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Update on UNHCR's global programmes and partnerships - 2010

This update presents some examples of challenges, progress and new developments in global programmes and partnerships since the last strategic overview presented to the 47th meeting of the Standing Committee in March 2010. A more comprehensive report will be provided in the forthcoming Global Appeal 2011 Update.

A. Major challenges, progress and new developments

(i) Shelter and physical planning

Large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) live outside camps today, and urban displacement has become a common occurrence in humanitarian crises. Shelter response and camp planning for IDPs and refugees in complex emergencies - such as in Georgia, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan - have required innovative and locally compatible solutions. UNHCR has been supporting field operations to develop comprehensive shelter strategies; conduct assessments for appropriate shelter solutions, design and quality; analyse shelter and physical planning-related components of operations; and provide inputs to enhance the quality of programmes. UNHCR has also continued to function as lead agency in the inter-agency global emergency shelter cluster.

The Office's shelter and physical planning interventions in 2009/2010 - both in emergencies and in protracted refugee situations - had a direct and positive impact on the welfare of refugees and other persons of concern. With the aim of providing effective, timely and environmentally-friendly shelter solutions, four strategic objectives will be pursued in 2011: delivering effective and timely field support in emergencies; developing the capacity of UNHCR and partner staff; providing policy guidance and leadership; and building strategic partnerships.

UNHCR also organized training of staff in the three clusters of emergency shelter, protection and camp coordination, with participants from Afghanistan, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. The training will be replicated in the southern Africa and Asia-Pacific regions to enhance internal capacity for cluster work. Collaboration with other cluster partners, as well as with local NGOs in the respective countries, resulted in enhanced response capacity and effective coordination in the implementation of shelter and physical planning operations.

(ii) Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH)

At the request of the High Commissioner, a 3-year WASH Strategic Plan (2011-2013) is being developed, which will form the basis for WASH needs to be met in a progressive manner. More WASH staff have been hired in 2010 to increase technical expertise in the Field. Additional funding has allowed certain operations, particularly in Africa, to repair or replace dilapidated infrastructure. UNHCR has continued to strengthen its WASH

partnerships in 2010 including with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the University of Neuchatel. Hygiene promotion activities have been strengthened in the Field and hygiene promotion guidelines produced.

(iii) Nutrition and food security

Improved assessments and monitoring and evaluation of nutrition programmes have provided more data to allow UNHCR and its partners to more effectively incorporate nutrition considerations into their programmes. In 2010, nutrition surveys have been carried out in 21 countries, in particular to measure levels of anaemia. Lessons learned on preventing and treating micronutrient deficiencies, including anaemia, in Bangladesh, Kenya and Nepal have been invaluable for planning similar interventions in other countries including Algeria, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Yemen. UNHCR has continued to work very closely with its nutrition and food security partners, notably WFP, as well as the Institute of Child Health at University College London, to develop the technical expertise necessary to implement the anaemia strategy in refugee settings. UNHCR and WFP have intensified their collaboration in addressing malnutrition, including micronutrient deficiencies, and food security in selected protracted refugee situations, as part of the High Commissioner's focus on protracted situations. Joint assessment missions were carried out in 11 countries in 2010. Similar activities will continue in 2011, with an increased emphasis on food security in urban settings, on cash and food voucher programmes where feasible, and on self-reliance activities.

(iv) Environment

UNHCR has continued to give priority to environmental conservation and sustainable natural resource management in its field operations. The promotion of renewable energy in the refugee camps has been given particular focus in 2010. UNHCR has introduced pilot projects for solar lighting and fuel-efficient clean cooking stoves in the Central Africa Republic, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan and Uganda. This initiative has helped improve not only the environment, but also the quality of life, the protection and the safety of refugees in the camps, particularly women. Given its positive impact, the plan is to expand this programme to other operations. For several years, UNHCR has been testing different models of improved cooking stoves at various locations. Some models could not stand up to use in the harsh conditions of refugee camps; however, a recently developed *Save80* stove deployed in Chad has proven sturdy enough, and is accepted by refugees. Environmental activities also included those related to reforestation; sustainable land use and agriculture; community-based environmental action plans; camp closure and rehabilitation; the use of environmentally friendly construction materials; and domestic energy. Environmental impact assessments are being undertaken and environmental guidelines and tools disseminated. Over 100 staff have been trained on mainstreaming environmental sustainability in the refugee, IDP and returnee operations in Bangladesh and in 11 African countries.

(v) Health

Health in urban contexts

Health strategies, policies and interventions for refugees have in the past usually targeted camps in low-income countries. In such situations, existing national health services are often insufficient to meet the needs of citizens and are unlikely to be extended to cover refugee needs. However, more than half of the world's refugees now reside in non-camp settings, including in urban areas. Furthermore, a larger proportion of refugees are now fleeing middle-income countries where the demographic and disease epidemiologic profiles tend to be of older populations with chronic diseases. These changes have had major consequences for UNHCR and its partners. In 2009, UNHCR published its *Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas*, and *Principles and Guidance for Referral Health Care for Refugees and Other Persons of Concern*. An in-depth examination of urban health policies and data has allowed UNHCR to improve guidance to the Field in many urban settings. This has brought about improved technical guidance that will culminate in practical guidelines for urban health care in early 2011.

Malaria control

In 2009, UNHCR engaged in a partnership with one of the leading global malaria fund-raising networks, the United Nations Foundation “Nothing but Nets” campaign. The project’s objective is to raise the level of net usage amongst refugee communities at risk of malaria to full coverage (i.e. 1 net for every 2 persons to sleep under). The project continued in 2010 where it was rolled out in 11 more countries to make a total of 16 countries. Bed-net use in conjunction with early diagnosis and access to effective treatment have been essential malaria control components that have helped UNHCR and its partners significantly reduce morbidity and mortality in many operations.

Epidemic preparedness and response (EPR) (including pandemic influenza H1N1 response)

EPR projects continued in 22 countries, targeting a wide range of interventions such as raising outbreak awareness; improving water and sanitation programmes; rehabilitating basic health infrastructure; contingency planning; building isolation wards; stockpiling essential medicines and laboratory tests; and improving infection prevention and drug management. Although some individual H1N1 cases were recorded amongst refugees, no major outbreak was observed in refugee communities.

HIV and reproductive health

In line with the Strategic Plan for HIV (2008-2012), UNHCR’s programmes were aimed at ensuring universal access to prevention, treatment and care for persons of concern. Measures were taken to strengthen the linkages between reproductive health services and HIV programmes, as well as to those related to substance abuse. UNHCR is an active member of the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force on HIV in Emergencies, and chairs an informal working group that aims to ensure that persons affected by humanitarian emergencies are included in national disease-specific plans and approved Global Fund proposals. Funding from the World Bank and the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) have allowed UNHCR to expand its HIV and related programmes in numerous countries throughout Africa in 2010. UNHCR has continued to be an active UNAIDS co-sponsor and contributes technical expertise and support to address HIV in humanitarian situations.

(vi) Livelihoods

There is a growing need for comprehensive and quality livelihood programming, in particular in urban areas. Since 2008, UNHCR has been introducing multi-year livelihood strategies, based on detailed assessments, in key urban refugee operations across the world. As a result, the Office now has a clearer vision of self-reliance opportunities and challenges for refugees in cities, enabling greater mobilization of resources and creative interventions that support national or local development plans - for example, with the Ministry for Vocational Training in Yemen, and with a Social Development Fund in Jordan. Programming and policy guidelines for urban livelihoods and the right to work are now being developed, and a new training programme will be rolled out in collaboration with partners, notably the Women’s Refugee Commission, the Norwegian Refugee Council, UNDP and ILO.

Microfinance

Microfinance has been given particular focus in 2010 through a global partnership with ILO’s Social Finance Department, which is providing technical expertise to UNHCR and facilitating collaboration with ILO’s regional centres. Quality guidance in microfinance is being delivered to several operations, including in Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and Mauritania. A global partnership with the Grameen Trust was signed in early 2010 with roll-out planned for 2011.

Community Technology Access (CTA) and Women Leading for Livelihoods (WLL)

The CTA and WLL programmes help support UNHCR's global livelihoods strategy. The CTA provides access to computer skills for school children, youth and adults from refugee and host communities. Facilities provided can be used for educational, employment, business and personal purposes. By the end of 2010, the CTA will be operating in Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Georgia, Rwanda, Uganda and Yemen. For 2011, additional CTAs are being planned in Kenya and Nepal.

Since 2008, WLL projects have been funded in Bangladesh, Brazil, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Georgia, India, Kenya, Morocco and Serbia. A lack of funds has however considerably slowed down the programme during 2009 and 2010. In 2011, funds will be sought for a new series of initiatives in support of Women and Youth's Entrepreneurship and Leadership, using lessons learnt from pilots in 2010 and drawing on UNHCR's global network of certified entrepreneurship training providers. New projects will support already existing livelihood strategies with a long-term perspective, in order to better assess the impact of the projects and monitor the evolution of the women concerned, their families and their communities.

(vii) Linking relief to development

Durable solutions and protracted refugee situations

UNHCR has promoted community-based projects in a range of reintegration and local integration operations. Several protracted refugee operations in Africa, Asia and Europe have expanded or reoriented their activities with more development-oriented approaches. In 2010, Nepal embarked on the Community-based Development Programme (CBDP) with an inter-agency approach to mainstreaming services in refugee-hosting and affected areas in western Nepal. Following evaluations of the operations in Serbia and in the United Republic of Tanzania, preliminary reports indicate that the High Commissioner's initiative on protracted situations has had a positive impact in terms of strengthened political resolve and new efforts to secure sustainable solutions, with UNHCR playing a catalytic role in engaging development partners. Nonetheless, there remain considerable challenges to resolving these situations, including limited options for resettlement and local integration; impediments to return and reintegration including security concerns; and the slow pace of political, economic and social development in areas of origin. UNHCR is also actively seeking the support of bilateral and multilateral actors for the Transition Solutions Initiative.

Peacebuilding

UNHCR has been co-chairing with UNDP and OCHA a reintegration working group as a follow-up to the Secretary-General's report *Peace-Building in the Immediate Aftermath of Conflict* (A/63/881-S/2009/304). UNHCR has also identified protection, the rule of law, coexistence, basic needs and livelihoods as areas of comparative advantage for contributing to peace-building through the return and reintegration of displaced populations. Internal capacity building and engagement in UNCT peacebuilding initiatives is being reinforced at operational level.

Partnership

UNHCR is working closely with the World Bank on the issue of forced displacement, through a multi-year programme which aims to address and improve the development response to forced displacement. In partnership with UNDP, the Office continues to advocate for joint programmes in post-conflict and protracted displacement situations - both bilaterally and within the framework of the early recovery cluster, for development support for refugee-hosting and affected areas and for reintegration programmes. UNHCR and UNDP undertook joint missions to donor countries and a field-testing mission to Sudan in July 2010 in relation to the development of a Reintegration Information Management System project for the early recovery cluster which aims to provide area-based information for planning reintegration operations. In September 2010, the Japan International

Cooperation Agency (JICA) and UNHCR met to take stock of 10 years of partnership. This partnership, which began in 1999 with a staff exchange programme, has, over the years, expanded to 30 countries with 57 projects in the areas of reintegration, protracted refugee situations, and support to host communities.

B. Financial information

A priority for UNHCR for 2011 and beyond is to invest in innovative technology in shelter, the environment and water and sanitation, taking into consideration the link between improvements in the delivery of these sectors and enhanced protection. As technology evolves and becomes more affordable and more suited for the operational context in which UNHCR works, the Office continues to count on donor support for expanding such innovative approaches.
