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Consideration of reports on the work of the Standing Committee

**Programme budgets, management, financial control
and administrative oversight**

Report of the forty-seventh meeting of the Standing Committee (2-4 March 2010)

Report by the Standing Committee

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I. Introduction

1. The Chairperson of the Executive Committee, His Excellency Ambassador Peter Woolcott (Australia), opened the meeting, and welcomed Azerbaijan, Congo, Iraq and Latvia as new observers. Chad, El Salvador, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Panama, were also admitted as observers during the meeting. The Vice-Chairperson, His Excellency Ambassador Hisham Badr (Egypt), chaired the meeting during agenda item 6 (a).

II. Adoption of the agenda of the 47th meeting and of the 2010 work programme

2. The agenda for the meeting (EC/61/SC/CRP.1/Rev.1) in English and (EC/61/SC/CRP.1) in French was adopted. The Standing Committee's work programme for 2010 (EC/61/SC/CRP.2), as approved at the Planning Meeting held on 11 December 2009, was also adopted.

3. The Deputy High Commissioner introduced himself to the Committee and made some brief opening remarks.

III. Regional activities and global programmes

4. The Assistant High Commissioner for Operations opened the agenda item with an introductory statement. She highlighted in particular two emerging trends: (i) the increasing complexity of the operating environment in which UNHCR works, marked by a reduction in humanitarian space and increased security threats to beneficiaries and staff; and (ii) the expanding scope of the Office's activities, beyond traditional settings, which included working on statelessness issues, assisting in internal displacement situations, implementing the urban refugee policy, and responding to requests related to natural disasters. She stressed that in order to remain effective and avoid being paralyzed by today's challenges, UNHCR's action had to be timely and results-oriented. In high-risk situations, such as in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Assistant High Commissioner emphasized the need to build the capacity of national and local partners, effectively reducing UNHCR's footprint without compromising service delivery.

A. Africa

5. The Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa highlighted both positive developments as well as major preoccupations that had marked the operations in Africa over the past year. Progress had been achieved in pursuing comprehensive solutions for a number of refugee populations in Africa including those from Angola, Burundi, Liberia, and Rwanda. With respect to local integration, the Director expressed particular appreciation to the United Republic of Tanzania for the naturalization of 155,050 Burundian refugees. Work had also begun in a number of countries, on mapping out the nature and scale of statelessness populations. Another positive development was the adoption of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. In terms of challenges, the Director expressed particular concern about the situation in Somalia and the overcrowded refugee camps in

Kenya. In addition, he cautioned that the proposed withdrawal of MINURCAT¹ on the part of Chad, would seriously jeopardize the safety of both the populations involved and humanitarian workers. Finally, the Director mentioned that while asylum remained resilient across Africa, there was at the same time a worrying rise, in some countries, in the detention and *refoulement* of asylum-seekers and refugees.

6. Delegations commended UNHCR for its achievements in finding durable solutions for refugees in Africa and welcomed the Office's support and technical assistance in strengthening national frameworks and capacities for protection. There was broad concern for the humanitarian situation arising from the conflict in Somalia and the overcrowded camps in Kenya, and support expressed for UNHCR's contingency planning. At the same time, the need for a solution to the situation inside Somalia was emphasized. A number of delegations echoed the Director's concern regarding MINURCAT, taking into consideration that there was no other plan in place to provide security for refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and humanitarian operations. Delegations were encouraged by recent developments in the Darfur region of Sudan, but called for further progress on the rehabilitation of places of return in Southern Sudan. More broadly, there was an appeal made for a balanced distribution of resources to avoid a concentration in one area to the detriment of others, and a call on Governments to ensure safe humanitarian access. UNHCR was encouraged to ensure that its operations were undertaken in full cooperation with Governments and to deepen its partnership with the African Union.

7. In response to a question about security in Darfur, the Director described the range of obstacles and risks faced by humanitarian workers including car hijackings and armed robbery. Regarding the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Director supported the need for a reconfiguration of the MONUC² mandate, and in particular for a strengthening of civilian protection. On Somalia, he stressed that the refugee situation inside Ethiopia was just as serious as in Kenya. Both the Director and the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations appreciated the concerns expressed by delegations regarding the security of both populations of concern and UNHCR staff.

B. Asia and the Pacific

8. The Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific outlined key challenges and priorities for UNHCR across the region. These included: the erosion of protection and asylum space; the difficulty of finding solutions to protracted refugees situations; the protection of urban refugees; and the general shrinking of humanitarian space, which was particularly evident in mixed migration movements. He also highlighted the issues of staff security in high-risk areas and responding to natural disasters as newly evolving challenges. The Asia and Pacific region was marked by a low rate of accession to the 1951 Convention. The Director stressed the difficult working environment that UNHCR faced in the absence of a legal protection framework and the subsequent lack of ownership by governments. He called for increased regional cooperation and harmonization, the adaptation of approaches and new partnerships.

9. In their interventions, delegations underlined the need for continued support to address the complex situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan amidst concerns about unhindered access to conflict-affected areas. There were calls to sustain assistance to IDPs in both countries, and to continue promoting the voluntary repatriation programmes for the protracted situations of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

¹ The United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT).

² The United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

10. Several delegations regretted the recent instances of *refoulement* in the region, as well as the lack of international access to some forcibly returned refugees. The living conditions of some refugees from northern Rakhine State (Myanmar), in particular persons of concern to UNHCR living outside of camps, were also of concern and delegations called for enhanced protection and the pursuit of solutions for this group. Delegations welcomed the progress achieved in relation to the IDP situation in Sri Lanka and supported the full freedom of movement for IDPs remaining in the camps. A number of delegations welcomed the resettlement of 26,000 refugees from Bhutan in Nepal, and called for discussions to facilitate voluntary repatriation. Some refugee-hosting countries called for greater solidarity and burden-sharing, including for assistance to refugee host communities. On the question of UNHCR's role in natural disasters, given the positive experience of a pilot project in the Philippines, one delegation recommended the development of a basic standby capacity for natural disaster response in all country offices and another proposed further discussion on the topic within the framework of a comprehensive evaluation of the humanitarian cluster later in the year.

11. The Director echoed delegations' concerns over the forced return of refugees; however, he was hopeful that humanitarian access and resettlement opportunities for those concerned would be forthcoming. The Director thanked countries that had provided resettlement opportunities for their support in helping to find durable solutions. He concurred that more attention should be given to various refugee and IDP situations in the region, and stressed the need for enhanced collaboration between UNHCR and States in order to address these challenges jointly.

C. Europe

12. The Director of the Bureau for Europe recalled that 40 per cent of UNHCR's funding was raised in this region, and with 80 per cent of asylum applications in the industrialized world being lodged in Europe, the continent played a vital role in setting standards for asylum law and practice. She then elaborated on five key objectives: (i) the safeguarding of space for refugee protection in the broader context of migration management, amidst concerns about its erosion across Europe; (ii) the need to build and maintain effective asylum systems with emphasis on the quality of asylum decisions; (iii) the promotion of durable solutions and the resolution of long-standing refugee problems, such as those in South-Eastern Europe; (iv) the promotion of State responsibility for internally displaced persons, using Georgia as an example; and (v) the strengthening of efforts to prevent and reduce statelessness.

13. Several delegations expressed particular appreciation for UNHCR's efforts towards solving the protracted displacement in South-Eastern Europe; the establishment of the emergency transit centre to facilitate resettlement; assistance provided with the drafting of national asylum legislation; and policy advice on migration and asylum. Other delegations noted the need for greater harmonization of asylum procedures and increased cooperation among States, as well as the importance of UNHCR's role in safeguarding asylum space, including the principle of *non-refoulement*, within the European Union (EU). In this respect, UNHCR was encouraged to pursue its collaboration with the European Asylum Support Office and to engage further on strengthening border management legislation, as well as working with FRONTEX³ on training tools, information gathering and analysis in relation to migratory flows.

³ European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union

14 In her responses, the Director expressed appreciation for the ongoing cooperation and progress achieved by many countries in improving protection space. UNHCR was fully engaged in the efforts to build a common European asylum system and she encouraged States to work towards greater harmonization amongst countries in Europe. While welcoming the new EU resettlement scheme, she suggested that more could be done to increase the number of resettlement spaces, and cautioned that resettlement should not be seen as a substitute for access to protection. The Director acknowledged the challenges for some countries, and advocated for new ways of sharing responsibility and more creative approaches. She also reiterated UNHCR's commitment to bring the refugee and IDP chapter in Europe to a conclusion.

D. The Americas

15. The Director for the Americas Bureau briefed the Committee on the support provided by UNHCR following the earthquake in Haiti, before moving on to outline the Bureau's strategic priorities for the year ahead. Amongst the promising developments, the San José Conference on Refugee Protection and International Migration was expected to result in concrete action, and UNHCR's new *Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas* would be particularly useful in the Americas, where populations of concern mostly lived in urban areas. She recalled many examples of good practice achieved in an urban context following the 2004 Mexico Plan of Action, notably the 'Cities of Solidarity' initiative. The Director then welcomed instances of progress made in several countries towards the goal of promoting a favourable protection environment in the region. In closing, she highlighted that the Bureau for the Americas had now decentralized the responsibility for operational functions and oversight to Panama.

16. In a joint statement for the Americas and Caribbean Group, delegations expressed their solidarity with the Governments of Haiti and Chile following the earthquakes in these countries. Delegations then commented on the need to step up joint efforts to enhance protection space in the region and welcomed UNHCR's work in this respect. They reiterated their appreciation for the 'Mexico Plan of Action' as an essential protection tool for national frameworks and for assistance programmes in urban areas, but also recognized the need for a greater involvement of local authorities and civil society. The 'Cities of Solidarity' concept could also be expanded to other areas. Other interventions included the proposal to conclude a specific agreement on IDPs, and to safeguard resources to meet the requirements of special needs groups. There were calls for follow-up action in response to the San José Conference on Refugee Protection and International Migration, and for the adoption of common migration policies, in line with UNHCR's 10-Point Plan of Action and international human rights standards. A number of delegations expressed appreciation for UNHCR's involvement in the Haiti crisis, and called for the protection of Haitians who left the country following the earthquake.

17. The Director took note of Member States' advice on several points, including the need to expand partnerships to strengthen asylum bodies and find solutions at the regional level. She also took the opportunity to clarify UNHCR's role in response to the earthquake in Haiti and in the Dominican Republic, where the Office's presence was related to providing protection measures for medical evacuees and unaccompanied children from Haiti, as well as anticipating ways to support the Government in building an asylum system and related institutions.

E. The Middle East and North Africa

18. The Director of the Bureau for the Middle East and North Africa began by highlighting some of the challenges in North Africa, where the protection space remained limited due to the current political and security dynamics. Positive developments included the conclusion of the repatriation of Mauritanian refugees from Senegal, the forging of important partnerships in Morocco, access given to UNHCR to detention centres in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Algeria's interest in putting in place a national asylum law, and the reorientation of the assistance programme for the Sahrawi refugees to development-oriented activities.

19. Delegations were supportive of UNHCR's efforts to create a favourable protection climate and provide humanitarian assistance in the region, particularly in Iraq. A number of delegations welcomed the recent ceasefire in Yemen and urged all parties to the conflict to allow for humanitarian access, both to refugees and to IDPs. More broadly, concern was expressed over the shrinking of protection space across North Africa as countries aimed to combat irregular migration by restricting the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers. A number of delegations raised the issue of burden sharing and the provision of resources for refugee-hosting countries. Support was also expressed for UNHCR's efforts to regularize its status in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

20. One delegation reiterated its request for a census and registration of the populations in the Tindouf camps, recalling that UNHCR and WFP had established their number at 90,000, and that the 35,000 additional rations had been added because of the floods. It considered it necessary to undertake an evaluation of the real numbers through an actual census in the camps, which would enable an adequation of the assistance required.⁴

21. One delegation expressed concern about the precarious living conditions of the Sahrawi refugees in the Tindouf camps and the inadequacy of the food rations in relation to the number of refugees, in spite of the increase from 90,000 to 125,000 rations. The registration of these refugees is indissociable from the mandate of MINURSO and should not serve as a pretext for avoiding a humanitarian obligation.⁵

22. The Director expressed gratitude to countries hosting refugees and urged the international community to reinforce its support for these countries, citing in particular the underfunded operation in Yemen. With regard to UNHCR's work in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Director acknowledged that a systematic improvement in the protection situation could not be achieved so long as UNHCR remained without solid footing in the country. He commended the Government of Iraq for its efforts to improve security, and took the opportunity to welcome the recent European Union initiative to resettle 10,000 Iraqis.

F. Global programmes and partnerships

23. The Director of the Division for Programme Support and Management outlined UNHCR's global programmes and partnerships, drawing particular attention to improvements being introduced to registration and profiling, with the redesign of UNHCR's registration software *proGres*, and to the development of policy and operational

⁴ The High Commissioner's Office has clarified that UNHCR has no way to determine the exact number of refugees presently staying in Tindouf, and that all quoted figures refer to the number of rations effectively distributed.

⁵ Ibid.

guidance for the profiling of IDPs. The Chief of the Public Health and HIV Section then briefed delegations on the progress achieved in including refugees in national HIV and AIDS programmes, as well as on UNHCR's efforts in combatting anaemia. The Director concluded by emphasizing the need for the full and sustained support of UNHCR's education programmes.

24. In their responses, delegations welcomed the improved *proGres* registration software and asked to be kept informed of further developments in this area. Some delegations urged UNHCR to maintain its focus on age, gender and diversity mainstreaming (AGDM) to better respond to the needs of refugees, and one delegation called on UNHCR to devote more staff to addressing the issue of sexual and gender-based violence. While UNHCR was commended for its successful partnership with some international non-governmental organizations, some delegations saw the need to be more alert to local partnership opportunities. One delegation cautioned that linking relief and development and pursuing self-reliance for refugees could promote local integration, while discouraging voluntary repatriation as the preferred solution. UNHCR was encouraged to continue to assist host communities, which often lived in worse conditions than refugees.

25. The Director announced his forthcoming visit to the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya where he would discuss how new camp space could be developed with maximum innovation. He reassured delegations that AGDM and responding to sexual and gender-based violence remained core responsibilities of the Division. While concurring that repatriation remained the preferred solution for refugees, he maintained that local integration was a reality in many refugee situations. He also stressed the need for concrete linkages between initial assistance and relief, and long-term rehabilitation efforts.

G. UNHCR emergency preparedness and response in 2009 and 2010

26. The Director of the Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS) outlined the new structure of DESS before focusing on the recently conducted review of the Office's approach to emergency management (see EC/61/SC/CRP.3). Forming the basis of a new action plan for the Division, the review had highlighted the importance of: i) strengthening the protection role in contingency planning, preparedness and response; ii) ensuring synergies both within DESS and the rest of organization, as well as with external stakeholders; iii) strengthening the research, analysis and policy support function of DESS; iv) ensuring adequate staffing with the appropriate skills, seniority and experience; and v) developing strategic partnerships, including with local and regional partners.

27. Delegations expressed appreciation for UNHCR's efforts in taking emergency response and preparedness in a new strategic direction, including being able to respond to emergencies within 72 hours and to deliver protection and assistance for up to 500,000 persons. The Office's increased focus on partnership was welcomed, particularly at the local level, although it was stressed that these partnerships should be well coordinated and in place before the onset of a crisis to be most effective. The Office was urged to conduct early contingency planning, including for the situations in Sudan, Chad, and the Central African Republic, and particularly in light of the unresolved issue of the MINURCAT mandate. There were queries about how the new action plan fitted in with existing system-wide initiatives, such as the three clusters led by UNHCR and common needs assessments. UNHCR was requested to keep the Standing Committee updated on the plan of action, including how results were defined and measured, and also on the Supply Management Service's objectives of improved efficiency and cost-savings.

28. Regarding partnerships at the local level, the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations suggested that UNHCR needed to invest seriously in developing national capacities, possibly by setting up a dedicated fund for this purpose. Responding to a question about UNHCR's early warning mechanism, the Director explained that the Office had moved from an internal information management-type system, Action Alert, to an integrated, real-time inter-agency effort. On contingency planning, he briefed the Committee on the recently completed review of all contingency plans, noting that Guinea, Somalia and Zimbabwe were also on the list.

H. Global needs assessment: prioritization

29. In opening the item on the Global needs assessment: prioritization (EC/61/SC/CRP.4), the Director of the Division of Programme Support and Management (DPSM) commented that the introduction of the global needs assessment (GNA) had increased the significance of making careful choices and prioritizing activities. He further explained the process by which the Field would prioritize life-saving interventions and key protection activities, but noted that this could differ significantly depending on UNHCR's role in varying operational contexts.

30. Although delegations were supportive of the needs-based planning approach, a number of questions remained, including what would happen if full funding was not made available; how unearmarked funding would be distributed across the pillars; and what was the hierarchy within the lifesaving areas that should be prioritized. It was important for UNHCR to be able to clearly explain what the needs were, how prioritization was done and what needs would not be met. UNHCR was encouraged to work closely with implementing partners in the process of prioritization and it was crucial for the GNA to be aligned with inter-agency efforts, including multisectoral needs assessments. In this context, one delegation requested that the protracted situations of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran should be prioritized in terms of the Global Needs Assessment. The Office was also advised to "manage expectations" through enhanced communications with stakeholders, including beneficiaries, partners, and local authorities. Finally, it was noted that country operations plans were no longer available on the UNHCR website and clarification was sought as to when donors would have access to *Global Focus*.

31. The Director reassured the Committee that access to *Global Focus* would be forthcoming but that more work needed to be done in order to provide clear and coherent information to donors in this new format.

IV. International protection: a presentation on the topic of birth registration

32. The Director of the Division of International Protection introduced the topic of birth registration (see EC/61/SC/CRP.5), which was being proposed as the theme for a conclusion for possible adoption by the 61st plenary session of the Executive Committee. He outlined the rationale for submitting the item and explained its repercussion on protection, particularly as it related to the issue of statelessness. The Director outlined the protection risks involved in not registering refugee children and noted the very low rate of birth registration in camps as well as in urban areas. He stressed that the issue was one of UNHCR's global strategic priorities and called for a concerted approach, not only with States but also with other United Nations agencies such as UNICEF and UNFPA.

33. A large number of delegations shared UNHCR's concern over the low level of birth registration and firmly supported consideration of the proposed theme as a conclusion. Others expressed concern over possible ramifications, particularly implications regarding the right to acquire the nationality of the host country, and called for further study and discussion. Several countries emphasized the need to prioritize the Executive Committee conclusion on persons with disabilities, concerned that this item would be delayed if attention was given to a second conclusion. There were also calls to expand partnerships beyond the United Nations and to clearly spell out the roles of all actors, including that of governments.

34. The Director acknowledged the concerns of some delegations and the need for further discussions on the matter. He clarified that birth registration simply facilitated the retention of parental nationality and was entirely independent of host country citizenship acquisition procedures. In response to concerns about the need to prioritize the conclusion on persons with disabilities, he recalled that in the past, ExCom had often adopted several conclusions in the same year and proposed the holding of an informal consultative meeting to discuss the issue and agree on a text for a draft conclusion.

V. Programme/protection policy: oral update on the High Commissioner's 2009 dialogue on persons of concern in urban settings

35. The Director of the Division of International Protection (DIP) briefed delegations on the meeting of the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges in December 2009, which had focused on challenges for persons of concern in urban areas. He reported on six main areas where follow-up action was being taken: i) the identification of six 'pilot cities' where UNHCR would engage with partners in the implementation of the Urban Refugee Policy issued in 2009; ii) the conducting of a real-time evaluation at these pilot sites to identify good practices and challenges encountered; iii) a revision of the urban refugee policy itself, to be based on the comments gathered at the Dialogue meeting as well as during the NGO consultations in June 2009; iv) the compilation and dissemination of 'good practices'; v) the harmonization of approaches vis-à-vis IDPs living in camps and those living outside of camps; and vi) the finalization of a joint study on potential cooperation, related to urban displacement, between UNHCR and the 'Cities' Alliance'. Finally, the Director took the opportunity to report on progress made following the first two Dialogue sessions, which had focused on protracted refugee situations, and asylum and migration, respectively.

36. Delegations welcomed the update and offered their cooperation in terms of follow-up. UNHCR was encouraged to engage in new, innovative partnerships with a wide range of actors. A recurring theme was the need to work more closely with local authorities and other actors at the community level, while avoiding the establishment of parallel structures. Delegations also requested more information on the 'pilot cities' initiative. It was recommended that field staff be provided with relevant operational guidance, and that local authorities, as well as UNHCR's implementing partners, be included in the process from the onset. Some delegations had queries on the financial implications while others emphasized the need for burden sharing. One delegation cautioned that any policy guidelines needed to be in line with existing government policies.

37. The Director concurred that 'good practices' needed to be drawn from a wide variety of actors, including governments and academia. A new common policy approach was required for IDPs residing outside camps, and there was a need to strengthen strategic, operational and policy partnerships, particularly involving local partners. On the question

of financial implications, the Director informed the Committee that the urban refugee policy and respective needs had already been taken into account when preparing the 2011 budget.

VI. Management, financial control, administrative oversight and human resources

A. Follow-up to the recommendations of the Board of Auditors on the accounts for 2008 and previous years

38. The Controller provided an update on the status of implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors for the 2008 accounts and previous years (see EC/61/SC/CRP.6). She explained that the Board's reports on the 2006 and 2007 accounts had been closed, with any remaining recommendations included in the 2008 accounts. These contained 19 recommendations, of which 13 related to the four main risk areas jointly identified with the Board of Auditors: i) implementing partner audit certification; ii) asset management; iii) accounting for contributions, and iv) end-of-service and post-retirement benefits liabilities. In closing, she highlighted the significant progress made over the past years to implement the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and reiterated UNHCR's commitment to address risk areas as well as all other outstanding recommendations.

39. Delegations commended UNHCR for the progress made and concrete steps taken, particularly regarding implementing partner audit certification. There was special mention that the matrixes provided had been helpful. Delegations urged UNHCR to work towards full compliance on audit certification and continue to inform the Committee on progress in this respect. There were calls for more oversight mechanisms, including the establishment of an independent oversight committee and an internal control system to better ensure justification of expenditures and cost-effectiveness. One delegation asked to know more about how the Global Management Accountability Framework (GMAF) was being used to clarify the accountabilities and responsibilities of individual staff in their work areas.

40. The Controller explained that the GMAF contained responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities which were now being assigned to individuals at their different levels and translated into job descriptions, which could then be linked to performance management. On the issue of end-of-service and post-retirement health insurance, UNHCR had been awaiting the Secretary-General's decision, which had not yet been announced. Meanwhile, the Office intended to start bilateral discussions and had appointed a new Policy Officer tasked with developing a funding strategy.

B. Oral update on UNHCR's structural and management change process

41. The Deputy High Commissioner opened the topic on structural and management change, with a few remarks on his first impressions since taking up his position the previous month. He commented in particular on the aspects of the reform measures which were providing UNHCR with a clearer picture of needs and gaps and a benchmark against which the Office could henceforth prioritize its operations against incoming funds. In moving ahead, the Deputy High Commissioner said UNHCR's priority was on continuous monitoring, strong coordination, and effective communication, both within the organization as well as with its partners, including governments.

42. The Deputy Director of Human Resources Management complimented the information provided by the Deputy High Commissioner with an update on the human resources aspects of the reform process. This included the fully operational Global Service Centre in Budapest, the new Career Management Support Section, ongoing efforts to reduce the number of staff-in-between assignments and the new assignments and postings policy. He noted that the new initiative for 2010 was to revamp the recruitment policy.

43. Delegations welcomed the continuing efforts being made with respect to the structural and management change process, including in the area of human resources. At the same time, they stressed that this was an important year for UNHCR in terms of showing results. A number of delegations expressed concern regarding the participation of Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) in the International Professional Roster, and the impact of the new recruitment policy on JPOs, and urged UNHCR to find a solution to keep the doors open in this respect. Others made the point that while the work of JPOs was appreciated, not all countries could afford to sponsor them and it was important to ensure diversity in terms of recruitment. The Deputy Director of DHRM reassured delegations that the new policies being put in place would offer opportunities for JPOs, but also highlighted that UNHCR's objective was to recruit the best and that this also meant ensuring diversity.

C. Oral update on the work of the Inspector General's Office

44. The Inspector General presented an overview of the work of his Office, including roles and responsibilities and how they fitted into UNHCR's oversight mechanisms. Separate presentations were also made on the three core functions of the Office: inspection, investigation, and ad hoc inquiries.

45. Delegations welcomed the efforts undertaken by the Inspector General to strengthen the work of his Office. It was important that his Office had sufficient and appropriate resources, both human and financial, at its disposal in order to be able to implement its "road map". UNHCR was urged to ensure complementarities amongst all of its oversight functions. There were numerous requests for information on the progress being made in setting up an External Advisory Committee, which was expected to enhance the independence of the Inspector General's Office. Delegations also expressed concern about the high number of allegations of staff misconduct directly affecting beneficiaries, and requested an explanation regarding the significant increase reported in 2009.

46. The Inspector General recounted the progress achieved in establishing the External Advisory Committee, including the conclusion of terms of reference and the selection of two out of the three members of the Committee. Regarding the allegations of staff misconduct, the Inspector General said the increase could be attributed to the online complaints mechanism, which had facilitated the reporting of such allegations, and that the Code of Conduct was also having an impact in terms trends in behaviour amongst staff. He emphasized that his Office was very focused on prevention and that the Global Learning Centre in Budapest was helping to equip managers to be able to run operations in order to serve the best interests of both beneficiaries and staff.

D. Oral update on progress in achieving gender equity in UNHCR staffing

47. The Director of the Division of Human Resources Management (DHRM) briefed the Committee on current measures being taken towards achieving gender equity in UNHCR staffing. He outlined three key components of the strategy put in place to achieve gender equity, namely: increased awareness and accountability, improved recruitment and

retention, and the institutionalization of the gender policy. Regarding accountability, he provided a demonstration of the online Gender and Diversity Scorecard system. He also explained a number of initiatives that had been put in place geared towards retention including flexible work arrangements, the option of taking special leave without pay, and support for inter-agency mobility. The Director presented comparative statistics to illustrate trends within UNHCR at different grade levels, acknowledging the slow progress that had been made, and expressed DHRM's commitment to continue its efforts in achieving gender parity in staffing levels.

48. A number of delegations welcomed the achievements to date and expressed support for further efforts being undertaken to achieve gender equity. There were questions on the methodologies used in selecting female staff; the drop in the percentage of female representatives; and the impact of UNHCR becoming a number of the UN Dual Career and Staff Mobility Programme. The importance of appropriate gender representation among field staff who had direct contact with populations of concern, for example in protection posts, was highlighted as a critical area. UNHCR was also urged to couple its efforts geared towards gender parity with those aimed at obtaining a balanced geographical distribution.

49. The Director provided information on how female staff were recruited, posted, and promoted, while assuring quality and substantive merit in the decisions process. He explained that the overall trend in the percentage of female representatives had increased since 2004, and that the Gender and Diversity Scorecard would help identify where more efforts were needed. He assured delegations that UNHCR actively promoted geographical diversity, including in its recruitment policy.

VII. Programme budgets and funding

50. The Controller/Director of the Division of Financial and Administrative Management provided an update on the 2009 overall financial situation based on near final estimates prior to the closure of accounts (see EC/61/SC/CRP.7 and Corr. 1 (English only.)) Concerning the overall trends, she indicated that, UNHCR's 2009 annual and supplementary programme budgets received positive donor support. The Annual Programme Budget was close to being fully funded while the Supplementary Programmes were funded to a level of 67 per cent. The Director of the Division of External Relations also provided a breakdown of the voluntary contributions for 2009, noting that despite the financial crisis, 2009 marked the highest level of annual contributions in the history of UNHCR. She expressed particular gratitude for the predictable, early and flexible funding, which were critical for UNHCR's operations.

51. Regarding the current year, the Controller highlighted that, the 2010 Annual Budget represented the first year of the 2010/2011 Biennium Programme Budget approved by ExCom at its sixtieth session in October 2009. This Biennium Budget was prepared based on a comprehensive assessment of needs using the new budget structure comprised of four pillars. The 2010 approved Annual Budget amounted to \$2,778.4 million for total activities across all pillars. Since January 2010, three supplementary budgets had been approved, for a total value of \$38.6 million. These related to the increased activities and emergency response for refugees and internally displaced in the Congo (\$21.9 million), Yemen (\$10.9 million) and Central African Republic (\$5.8 million). Therefore, the total combined 2010 Annual Budget currently amounted to \$3045.8 million.

52. Delegations requested more consultations on the supplementary budgets and as such any modifications to the Annual Budget. Concern was also expressed regarding the draft Decision contained in Annex VIII and its implication on the 2010 budget approved by

ExCom in October 2009, in light of the new financial rules adopted by ExCom in December 2009. Regarding the latter point, the Controller explained that in view of its goal of becoming IPSAS compliant in 2011, it was important to define the "approved budget" of UNHCR against which all expenditures would be reported to ExCom. In order to ensure that UNHCR continued to have one budget against which all expenditures were reported it was imperative to consider supplementary budgets as "adjustments to" or "increases to" the Biennial Programme Budget approved by ExCom last October. There was however no obligation in terms of the draft Decision to fund the Biennial Programme Budget approved by ExCom in October nor any of its adjustments (supplementary budgets).

53. The draft Decision on Programme Budgets and Funding in 2010 (see Annex I) was adopted.

VIII. Any other business

54. There being no further business, the Chairperson closed the meeting.

Annex I

Decision on programme budgets and funding in 2010

The Standing Committee,

Recalling the Executive Committee's decision, taken at its sixtieth session, on administrative, financial and programme matters (A/AC.96/1078, para.14), as well as its discussions under the programme budgets and funding item at the 46th meeting of the Standing Committee,

Reaffirming, the importance of international burden and responsibility sharing in reducing the burden of host countries, especially developing ones,

1. *Notes* that UNHCR's overall needs under its Annual Budget for 2010, based on currently known requirements, amount to \$3,045.8 million;
2. *Notes* that the supplementary budgets for 2010 currently amount to \$38.6 million for programmes benefiting refugees and internally displaced persons;
3. *Recognizes* that emergencies and unforeseen activities unfolding during 2010 may result in the need for additional or expanded supplementary budgets and that additional resources, over and above those for existing budgets, would be required to meet such needs; and
4. *Urges* Member States, in light of the extensive needs to be addressed by the Office of the High Commissioner, to respond generously, in a spirit of solidarity, and in a timely manner, to his appeal for resources to meet the approved 2010 Annual Budget, as well as the requirements of the 2010 Supplementary Programme Budgets.

Annex II

Follow-up action

1. There were renewed requests for a matrix clarifying the responsibilities of the various oversight and advisory functions of UNHCR.
 2. UNHCR was asked to keep the Standing Committee informed of any new supplementary budgets/modifications to the Annual Budget.
 3. Delegations asked UNHCR to provide regular updates on the progress made with respect to the Global Needs Assessment, including priorities and difficulties, and to share this information with other United Nations agencies.
 4. UNHCR was asked to clarify when Executive Committee Members would be given access to *Global Focus*.
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