

## **3A - Reduce and address displacement**

### **UNHCR commitments – report**

**UNHCR commits to a predictable engagement in situations of internal displacement, subject to resources being made available by the international community.**

*What led your organization to make the commitment?*

UNHCR is the protection lead agency and works across a spectrum of issues related to displacement. At the operational level, within the cluster approach, UNHCR is not only a major responder to internal displacement but, more broadly, it leads a response to protection needs, whether of displaced persons, host communities or besieged people.

*Achievements at a glance*

In reference to predictable engagement in IDP situations, UNHCR has made tangible progress in recent years. The progress includes Operational Guidelines issued at the beginning of 2016, the revitalization of the Global Protection, Shelter and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Clusters and an increase in learning programmes.

Several key UNHCR operations were able to make important progress on national solutions strategies for IDPs in 2016. In Sri Lanka, where UNHCR and UNDP jointly hosted an expert from the Protection Standby Capacity Project (ProCap), a national policy on durable solutions for conflict affected displacement was adopted by the Sri Lankan Cabinet in August 2016. In addition, national consultations on a durable solutions strategy also got underway in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

*How are you assessing progress?*

UNHCR co-leads the Global Protection Cluster Task Team on Law and Policy with IDMC which includes 20 organizations. The Task Team completed a number of high profile activities during the year. This included the creation of a database of national and regional IDP laws and policies, a stocktaking exercise based on this mapping that identified trends as best practices and lessons learned, and the organization of several learning activities and workshops.

The 2016 Operational Guidelines relate UNHCR's results framework with its work with IDPs (e.g. IDP footprint). Moreover, they allow UNHCR to be up-to date on the current operational realities and broader institutional commitments emerging from the IASC's transformative agenda.

*Challenges faced in implementation?*

No significant challenges faced in implementation.

### *Next Steps planned to advance implementation in 2017?*

In 2017, UNHCR will draw on these achievements in DRC and Sri Lanka to launch similar initiatives in other countries with protracted internal displacement. It will also continue to contribute concretely to the efforts of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons and other key stakeholders in promoting the inclusion of IDPs in national development planning.

**UNHCR commits to a sustained partnership with entities that wish to work collaboratively in situations of forced displacement based on the Wilton Park Principles: working through national and local systems; supporting host communities and building social cohesion; enabling economic participation and growth; providing impactful and innovative financing and improving the data and evidence base.**

### *What led your organization to make the commitment?*

The protracted nature of forced displacement requires greater efforts to ensure that responses foster self-reliance and resilience from the outset. UNHCR support takes several forms including: (1) strengthening the preparedness of national systems for emergency response; (2) supporting national systems and local communities once displacement occurs, to ensure the inclusion of displaced persons in national services; and (3) supporting host communities to respond to the impact of forced displacement and helping people of concern equip themselves for future solutions. According to 2016 UNHCR data, 48% of refugees are currently integrated in national health care systems; 61% in the education systems.<sup>1</sup>

### *Achievements at a glance*

UNHCR is pursuing inclusive and more sustainable approaches, for instance by supporting the inclusion of persons of concern in national health insurance schemes in Burkina Faso, Ghana, the Islamic Republic of Iran and other countries. In regions where natural resources are scarce, UNHCR has collaborated with the authorities to meet energy and water needs. In Jordan, UNHCR works on the development of solar power plants in Azraq and Zaatari camps, while in Lebanon, it is supporting infrastructure development to improve water supply to urban areas hosting refugees. UNHCR is also exploring ways to facilitate access to financing and loan opportunities for members of displaced and host communities, by partnering with development partners to establish a credit guarantee facility designed to encourage lending to refugees and reduce risks for financial service providers.

### *How are you assessing progress?*

The running costs for maintaining and operating dedicated refugee camp facilities and systems are considerable and often must be sustained for many years or even decades. These investments are typically lost when refugees go home, particularly where camps are located in isolated areas.

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR Diagnostic Tool for Alternatives to Camps 2016 Global Results

Government in many countries hosting refugees have concluded that the disadvantages of camps outweigh the justifications. UNHCR supports alternatives to camps that ensure the needs of refugees are met, while also have positive impact for host communities. Every year, UNHCR collects key data on its alternatives to camp policy (accessible here: <http://www.unhcr.org/alternatives-to-camps.html>). This data can be used to monitor progress on the WHS commitments.

*Challenges faced in implementation?*

In order to develop more predictable and structured partnerships with development partners, UNHCR is exploring ways to systematically collect data on refugee populations, especially at the household level, as operations increasingly need socio-economic data to target programmes. It is also investing time to strengthen data management systems, to optimize cost-effective spending and contribute to the establishment of baseline indicators for refugee and local populations. Such data will enable UNHCR to have a role in monitoring progress in welfare against the baseline throughout the programme cycle and track protection concerns and gauge prospects for solutions on the basis of well-grounded evidence.

*Next Steps planned to advance implementation in 2017?*

UNHCR will continue to work on improving its monitoring and data collection systems in order to able to implement the commitments made during the World Humanitarian Summit, as well as those published in UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2017-2021, which reflects the commitments made during the WHS.

*If you had one message for the annual synthesis report on what is most needed to advance the [name of transformation] in the Agenda for Humanity?*

Refugees who have maintained their independence, retained their skills and developed sustainable livelihoods will be more resilient and better able to overcome future challenges than if they had spent years dependent on humanitarian assistance, whatever solutions are eventually available to them.

**UNHCR commits to expand the use of biometrics for refugee registration to a total of 75 country operations in order to enhance the protection of refugees by maintaining their key identity features and to strengthen the integrity of aid delivery.**

*What led your organization to make the commitment?*

UNHCR has developed its biometrics capacity since 2002, and believes that the anchoring of registration records in biometric enrolment facilitates the protection and empowerment of refugees (by demonstrating unbroken continuity of identity and providing protection from identity loss or theft); increases efficiencies (by reducing the risk of duplicate disbursement of assistance and increasing the accuracy of programme planning); and strengthening programme integrity (by ensuring the uniqueness of each enrolment and mitigating risk of identity fraud or manipulation).

Prior to the World Humanitarian Summit commitments, biometrics were in use in approximately 63 countries for the purpose of refugee registration. UNHCR is seeking to increase the deployment of UNHCR systems (BIMS in particular) and to capacitate State-based registration systems.

### *Achievements at a glance*

UNHCR's Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS) was deployed to 9 country operations, taking the total from 15 to 24 operations using BIMS. Total numbers of biometric enrolments in BIMS surpassed 1 million persons. Planning is well advanced for an expected 10 further deployments during 2017. Additionally, IrisGuard continues to be used as UNHCR's principal biometric system responding to the Syria crisis and holds over 2 million records. BioRegistrator and older 'legacy systems' remain operational in 19 operations. UNHCR has also taken steps to increase the impact and benefit of its biometric systems. These include development and piloting of a biometric verification tool for assistance distribution and development of data sharing relationships with governments and service providers.

### *How are you assessing progress?*

This commitment is set against a numerical target, which UNHCR is striving to achieve. Further, UNHCR is seeking to maximize the benefits of biometric systems in terms of increased efficiencies, access to services and assistance, and strengthened programme integrity.

### *Challenges faced in implementation?*

Resource and staffing limitations remain the principal challenges in implementing this commitment.

### *Next Steps planned to advance implementation in 2017?*

During 2017, a further 10 BIMS deployments are planned. Additionally, UNHCR will continue to develop assistance distribution systems and interoperability with key partners to derive the maximum benefits from the use of biometrics in refugee registration.

### *If you had one message for the annual synthesis report on what is most needed to advance the [name of transformation] in the Agenda for Humanity?*

Biometrics helps ensure that assistance reaches rightful beneficiaries, and that duplicative disbursements (and gaps) are avoided. It facilitates accurate programmatic planning, ensures the global uniqueness of registered identities and protects individuals from identity loss or theft.

**UNHCR commits to reinforcing the Solutions Alliance as a central platform for collaborative action in support of solutions to conflict-induced displacement and to do so by engaging in relevant national groups.**

### *What led your organization to make the commitment?*

UNHCR was one of the founding actors for the Solutions Alliance. The Alliance provided a means to advance the agency's longstanding goal to build the humanitarian-development nexus. Previous efforts include the Brookings Process, the 4 Rs, and Transition Solutions Initiative. Drawing on lessons from these past efforts, the Solutions Alliance was designed to 1) adopt a new approach to partnership, 2) improve situational analysis giving priority to political economy, and 3) advocate for the inclusion of forced displacement issue on development agendas.

### *Achievements at a glance*

UNHCR remains a central actor in advancing the work of the Solutions Alliance. The Agency co-chairs 2 of the 3 Thematic Groups – Research, Data and Performance Management (RDPM) and Rule of Law (RoL). The RDPM developed a list of available research and a first draft of a Performance Management for Solutions paper. The RoL is developing guidance to facilitate partnerships across different fields and is contributing to documents on Housing Land and Property, and Durable Solutions. At the field level, UNHCR has been active in 5 National Groups. Since February 2016 UNHCR also Chair of the Governing Board and has lead the strengthening of the Secretariat, and carrying out of a review of the national groups.

### *How are you assessing progress?*

In coordination with other members of the Governing Board, UNHCR reviews progress of the Solutions Alliance at Governing Board meetings. Towards this end the Secretariat is expected to prepare yearly reports. An interim strategy, pending the finalization of a 3 year strategy, is currently under preparation. Both strategies will provide the basis on which to more systematically measure progress of the Alliance. It is anticipated that these strategies will include clear indicators. A review was recently carried out on the National Groups to equally assist in gathering baseline data and assessing the way forward.

### *Challenges faced in implementation?*

The Alliance propitiously formed in 2015 alongside a growing recognition of the need for new approaches to forced displacement. In 2016, a range of events were held that placed forced displacement and the humanitarian-development nexus in the forefront of global policy discussions. Trying to adapt an incipient multilateral partnership effort, such as the Alliance, to keep pace with all the discussions and new initiatives has been challenging and is requiring the Alliance to review its modus operandi.

### *Next Steps planned to advance implementation in 2017?*

In 2017 UNHCR will continue to play an active role in the Governing Board. A key focus will be to support the Secretariat to finalize a 3 year strategy that well positions the Alliance to contribute towards developing, strengthening and implementing new approaches to forced displacement. Another key focus will be to establish an Advisory Board.

**UNHCR commits to support efforts that enable economic participation of forcibly displaced persons and access to finance, in collaboration with partners, thereby contributing to their self-reliance, preparedness for solutions and also to poverty reduction and economic growth.**

*What led your organization to make the commitment?*

Faced with the enormous scale and severity of global forced displacement, UNHCR has recognized the need to pursue alternatives to existing durable solutions (voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement) to ensure continued protection of forcibly displaced persons. Enabling refugees achieve economic self-reliance in their country of asylum has been identified by the organization as a fundamental solution for displaced people to rebuild their lives in dignity and peace. To put this into action, UNHCR developed the [Global Livelihoods Strategy 2014-2018](#) which defines concrete objectives and progressive steps to enable refugees meet their basic needs in a safe, sustainable and dignified manner. Specifically, the strategy highlights the promotion of refugees' right to work and access productive assets. It also underlines the need to develop and adopt innovative and market-oriented approaches to support refugee livelihoods. UNHCR's commitment at the World Humanitarian Summit reflects and reaffirms its resolve to continue working towards empowering refugees to achieve self-reliance.

*Achievements at a glance*

In 2016, UNHCR demonstrated progress in developing results-driven and market-oriented livelihoods programmes. Country operations that completed livelihoods strategic plan based on socio-economic and market data increased from 18 in 2015 to 32 in 2016. Country operations were supported to improve livelihoods programming through deployment of 80 international livelihoods experts and training of 30 UNHCR staff on results-driven and market-oriented livelihoods programming.

To reduce extreme poverty and strengthen self-reliance of ultra-poor refugee households, UNHCR supported Graduation Approach projects in 6 countries. Preliminary results are encouraging: In Egypt, 750 participants from the refugee and host community found a job, and almost 800 were starting their own businesses. In Ecuador, 30 percent had been employed for longer than three months, and 81 percent were eating three meals a day compared to 17 percent at the onset. In Costa Rica, unemployment rate among the 114 participants decreased from 36% to 4.4% through the course of implementation.

To increase access to credit for refugees, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and UNHCR signed an agreement to launch a US\$15 million partial Credit Guarantee Facility (CGF). This will be rolled out in 2017 to support Financial Service Providers targeting refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Kenya and Uganda. Concurrently, guidelines on access to finance for refugees were finalized by the Social Performance Task Force (SPTF), and technical assistance providers were trained on how to promote access to finance for refugees among financial service providers.

UNHCR has successfully connected refugee artisans to global markets by partnering with local social enterprises to include refugees in value chains. This approach, piloted in Burkina Faso, was expanded to six countries in East Africa and Southeast Asia in 2016.

UNHCR has expanded its collaboration with development and private sector actors. The 1983 memorandum of understanding with the International Labor Organization (ILO) was updated, with the ILO's Governing Board's adopting the "Guiding Principles on Access of Refugees and other Forcibly Displaced Persons to the Labour Market". While voluntary and non-binding, the Guiding Principles provide an important framework to promote refugees' full enjoyment of the right to work. ILO also conducted a one-week training for the global UNHCR livelihoods team to improve the capacity to support market-based livelihoods interventions for refugees. Participation in strategic partnerships forums was maintained, including the Artisans Alliance and the SEEP Network. UNHCR also participated in the Minimum Economic Recovery Standards (MERS) revision meeting in Washington DC, and hosted a regional workshop in Geneva to engage Europe-based NGOs in the revision process. In collaboration with the OECD, labour market integration of refugees and asylum-seekers in Europe was supported via the private sector. The UNHCR Livelihoods Advisory Board, a high-level consultative group consisting of key development and private sector actors, also convened for the third time and successfully provided critical inputs to UNHCR's work on livelihoods.

#### *How are you assessing progress?*

UNHCR's commitment is embedded in the Global Livelihoods Strategy. Achievement of this commitment will therefore be measured by the progress made towards attainment of the four objectives of the strategy using predefined [indicators](#). 2016 results against the objectives show positive progress. Recognizing limitations in its current monitoring system, UNHCR has recently embarked on a process to review and revise monitoring indicators for its programs, including livelihoods and self-reliance, to better capture the outcomes of interventions implemented. This exercise is ongoing and field testing is underway in selected country operations.

#### *Challenges faced in implementation?*

While 2016 saw important progress in the area of refugees' right to work, key challenges such as legal, policy and administrative frameworks affecting access to employment in host countries remain a barrier to safe and sustainable employment for many refugees. These challenges include lengthy waiting periods for refugees to get documentation. Moreover, the economic situation in many host countries, including high unemployment and poverty rates, further limits opportunities for enabling refugee employment. Lack of resources – financial, human, and technical – also continues to be an obstacle experienced by country operations.

#### *Next Steps planned to advance implementation in 2017?*

UNHCR will continue advocating for access to work for refugees. Guidance on the implementation of ILO's 'Guiding Principles on Access to the Labour Market for Refugees and other Forcibly Displaced Persons' will provide an important preliminary step for this. Financial inclusion of refugees will be promoted through the CGF and by utilizing the guidelines developed by SPTF. Strategic partnerships with development actors will be strengthened to have refugees included in their economic development programming. Capacity building and technical support in the field will continue in order to enhance results-driven and market-oriented livelihoods programming. UNHCR will scale up the Graduation Approach to 20 country operations. The new

Artisanal Strategy, MADE51 (Markets, Design and Empowerment of refugee artisans) which aims to connect refugee artisans to global markets will be implemented in six countries in East Africa and Southeast Asia.

*If you had one message for the annual synthesis report on what is most needed to advance the [name of transformation] in the Agenda for Humanity?*

UNHCR acknowledges that making progress towards economic self-reliance of forcibly displaced people requires a multi-sector, multi-stakeholders effort – host communities and governments, donor organizations, humanitarian and development agencies, public and private entities, faith-based organizations, and dedicated individuals who provide resources and expertise. UNHCR encourages their continued support – in granting the right to work, in enabling access to assets and employment opportunities, in inclusion in local economic development plans – which are essential to helping displaced people transition from aid recipients to self-reliant agents of change.