seventeen capacity-building missions in 2013. Performance reviews of the clusters at the field level will inform implementation. The global cluster will also develop guidance and training on housing, land and property rights.

Registration and biometrics

During 2013, UNHCR advanced its identity management infrastructure considerably, including through the development of a new version of *proGres*, the refugee registration system and a new corporate biometrics solution. UNHCR is seeking a biometrics system that will be fast, durable and easy to use in challenging field locations. It should provide secure, resilient and scalable data storage capability that allows for the real-time verification of individuals who approach UNHCR seeking protection, assistance and durable solutions.

Following an intensive review process, UNHCR selected a commercial partner for the development of the new biometrics solution, which was piloted in Malawi in late 2013 with the biometric enrolment of nearly 17,000 refugees using fingerprints as well as face and iris recognition technology. The pilot will inform the development of the new biometrics system during 2014, with initial field implementation expected by the end of the year.

Information management

Through the implementation of the Information and Data Management Strategy 2012-2014, UNHCR has achieved extraordinary progress in building institutional capacity for information management (IM) over the past two years, in support of coordination efforts in refugee operations and IDP operations where UNHCR has cluster leadership responsibilities. The training in Information Management in Emergencies (TIME) has increased the number of well-trained IM Officers, thereby improving the capacity to meet needs in emergencies. The introduction of UNHCR's operational web portals covering all major emergency situations⁴ and the Emergency IM Toolkit⁵ have also been important developments.

⁴ See: data.unhcr.org

⁵ See: data.unhcr.org/imtoolkit

During 2014, UNHCR will continue to expand the coverage of the web portals; strengthen data visualization capacity; introduce new geographic information system mapping tools and needs assessment guidance; and work toward greater harmonization of core operational datasets with inter-agency partners. The new version of *proGres (v4)* will support IM and enable more effective needs assessments, as will the development of new profiling methodologies tailored to urban refugee situations, undertaken in cooperation with the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) and with special support from the United States of America's Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration.

Energy and environment

UNHCR's new Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE) focuses on meeting refugees' energy needs in camp situations. It seeks to integrate energy requirements into emergency response and promote appropriate household fuel and lighting technologies, including the expanded use of renewable energy. Additionally, increased access to energy for schools, health centres and other institutions are priorities outlined in the Strategy, as is the planting of trees for fuel provision and environmental protection.

UNHCR will pursue new partnerships and innovative approaches to support SAFE interventions. These will build upon UNHCR's first carbon financing agreement, recently concluded with the climate protection organization Atmosfair, which will bring fuel-efficient stoves to refugees in Rwanda. UNHCR will also work closely with the IKEA Foundation, the SAFE reference group, the Women's Refugee Commission and the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves.

Livelihoods and self-reliance

UNHCR's new Global Livelihoods Strategy seeks to enable refugees to earn a safe and sustainable living that meet their basic needs and enhances self-reliance. As outlined by the Strategy, UNHCR will strengthen baseline data collection, programme design, technical capacity, partnerships, and monitoring and evaluation efforts. Country-specific, multi-year plans will be developed on the basis of sound economic analysis in close collaboration with the public and private sectors, development actors and refugee and host communities. The Strategy will encourage market-oriented approaches that build opportunities for employment and employability.

Building on the ongoing pilots in Costa Rica and Egypt, UNHCR will introduce the Graduation Approach, working with the BRAC Development Institute and the NGO partner, Trickle Up. This approach, which was developed by the World Bank and the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor, seeks to "graduate" people in rural or urban areas out of poverty through a sequenced combination of livelihoods provisioning, capacity-building and microfinance. UNHCR has also initiated a redesign of the Community Technology Access programme, which seeks to remove barriers to livelihood and learning opportunities, including microfinance, data outsourcing and remote work via the Internet.

UNHCR is working closely with WFP to follow up on the joint impact evaluations on the contribution of food assistance to durable solutions in protracted refugee situations carried out in 2012. UNHCR and WFP have initiated pilot projects in three countries, in order to identify good practices that can inform a joint corporate strategy and operational framework for ensuring that food assistance contributes toward self-reliance and durable solutions.

D. Thematic areas

Expanding cash-based interventions

UNHCR has increased cash and cash alternatives extensively in its global operations for several years. In 2013, sixty-seven UNHCR operations distributed more than US\$ 94.5 million to refugees and other people of concern through cash or vouchers, most notably in the Syria situation. UNHCR has made considerable progress in developing the policy framework, operational guidance, standard operating procedures, strengthened technical expertise and tools and systems needed for the responsible expansion of cash-based programming, while maximizing the protection benefits for refugees and other people of concern. In 2014, UNHCR will establish a dedicated unit to provide overall coordination of these efforts and support to the field.

UNHCR is expanding strategic partnerships, including with the Norwegian Refugee Council, Oxfam and the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP), to fully realize the transformative potential of cash-based interventions. Since 2011, UNHCR and WFP have collaborated closely under a joint plan of action on the expanded use of cash-based programming to achieve food security among people of concern.

Working towards solutions

The new Solutions Steering Group at headquarters will continue to support the development of comprehensive strategic plans to tackle protracted situations through multi-year planning with longer-term objectives and measurable benchmarks. Where durable solutions are not immediately available, these comprehensive strategies will help guide a progressive approach to increasing self-reliance and building the financial, social and human capital of refugees and others persons of concern. The Solutions Steering Group will strengthen internal coherence and technical support to field operations.

The development of comprehensive solutions strategies in countries such as Ecuador and Zambia is fostering collaboration with national authorities and international and bilateral development partners. In the Dollo Ado camps in Ethiopia, UNHCR is working with national, regional and local authorities to boost economic development in the surrounding area through investment in agricultural production benefiting both the refugee and host populations alike.

During 2014, UNHCR will seek to build upon the experience gained through the Transitional Solutions Initiative pilots in eastern Sudan and Colombia, as well as the implementation of the Secretary General's Policy Decision on Durable Solutions for Displaced People. Discussions are underway regarding the launch of a broader solutions initiative that will bring together key partners to better prevent protracted situations from arising and to ensure that resolving existing ones remains a priority on the development agenda.
