

United Nations Economic and Social Council: Management Segment Meeting

**Item 19(e), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Oral Report on the coordination aspects of the work of the Office of UNHCR
Delivered by UNHCR New York Director, Ms. Ruven Menikdiwela**

**United Nations Headquarters, New York
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Madame Vice-President, allow me to congratulate you on your election yesterday as Chair of the General Assembly Second Committee for the upcoming 77th Session.

Madame Vice-President, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, I am pleased to present this oral report on the coordination aspects on the work of the Office.¹

The world has now reached a staggering figure of 100 million forcibly displaced. While protracted crises, such as in Syria or the Sahel, remain unresolved, new waves of violence in countries including Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Myanmar, Nigeria, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo propelled us to 90 million displaced by the end of 2021. The war in Ukraine has seen the number cross the 100 million mark. Humanitarian needs are greatly compounded by conflict, drought and other manifestations of climate change, the residual impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and now the ripple effect of the Ukraine crisis. Growing inflation and rising food and energy costs mean that we will accomplish less with the same levels of funding. Now more than ever, it is critical to put the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees into action, to maximize resources for protection and solutions for those displaced. The GCR, as affirmed by the General Assembly², encourages us to pursue our mandate through partnership with sister agencies, development actors, the private sector, academia and faith-based organizations, in support of host governments.

Madame Vice-President,

Strategic partnerships with sister UN agencies continued to leverage complementarity and expertise to benefit people of concern. Collaboration with UNICEF on the "[Blueprint for Joint Action](#)" reached some 10 million refugees and host communities with programming and services in education, child protection, water, sanitation and hygiene. The UNHCR-WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub enabled prioritization of food and basic needs assistance to refugees. However, food assistance to refugees remains a concern, as some 50% of the world's refugees receive less than the standard food basket. Moreover, recognizing the increasingly important issue of access to technology, UNHCR signed a new agreement with the International Telecommunications Union.

Madame Vice-President,

¹ A/RES/58/153 of 22 December 2003.

² "Office of UNHCR", A/RES/73/151 of 17 December 2018 (OP 23).

UNHCR continues to actively support the UN development system reform. In 2021, we provided 2.5 million dollars to the Resident Coordinator system, in line with the cost sharing agreement, and contributed to the Handbook for RCs on the humanitarian system. UNHCR and the UN Development Coordination Office also issued a joint letter outlining common areas of work for RCs and UNHCR Representatives. UNHCR's new multi-year planning cycle and Global Results Framework, introduced in 2021, is aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, and mainstreams the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. UNHCR continues to incorporate the mandates of the QCPR and UNDS-related resolutions, where applicable, in UNHCR's programmes. At the regional level, UNHCR co-led Issue-Based Coalitions on human mobility, to further the achievement of the SDGs through data analysis, and technical and capacity support to government and local actors.

Our collaboration with the World Bank brought additional development funding to refugee-hosting countries. Since mid-2017, over 2.4 billion dollars have been allocated for 45 projects in 14 low-income countries through the World Bank's IDA sub-window for refugees and host communities. Engagement with regional development banks was also strengthened, for example, through the MoU concluded with the Inter-American Development Bank and the exchange of letters with the Asian Development Bank, promoting the inclusion of forcibly displaced people within the Banks' policies and programmes. Cooperation with the African Development Bank resulted in projects benefitting displaced people in Zimbabwe, the East and Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes region, and the Sahel.

UNHCR has adhered to the OECD DAC recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus, and continues to be an active member of the IASC results group on the humanitarian-development nexus.

Madame Vice-President,

UNHCR partnerships were strengthened and diversified in 2021, to further the localization agenda and continue our longstanding engagement with civil society. The focus shifted from a purely humanitarian response to one that fosters inclusion and solutions, and acknowledges the capacities of local actors and the displaced themselves. In recognition of community-led work, a pilot agreement was launched, providing small-scale grant funding directly to refugee-led organizations for the first time, while the NGO innovation awards recognized the work of women-led organizations. The 2022 Global NGO Consultations on "Localization and Climate Action" are in session this week and refugee-led organizations are well-represented, as both speakers and moderators. In relation to faith-based organizations, in 2021 UNHCR established a Multi-Religious Council of Leaders to address the root causes of displacement, in partnership with Religions for Peace.

We have also enhanced our partnership with sports entities. In 2021 UNHCR supported the participation of the Refugee Olympic and Refugee Paralympic Teams in the Tokyo Games, working closely with the respective Committees as well as with the Olympic Refugee Foundation. A new cooperation agreement was signed with UEFA, which facilitated messaging on refugee issues to wide audiences during the European Football Championships. We have also partnered with the Global e-Sports Federation, Cricket Without Boundaries, the International Chess Federation, and the World University Service of Canada, which saw a small number of refugee athletes resettled through a new complementary pathway focused on sport.

Madame Vice-President,

UNHCR's leadership in coordinating refugee situations continued in 2021, with regional refugee response plans issued to cover inter-agency responses in 40 refugee-hosting countries, resulting from the crises in Afghanistan, Burundi, the DRC, Ethiopia and South Sudan. Other mechanisms, such as the regional refugee and resilience plan in response to the Syria crisis (co-led with UNDP) and the regional

refugee and migrant response plan for refugees and migrants from Venezuela (co-led with the IOM), helped garner funds and ensure a link between humanitarian action, resilience activities and development approaches. UNHCR and IOM also co-led the joint response plan for the Rohingya humanitarian crisis in Bangladesh. The 2021 inter-agency response plans for refugees mobilized over 800 partners, and collectively appealed for 10.7 billion dollars, to help protect and assist some 15.5 million displaced persons and to support some nine million people from host communities.

With regard to coordination concerning internally displaced persons, the cluster approach continues to enhance greater predictability for the work of UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies. Under this framework UNHCR continues to lead the global Protection, Emergency Shelter, and Camp Coordination and Camp Management clusters. In addition to leading these clusters in some 30 country contexts in 2021, UNHCR also actively engaged with the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, contributed to the conceptualization of the Secretary-General's Common Agenda and Action Plan for IDPs, and stands ready to contribute fully to their implementation.

In conclusion, Madame Vice-President, as the current challenges show, now more than ever, it is critical to work in partnership to strengthen the humanitarian and resilience activities needed to protect the displaced and support the communities that host them.

Thank you.