Refugees and displaced persons

In 2013, the number of people of concern to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) stood at 51.2 million, including 16.7 million refugees. More than half of all refugees came from Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Somalia. The number of persons displaced within their own country as a result of conflict was an estimated 33.3 million—the highest number ever recorded—of whom 23.9 million benefited from UNHCR protection and assistance. The number of identifiable stateless persons stood at 3.5 million. Some 1.1 million individual applications for asylum or refugee status were submitted to Governments or UNHCR offices during the year. An estimated 414,600 refugees were able to return home voluntarily, the lowest level in a decade.

The year was one of the most challenging in the history of UNHCR. The number of people displaced by conflict and persecution reached its highest level since the Second World War. With more than 2.5 million persons forced to abandon their homes, UNHCR saw the highest number of new refugees recorded in one year since the Rwandan genocide in 1994. The war in Syria was the primary cause of the outflows, with 2.4 million people having fled the country by the end of 2013, shifting the country from one of the world’s largest refugee-hosting countries to one of the largest refugee-producing countries in the span of five years. Syria’s neighbours bore most of the burden, prompting a high-level segment of the UNHCR Executive Committee on solidarity and burden-sharing with countries hosting Syrian refugees. UNHCR worked alongside Governments and more than 150 other partners in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey to deliver protection and assistance to Syrian refugees in both camps and urban areas.

Other humanitarian crises such as those in the Philippines, South Sudan and the Central African Republic, coupled with continued conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Mali and Somalia, placed enormous demands on UNHCR and its partners and heightened the burden on host countries and communities, prompting the Office to deploy 464 personnel on emergency missions to support 43 country operations. In response to Typhoon Haiyan, which hit the Philippines in November, UNHCR worked with the Government to deliver emergency shelter and relief items to more than half a million people. In the Americas, the biggest UNHCR operation remained in Colombia. In Europe, UNHCR helped enhance asylum by promoting consistency in asylum procedures, improved reception conditions, protection in mixed migration contexts and alternatives to detention.

Of further concern to UNHCR were the thousands of unaccompanied children arriving in refugee camps, who represented more than 50 per cent of the global refugee population; the widespread sexual and gender-based violence, forced recruitment, armed attacks, abductions, arbitrary detention and trafficking faced by refugees; and the hundreds of lives lost at sea in the Mediterranean, as refugees, asylum seekers and migrants took to the seas to find safety elsewhere. In early October, more than 360 persons lost their lives off the coast of the Italian island of Lampedusa.

During the year, UNHCR assisted 206,000 of the 414,600 refugees who returned home voluntarily. The countries with the largest number of returnees included the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Côte d’Ivoire, the Sudan and Mali. In light of developments in Myanmar, UNHCR worked closely with Governments and partners in the region to lay the groundwork for the eventual voluntary repatriation of refugees. In December, the sixth High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges focused on the theme “Protecting the Internally Displaced: Persisting Challenges and Fresh Thinking”.

In August, UNHCR submitted its first decennial review to the General Assembly, identifying and outlining the progress achieved on institutional reform and on strengthening the protection and emergency response capacities of the Office in the intervening decade.

At its sixty-fourth session, the UNHCR Executive Committee adopted a conclusion on civil registration, recognizing that civil registration and documentation contributed to the enhancement of protection and the implementation of durable solutions. In December, the General Assembly increased the membership of the UNHCR Executive Committee from 87 to 94 States.
working methods of the Executive Committee and its Standing Committee; administrative, financial and programme matters; the 2014 programme of work of the Standing Committee; observer participation in the Standing Committee’s 2013–2014 meetings; and the provisional agenda for its sixty-fifth (2014) session.

The session opened on 30 September with a high-level segment on solidarity and burden-sharing with countries hosting Syrian refugees. The High Commissioner, António Guterres, in his opening statement, said that the generosity of the Syrian Arab Republic’s neighbouring countries, who were hosting over 2.1 million registered refugees, was avertting a humanitarian catastrophe. He asked the international community to share the burden, as it was too heavy for the neighbouring countries to bear alone.

The influx of refugees had compounded the already dire economic consequences of the conflict. In Lebanon, 20 to 25 per cent of the population was Syrian. The country was already losing 2.9 per cent in gross domestic product growth per year, and unemployment was set to rise by 100 per cent by the end of 2014. Turkey spent $2 billion on refugee assistance in 2013, and in Jordan, the cost of hosting Syrian refugees was projected to reach $1.7 billion by the end of the year. The Dohuk governorate in the Kurdistan region of Iraq was also under pressure, its population having increased by 10 per cent after the influx of Syrian refugees.

The High Commissioner noted that international solidarity—including assistance to humanitarian organizations, emergency development support, structural assistance to the neighbouring States and sharing the burden of receiving refugees—was needed more than ever. Syrians should be allowed access to asylum, protection and permanent residence or admission on humanitarian grounds. At the end of 2013, the number of refugees had turned to their country since 2002. Even though there had been encouraging progress in Somalia and a subsequent return of thousands of IDPs and refugees, there remained 1.1 million Somali refugees registered in 109 countries, an estimated 50,000 new IDPs and over 20,000 new refugee arrivals in Somalia in 2013 alone.

A number of key challenges and trends with regard to protection were observed in 2013, namely, the risks and dangers faced by refugees and asylum seekers; the increase in irregular maritime movements; the rising pressure on the institution of asylum; and a greater focus on sexual and gender-based violence. Encouraging progress, however, had been made on the problem of statelessness, and the High Commissioner believed that while eradicating statelessness within a decade was an ambitious goal, it was one that could be achieved through joint efforts by all sides.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 18 December (meeting 70), the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) Committee [A/68/450], adopted resolution 68/141 without vote [agenda item 62].

**Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the activities of his Office and noting that it includes the first decennial strategic review pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/153 of 22 December 2003, and the report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the work of its sixty-fourth session and the decisions contained therein,

Recalling its previous annual resolutions on the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees since its establishment by the General Assembly,

Expressing its appreciation for the leadership shown by the High Commissioner,

Commending the staff and implementing partners of the Office of the High Commissioner for the competent,
courageous and dedicated manner in which they discharge their responsibilities.

*Underlining its strong condemnation of all forms of violence to which humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel are increasingly exposed,*

1. **Welcomes** the important work undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and its Executive Committee in the course of the year, which is aimed at strengthening the international protection regime and at assisting Governments in meeting their protection responsibilities;

2. **Endorses** the report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the work of its sixty-fourth session;

3. **Welcomes** the resumption by the Executive Committee of the practice of adopting conclusions, and notes with appreciation its adoption of the conclusion on civil registration;

4. **Appreciates** the high-level segment of the sixty-fourth plenary session of the Executive Committee, welcomes the statement adopted on 1 October 2013 by States members of the Executive Committee, and calls upon all States to urgently provide assistance, as identified in the statement, in order to relieve pressure on host communities;

5. **Welcomes** the ongoing implementation, and encourages further implementation, of pledges made by States at the intergovernmental ministerial event held in 2011 to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the fiftieth anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness;

6. **Reaffirms** the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto as the foundation of the international refugee protection regime, recognizes the importance of their full and effective application by States parties and the values they embody, notes with satisfaction that 148 States are now parties to one or both instruments, encourages States not parties to consider accession to those instruments and States parties with reservations to give consideration to withdrawing them, underlines, in particular, the importance of full respect for the principle of non-refoulement, and recognizes that a number of States not parties to the international refugee instruments have shown a generous approach to hosting refugees;

7. **Re-emphasizes** that the protection of refugees is primarily the responsibility of States, whose full and effective cooperation, action and political resolve are required to enable the Office of the High Commissioner to fulfil its mandated functions, and strongly emphasizes, in this context, the importance of active international solidarity and burden-sharing;

8. **Welcomes** pledges by States to accede to the statelessness conventions, the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, as well as pledges to remove reservations to them, also welcomes the recent increase in the number of accessions to the two Conventions and notes that 79 States are now parties to the 1954 Convention and 55 States parties to the 1961 Convention, encourages States that have not done so to give consideration to acceding to those instruments, notes the work of the High Commissioner in regard to identifying stateless persons, preventing and reducing statelessness and protecting stateless persons, and urges the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to work in this area in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions and Executive Committee conclusions;

9. **Re-emphasizes** that prevention and reduction of statelessness are primarily the responsibility of States, in appropriate cooperation with the international community;

10. **Also re-emphasizes** that protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons are primarily the responsibility of States, in appropriate cooperation with the international community;

11. **Notes** the current activities of the Office of the High Commissioner related to protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons, including in the context of inter-agency arrangements in this field, emphasizes that such activities should be consistent with relevant General Assembly resolutions and should not undermine the refugee mandate of the Office and the institution of asylum, and encourages the High Commissioner to continue his dialogue with States on the role of his Office in this regard;

12. **Encourages** the Office of the High Commissioner to continue responding adequately to emergencies, in accordance with its mandate and in cooperation with States, noting the measures taken by the Office to strengthen its capacity to respond to emergencies, and encourages the Office to pursue its efforts to further strengthen its emergency capacity and thereby ensure a more predictable, effective and timely response to coordinated inter-agency efforts;

13. **Also encourages** the Office of the High Commissioner to work in partnership and in full cooperation with relevant national authorities, United Nations offices and agencies, international and intergovernmental organizations, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations to contribute to the continued development of humanitarian response capacities at all levels, and recalls the role of the Office as the leading entity of the cluster for protection, camp coordination and management and emergency shelter in complex emergencies;

14. **Further encourages** the Office of the High Commissioner, among other relevant United Nations and other relevant intergovernmental organizations and humanitarian and development actors, to continue to work with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat to enhance the coordination, effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian response and to contribute, in consultation with States, as appropriate, to making further progress towards common humanitarian needs assessments, as stated, among other important issues, in General Assembly resolution 67/87 of 13 December 2012 on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations;

15. **Encourages** the Office of the High Commissioner to engage in and implement in full the objectives of the “Delivering as one” initiative;

16. **Notes with appreciation** the measures taken and efficiencies gained in the process of structural and management change to reinforce the capacity of the Office of the High Commissioner, and encourages the Office to focus on continuous improvement in order to enable a more efficient response to the needs of beneficiaries, including identifying unmet needs, and to ensure the effective and transparent use of its resources;

17. **Expresses deep concern** about the increasing threats to the safety and security of humanitarian aid workers and convoys and, in particular, the loss of life of humanitarian
personnel working in the most difficult and challenging conditions in order to assist those in need;

18. **Emphasizes** the need for States to ensure that perpetrators of attacks committed on their territory against humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel do not operate with impunity and that the perpetrators of such acts are promptly brought to justice as provided for by national laws and obligations under international law;

19. **Strongly condemn** attacks on refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons and acts that pose a threat to their personal security and well-being, and calls upon all States concerned and, where applicable, parties involved in an armed conflict to take all measures necessary to ensure respect for human rights and international humanitarian law;

20. **Deplores** the refoulement and unlawful expulsion of refugees and asylum seekers, and calls upon all States concerned to ensure respect for the relevant principles of refugee protection and human rights;

21. **Urges** States to uphold the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, inter alia, through effective measures to prevent the infiltration of armed elements, to identify and separate any such armed elements from refugee populations, to settle refugees in secure locations and to afford to the Office of the High Commissioner and, where appropriate, other humanitarian organizations prompt, unhindered and safe access to asylum seekers, refugees and other persons of concern;

22. **Notes with concern** that asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons are subject to arbitrary detention in some situations, welcomes the increasing use of alternatives to detention, and emphasizes the need for States to limit detention of asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons to that which is necessary;

23. **Expresses concern** at the large number of asylum seekers who have lost their lives at sea trying to reach safety, and encourages international cooperation to further strengthen search and rescue mechanisms;

24. **Emphasizes** that the international protection of refugees is a dynamic and action-oriented function that is at the core of the mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner and that it includes, in cooperation with States and other partners, the promotion and facilitation of the admission, reception and treatment of refugees in accordance with internationally agreed standards and the ensuring of durable, protection-oriented solutions, bearing in mind the particular needs of vulnerable groups and paying special attention to those with specific needs, and notes in this context that the delivery of international protection is a staff-intensive service that requires adequate staff with the appropriate expertise, especially at the field level;

25. **Affirms** the importance of age, gender and diversity mainstreaming in analysing protection needs and ensuring the participation of refugees and other persons of concern to the Office of the High Commissioner, as appropriate, in the planning and implementation of programmes of the Office and State policies, also affirms the importance of according priority to addressing discrimination, gender inequality and the problem of sexual and gender-based violence, recognizing the importance of addressing the protection needs of women, children and persons with disabilities in particular, and underlines the importance of continuing to work on those issues;

26. **Notes** that the lack of civil registration and related documentation makes persons vulnerable to statelessness and associated protection risks, recognizes that birth registration provides an official record of a child’s legal identity and is crucial to preventing and reducing statelessness, and welcomes pledges by States to ensure the birth registration of all children;

27. **Strongly reaffirms** the fundamental importance and the purely humanitarian and non-political character of the function of the Office of the High Commissioner of providing international protection to refugees and seeking permanent solutions to refugee problems, and recalls that those solutions include voluntary repatriation and, where appropriate and feasible, local integration and resettlement in a third country, while reaffirming that voluntary repatriation, supported, as necessary, by rehabilitation and development assistance to facilitate sustainable reintegration, remains the preferred solution;

28. **Expresses concern** about the particular difficulties faced by the millions of refugees in protracted situations, and emphasizes the need to redouble international efforts and cooperation to find practical and comprehensive approaches to resolving their plight and to realize durable solutions for them, consistent with international law and relevant General Assembly resolutions;

29. **Recognizes** the importance of achieving durable solutions to refugee problems and, in particular, the need to address in this process the root causes of refugee movements;

30. **Recalls** the important role of effective partnerships and coordination in meeting the needs of refugees and in finding durable solutions to their situations, welcomes the efforts under way, in cooperation with countries hosting refugees and countries of origin, including their respective local communities, relevant United Nations agencies, international and intergovernmental organizations, regional organizations, as appropriate, non-governmental organizations and development actors, to promote a framework for durable solutions, particularly in protracted refugee situations, which includes an approach to sustainable and timely return that encompasses repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities, and encourages States, in cooperation with relevant United Nations agencies, international and intergovernmental organizations, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and development actors, to support, inter alia, through the allocation of funds, the implementation of such a framework to facilitate an effective transition from relief to development;

31. **Recognizes** that no solution to displacement can be durable unless it is sustainable, and therefore encourages the Office of the High Commissioner to focus on a solution-oriented approach that supports the sustainability of return and reintegration;

32. **Calls upon** States to create opportunities for resettlement as a durable solution, recognizes the need to increase the number of resettlement places and the number of countries with regular resettlement programmes and to improve the integration of resettled refugees, calls upon States to ensure inclusive and non-discriminatory policies in their resettlement programmes, and notes that resettlement is a strategic protection tool and solution for refugees;

33. **Notes with appreciation** the activities undertaken by States to strengthen the regional initiatives that facilitate cooperative policies and approaches on refugees, and
encourages States to continue their efforts to address, in a comprehensive manner, the needs of the people who require international protection in their respective regions, including the support provided for host communities that receive large numbers of persons who require international protection;

34. Notes the importance of States and the Office of the High Commissioner discussing and clarifying the role of the Office in mixed migratory flows, in order to better address protection needs in the context of mixed migratory flows, bearing in mind the particular needs of vulnerable groups, especially women, children and persons with disabilities, including by safeguarding access to asylum for those in need of international protection, and also notes the readiness of the High Commissioner, consistent with his mandate, to assist States in fulfilling their protection responsibilities in this regard;

35. Emphasizes the obligation of all States to accept the return of their nationals, calls upon States to facilitate the return of their nationals who have been determined not to be in need of international protection, and affirms the need for the return of persons to be undertaken in a safe and humane manner and with full respect for their human rights and dignity, irrespective of the status of the persons concerned;

36. Expresses concern about the challenges associated with climate change and environmental degradation to the operations of the Office of the High Commissioner and the assistance it provides to vulnerable populations of concern across the globe, particularly in the least developed countries, and urges the Office to continue to address such challenges in its work, within its mandate, and in consultation with national authorities and in cooperation with competent agencies in its operations;

37. Urges all States and relevant non-governmental and other organizations, in conjunction with the Office of the High Commissioner, in a spirit of international solidarity and burden-sharing, to cooperate and to mobilize resources, including through financial and in-kind assistance as well as direct aid to host countries, refugee populations and communities hosting them, with a view to enhancing the capacity of and reducing the heavy burden borne by countries and communities hosting refugees, in particular those that have received large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers, and whose generosity is appreciated;

38. Calls upon the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to play its catalytic role in mobilizing assistance from the international community to address the root causes as well as the economic, environmental and social impact of large-scale refugee populations in developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, and countries with economies in transition, and notes with appreciation those donor States, organizations and individuals that contribute to improving the condition of refugees who remain vulnerable members of society;

39. Expresses deep concern about the existing and potential challenges posed by the world financial and economic crisis to the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner, and calls upon the Office to further explore ways and means to broaden its donor base so as to achieve greater burden-sharing by reinforcing cooperation with governmental donors, non-governmental donors and the private sector;

40. Recognizes that adequate and timely resources are essential for the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to fulfil the mandate conferred upon it through its statute and by subsequent General Assembly resolutions on refugees and other persons of concern, recalls its resolutions 58/153 of 22 December 2003, 58/270 of 23 December 2003, 59/170 of 20 December 2004, 60/129 of 16 December 2005, 61/137 of 19 December 2006, 62/124 of 18 December 2007, 63/148 of 18 December 2008, 64/127 of 18 December 2009, 65/194 of 21 December 2010, 66/135 of 19 December 2011 and 67/149 of 20 December 2012 concerning, inter alia, the implementation of paragraph 20 of the statute of the Office, and urges Governments and other donors to respond promptly to annual and supplementary appeals issued by the Office for requirements under its programmes;

41. Requests the High Commissioner to report on his annual activities to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

Enlargement of Executive Committee

On 25 July, the Economic and Social Council, by decision 2013/251, noted the requests of Afghanistan [E/2013/10], Belarus [E/2013/49], the Czech Republic [E/2013/76], Peru [E/2013/85], Slovakia [E/2013/83], Senegal [E/2013/86], and Latvia [E/2013/89] to become members of the UNHCR Executive Committee, and recommended that the General Assembly decide on enlarging the membership of the Committee from 87 to 94 States.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 18 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee [A/68/450], adopted resolution 68/142 without vote [agenda item 62].

Enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The General Assembly,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council decision 2013/251 of 25 July 2013 concerning the enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,

Taking note also of the request regarding the enlargement of the Executive Committee contained in the note verbale dated 12 February 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the letter dated 2 April 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council, the note verbale dated 16 May 2013 from the Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the note verbale dated 28 May 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Peru to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the note verbale dated 5 June 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Slovakia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the note verbale dated 21 June 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Senegal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, and the note verbale dated 2 July 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Latvia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General,
1. **Decides** to increase the number of members of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from 87 States to 94 States;

2. **Requests** the Economic and Social Council to elect the additional members at a coordination and management meeting in 2014.

**Standing Committee**

The Standing Committee held three meetings in 2013 (Geneva, 5–7 March [A/AC.96/1121]; 25–27 June [A/AC.96/1129]; and 17–18 September [A/AC.96/1130]), during which it considered issues relating to UNHCR programme budgets and funding; international protection; regional activities and global programmes; programme/protection policy, including community-based protection, and security and welfare issues; coordination; management; financial control, administrative oversight and human resources; and governance. In 2013, the Committee also held informal consultative meetings on issues requiring in-depth discussion or action: the global strategic priorities for 2014–2015; UNHCR and the Transformative Agenda—a set of actions to address challenges in leadership and coordination, and to enhance accountability; UNHCR budget process and prioritization; and the biennial programme budget for 2014–2015. The Committee adopted decisions regarding programme budgets and funding for 2012 and 2013. The Committee’s work was summarized in an October Secretariat report (A/AC.96/1131).

In October [A/68/12/Add.1], the Executive Committee adopted a decision on the programme of work of the Standing Committee in 2014, requesting that Committee to report on its work to the sixty-fifth session (2014) of the Executive Committee. It also approved applications by Governments and intergovernmental and international organizations to participate as observers in Standing Committee meetings in 2013 and 2014.

**Refugee protection and assistance**

In his annual report covering 2013 [A/69/12], the High Commissioner noted the year had been one of the most challenging in the history of UNHCR. The number of people displaced by conflict and persecution reached more than 50 million—the highest level since the Second World War and an increase of 6 million from the previous year. More than 2.5 million persons were forced to abandon their homes and seek protection outside the borders of their country, the primary cause of which was the war in Syria. Another record high of 8.2 million people were displaced within their countries. There were an estimated 33.3 million IDPs worldwide in 2013—6.3 million more than the previous year, and the highest number ever recorded. Only 414,600 refugees had been able to return home—the lowest level in a decade—and 98,400 refugees had resettled.

The multitude of simultaneous emergencies continued to stretch the response capacities of UNHCR. The Office remained positioned to deliver assistance for up to 600,000 people within 72 hours of the onset of a humanitarian emergency. UNHCR continued to assist populations in dangerous and hard-to-reach places, but not without considerable security costs and tremendous efforts. The Office continued to invest in risk-mitigation measures to reduce staff vulnerability and allow them to remain present in challenging security environments.

Refugees and asylum seekers also faced other threats such as sexual and gender-based violence, forced recruitment, armed attacks, abductions, arbitrary detention and trafficking. In 2013, 12,400 incidents of sexual and gender-based violence were reported to field staff in 43 countries. The actual number of incidents, however, was expected to be much higher, as many cases went unreported due to stigma and fear. Physical and administrative barriers were enacted by some States to curtail the arrival of large numbers of people, and the principle of non-refoulement (non-expulsion)—the cornerstone of international protection and a norm of international customary law—was not always respected. UNHCR noted a worrying increase in the detention, often in inhumane conditions, of asylum seekers and refugees alongside irregular migrants. Thousands of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants took to the seas in 2013, often on overcrowded, unseaworthy vessels, in an effort to find safety elsewhere. There were reports of abuse, rape and torture by smugglers, and some States used deterrent measures, including interceptions, push-backs and refoulement.

UNHCR observed a dramatic rise in the global number of refugee children, who represented more than 50 per cent of the global refugee population. It expressed concern at the more than 25,000 unaccompanied and separated children who applied for asylum in 77 countries in 2013.

With an estimated 10 million stateless persons worldwide, UNHCR expanded its statelessness activities and forged new partnerships in 2013. The Office also provided advice on the reform of nationality laws to prevent and reduce statelessness in 67 countries.

Twenty-seven countries, however, maintained provisions in their nationality laws that discriminated against women, preventing mothers from conferring nationality on their children and leading to statelessness. In recent years, 11 countries reformed their laws to ensure gender parity, including Senegal in 2013.

Host countries continued to play a critical role in refugee protection by keeping their borders open and providing asylum space. Despite the significant financial burden, as well as economic and social costs borne...
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across various sectors, developing countries hosted 86 per cent of the world’s refugees. In 2013, Pakistan remained the country hosting the largest number of refugees, followed by Iran. Lebanon, however, hosted the largest number of refugees in relation to its national population, followed by Jordan.

The High Commissioner concluded that a number of factors remained essential in allowing UNHCR to deliver under growing pressure in the future: continued generosity of host countries and local communities; strong financial support from traditional and new donors; continued investment in partnerships; ongoing commitment to increasing productivity and decreasing structural costs; emphasis on innovation; and sufficient support to UNHCR staff, particularly those working in remote and dangerous places.

In a July note on international protection [A/AC.96/1122], the High Commissioner examined protection challenges related to new and ongoing emergencies and reviewed progress towards durable solutions. Together with its partners, UNHCR provided technical and operational assistance to governments; promoted and monitored compliance with international standards; intervened with governments, as appropriate; directly delivered services in many contexts; provided information and legal advice to persons of concern; and developed comprehensive solutions strategies. The High Commissioner concluded that building, strengthening and sustaining protection systems for all displaced persons, including refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs, must remain a common goal.

In another July note [A/AC.96/1123], covering the period June 2011 to June 2013, the High Commissioner reviewed UNHCR progress in relation to the prevention and reduction of statelessness, as well as the identification and protection of stateless persons. Through increased staffing capacity, UNHCR strengthened its global response to statelessness. It was concerned, however, that there was insufficient progress in resolving protracted statelessness situations.

Dialogue on protection challenges. The sixth High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges (Geneva, 11–12 December) focused on the challenges surrounding protection and solutions for IDPs, including responses to internal displacement in out-of-camp and urban settings; protection-based solutions; the legal and institutional dimensions of protecting IDPs; and partnerships. Despite considerable progress in developing tools, policy, legal instruments and legislation on IDPs over the last decade, numerous “implementation gaps” remained. The Dialogue therefore had a strong operational focus, and generated a better understanding of current humanitarian and development challenges in diverse contexts of internal displacement. The participants identified a number of practical ways to enhance engagement and partnerships in the protection of IDPs.

Population of concern

According to the High Commissioner’s annual report [A/69/12], the global population of concern at the end of 2013 was over 42.8 million, including 11 million refugees; 1.1 million asylum seekers; 23.9 million IDPs; and 3.4 million people under UNHCR statelessness mandate. In 2013, UNHCR introduced a number of initiatives to enhance services for and assistance to persons of concern in the areas of public health (including water, sanitation and hygiene; reproductive health and HIV; and nutrition and food security); settlement and shelter; livelihoods; and safe access to fuel and energy. Those strategies were the result of extensive consultations with partners, were shaped by a set of guiding principles grounded in the age, gender and diversity approach, and emphasized the sustainability of programme interventions.

UNHCR increased its use of cash-based interventions including for the most vulnerable Syrian IDPs and refugees to enhance protection during displacement and upon return. By enabling people of concern to decide on their priority needs, harmful coping strategies, such as survival sex, child labour and forced marriage, could be mitigated. Cash-based interventions also had multiplier effects, benefiting local economies and contributing to peaceful coexistence with host communities. The approach was also being employed in many other operations, including Afghanistan, Chad, Ecuador, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iran, Kenya, Sri Lanka and the Sudan.

Protection issues

Refugee women

In June [A/AC.96/1129], the Standing Committee considered a document on refugee women [EC/64/SC/CRP.12] that set out recent progress towards the achievement of gender equality in four areas: participation and leadership; documentation and statelessness; education; and self-reliance. UNHCR operations around the world were making a concerted effort to increase refugee women’s representation in leadership management structures that represented their interests and influenced decisions affecting them. UNHCR was also introducing innovative approaches to empower women leaders. In India, for instance, the agency had supported leadership capacity-building activities for women refugees, including training sessions and empowerment campaigns; by the end of 2012, refugee women comprised 64 per cent of leadership and management structures in their communities.

With regard to documentation and statelessness, the Office contributed to the drafting of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), which entered into force in December 2012.
The Convention contained important provisions for the protection of women, including recognition of the equal right of men and women to obtain identity documents and having them issued in their own names.

To improve the low enrolment rates for girl refugees, UNHCR Education Strategy 2012–2016 called for targeted interventions to ensure that girls were enrolled, that their attendance was monitored, and ultimately, that they were able to complete their schooling. It also emphasized the need to create safe learning environments. The strategy had been implemented in 20 priority countries since 2012.

UNHCR had dramatically increased its engagement in livelihoods interventions in recent years. In 2012, the organization’s global budget for that sector, covering 79 countries, was 66 per cent higher than in 2010. A number of UNHCR livelihoods programmes, which were centred on achieving self-reliance, focused specifically on providing opportunities to women.

UNHCR intensified efforts to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence. UNHCR remained committed to the strengthening of its efforts to tackle the root causes of gender inequality and sexual and gender-based violence through empowering women and girls, working with men and boys, and promoting a shift in discriminatory attitudes and behaviours at all levels.

**Community-based protection**

In June [A/AC.96/1129], the Standing Committee considered a report on community-based protection [EC/64/SC/CRP.14]. In early 2013, UNHCR launched the age, gender and diversity (AGD) e-learning course, which consisted of two modules. The first defined the AGD approach, while the second module detailed its implementation. The e-learning course was accompanied by two learning journals that provided additional resources and information. In line with its Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Strategy, UNHCR also partnered with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to develop guidance and training materials and to create new learning opportunities in order to enhance education about diversity.

UNHCR was aware of the value of a community-based approach in enhancing the effectiveness of its work with refugees. By way of example, efforts in a number of countries to reduce the prevalence of female genital mutilation could only be effective with people from the communities driving the initiatives. Activities designed to engage with traditional circumcisers had led to the identification of alternative livelihood options for them, and in some cases, had resulted in those individuals becoming among the most active anti-female genital mutilation advocates in their communities. Similarly, prevention of sexual and gender-based violence had been significantly strengthened in communities where men and boys became actively involved and spoke out. Initiatives to address the risks faced by children had proven more effective when staff were trained and invested the time to listen to children articulate the risks that they were facing at home and in their communities, as well as ways the risks might be reduced.

**Staff security**

In June [A/AC.96/1129], the Standing Committee discussed key elements of the UNHCR revised security plan for 2013–2015 [EC/64/SC/CRP.15] and provided an update on actions taken since March 2012. The revised security plan sought to strengthen the culture of security within UNHCR, based on sound risk management practices that would enable the Office to deliver its programmes safely and effectively, even in high-risk environments.

In 2013, two UNHCR staff members were killed, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Syria, respectively. Although they were off-duty at the time, those accidents highlighted the dangers that staff members continued to face. The number of Field Safety Advisers at headquarters and deployed across UNHCR operations remained high, at nearly 60. The need for security staffing had been particularly acute in Mali, Syria and countries affected by those crises. UNHCR security personnel collaborated with humanitarian partners to ensure standards of safety for staff, and worked closely with protection officers and others on the security issues faced by persons of concern.

In 2012, UNHCR enhanced its Field Safety Section by designating Senior Field Safety Advisers with regional responsibilities, corresponding to the Regional Bureaux, to allow for more predictable and effective support. The Senior Field Safety Advisers reinforced the Office’s information management initiatives by providing in-depth situational and security analysis for their regions. Beginning in 2013, further steps were taken to reinforce contextual analysis and develop guidelines for critical incident management response, with the ultimate aim of creating a system enabling the Bureaux and the Field Safety Section to proactively identify potential problems and take preventive action.

In 2012, Field Safety Section staff was deployed over 30 times to locations in Afghanistan, Algeria, Burkina Faso, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen, among others. They provided direct support in managing critical incidents and technical advice on how to sustain operations in high-risk locations.

**Refugees and HIV/AIDS**

The extent to which persons of concern to UNHCR were affected by HIV had been increasingly examined in recent years. There was evidence that, in many situations, HIV prevalence among populations affected by conflict and displacement was similar to or lower than
that of the surrounding host population. The persons of concerns to UNHCR, however, might be more vulnerable to transmission due to protection and security risks, and might lack access to prevention programmes and treatment. Due to their situation, they were also more likely to resort to unprotected sex work or occasional sex-for-goods. In response, UNHCR supported immediate life-saving activities and protection strategies at the onset of an emergency and the development of comprehensive HIV programmes, as soon as the situation stabilized.

At its fifty-seventh meeting [A/AC.96/1129], the Standing Committee considered an update [EC/64/SC/CRP.18/Rev.1] on activities since the previous report of June 2012, reviewing progress made on HIV and AIDS interventions by UNHCR, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, and with respect to UNHCR co-sponsor role in the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). In 2012, the percentage of women with access to initiatives for ending mother-to-child transmission (EMTCT) of HIV continued to rise, contributing to a 5 per cent increase since 2008. Substantial improvements in women’s access to EMTCT programmes were observed in countries such as Burundi (43 per cent in 2008 to 98 per cent in 2012) and Uganda (56 per cent in 2008 to 93 per cent in 2012). Only 35 per cent of operations, however, met the UNHCR objective of 90 per cent coverage. UNHCR also worked to ensure that the HIV status of an asylum seeker did not constitute a bar to accessing asylum or constitute grounds for refoulement.

Protracted situations and durable solutions

According to the High Commissioner’s annual report [A/69/12], more than half of the world’s population lived in protracted exile. In 2013, UNHCR established the Solutions Steering Group to analyse the Office’s approach to global solutions and make recommendations related to budgeting and planning in that area.

During the year, in Africa, over 1,700 Angolan refugees repatriated with UNHCR assistance, mostly from Botswana and Zambia. Further, the Global Initiative on Somali Refugee was launched to address that protracted situation and galvanize support for comprehensive solutions. In the Americas, several initiatives were taken for the benefit of Colombian refugees, including the Agreement Relating to Residence Permits for Nationals of States parties to Mercosur. In Asia, UNHCR continued to work with concerned governments and partners to implement the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries. In Europe, a three-year project for Bosnia and Herzegovina, funded by the European Union (EU) and led by UNHCR, was aimed at implementing the Revised Strategy for the implementation of Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Agreement [YUN 1995, p. 551] and supporting solutions for IDPs through a joint needs-based prioritization of communities and families with specific needs.

In 2013, approximately, 414,600 refugees returned home voluntarily, including 206,000 with the assistance of UNHCR, marking the fourth lowest level of returns in the past 25 years. The countries with the largest number of returnees included the Democratic Republic of the Congo (68,400), Iraq (60,900), Afghanistan (39,700), Somalia (36,100), Côte d’Ivoire (20,000), the Sudan (17,000) and Mali (14,300). Close to 1.4 million IDPs returned home during the year, about one third with assistance from UNHCR.

While resettlement remained essential in comprehensive solutions frameworks, it was still available to less than 1 per cent of the world’s refugee population. In 2013, the total number of countries offering resettlement stood at 27, unchanged from 2012. During the year, UNHCR submitted some 93,200 refugees for resettlement, up from 74,800 in 2012. The majority were from Myanmar (23,500), Iraq (13,200), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (12,200), Somalia (9,000) and Bhutan (7,100). Women and girls at risk constituted more than 12 per cent of all submissions. A total of 98,400 refugees were admitted by resettlement countries, some 9,400 more than in 2012. The United States admitted the majority, followed by Australia, Canada, Sweden and the United Kingdom. For those who could not be returned or resettled, local solutions were explored, such as local integration in hosting communities. In Benin, for example, the Government began issuing 10-year residence permits to Togolese refugees who had been in the country since 2005.

UNHCR remained committed to supporting the self-reliance of refugees through livelihood interventions, which empowered refugees by decreasing their dependency on aid and enabling them to contribute economically to their host countries. The budget for livelihoods activities grew by more than 25 per cent between 2011 and 2012, and by another 15 per cent in 2013. Nonetheless, UNHCR livelihoods programming remained limited and only reached a small percentage of refugees.

Strategic partnerships were being pursued with development partners, including the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme, to help move those efforts forward. In Dollo Ado, Ethiopia, for example, UNHCR and partners were empowering refugees and host communities by linking vocational training to income and job creation.

International instruments


Regional activities

In 2013, Africa continued to face large-scale displacement. The most critical situations, triggered by violence and human rights abuses, were in the Central African Republic, the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. The eruption of conflict in South Sudan uprooted nearly 1 million people internally and across borders. UNHCR increased its capacity to respond to those emergencies and, in the context of IDP situations, played a coordinating role within the inter-agency framework, leading clusters for protection, emergency shelter and non-food items, and camp coordination and camp management. While relative stability in parts of Mali and Somalia led to some spontaneous returns, the majority of those displaced by conflict in those countries continued to require international protection. In the Americas, the biggest UNHCR operation remained in Colombia, where the Office worked with all stakeholders of the Cartagena+30 process in preparation for the upcoming thirtieth anniversary of the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. Peace talks between the Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia continued to give hope to resolving five decades of conflict in the country. Nevertheless, some 5.4 million people remained internally displaced, including 115,000 uprooted by violence in 2013. Ongoing displacement was particularly acute along the border areas and up to 1,000 new arrivals were registered in Ecuador each month in 2013. The Asia and Pacific region remained home to one third of the world’s refugees—approximately 3.5 million people. More than 2.4 million Afghan refugees, the majority in Iran and Pakistan, constituted some 70 per cent of the refugees in the region. In Myanmar, UNHCR continued to support displaced people in Rakhine and Kachin States. Further, in response to Typhoon Haiyan, which hit the Philippines in November, the agency assumed co-leadership of the protection cluster with the Government and delivered emergency shelter and relief items to more than half a million people. In Europe, almost half a million people sought asylum in 2013, a 32 per cent increase from 2012. UNHCR helped enhance asylum by promoting consistency in asylum procedures, improved reception conditions, protection in mixed migration contexts and alternatives to detention. The 28 EU Member States registered 82 per cent of the asylum claims in Europe, with Germany, France and Sweden being the top three receiving countries. Out of more than 484,000 asylum applications lodged in Europe in 2013, some 53,800 claims were from Syrians. The Office also focused its attention on durable solutions to protracted refugee situations, statelessness activities and efforts to address xenophobia. In the Middle East and North Africa region, the war in Syria entered its fourth year. In 2013, the exodus from the country grew by more than 1.7 million refugees. Inside the country, there were an estimated 6.5 million IDPs, of whom an estimated 3.5 million were residing in locations that were difficult or impossible to reach. UNHCR and partners expanded interventions inside Syria, reaching millions of IDPs across the country in both government and opposition-controlled areas.

Africa

According to the UNHCR Global Report 2013, more than 25 per cent of the world’s refugee population lived in sub-Saharan Africa, which housed some 3.3 million refugees and asylum seekers at the end of the year. UNHCR also assisted the more than 7.6 million IDPs in Africa during the year. The most critical displacement situations were in the eastern areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central Africa Republic, and South Sudan. Uganda, Chad and Cameroon received large refugee influxes from those countries.

UNHCR remained determined to bring closure to as many protracted refugee situations as possible without compromising protection. The Office saw over 168,000 refugees return home, including 19,400 Ivoirian refugees and some 57,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo who returned from the Congo. More than 6,000 Rwandan refugees voluntarily returned to their country in 2013. In Tanzania, efforts were under way to finalize the naturalization of the 165,000 Burundian and 1,300 Somali Bantu refugees. Following a ministerial meeting in Pretoria, South Africa, in April, involving all of the main asylum countries and Rwanda, agreement was reached on an approach to the cessation of refugee status tailored to the situation of each of the countries of asylum.

The Office strengthened the self-reliance of refugees awaiting durable solutions through livelihood strategies like cash programmes and implementation of UNHCR urban refugee policy. Registration and documentation remained key protection tools in Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Mali, the Niger, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda. UNHCR focused on training government officials and providing technical expertise and material support for registration and documentation exercises. The agency also saw progress in addressing statelessness in the region, with nationality documentation and passports issued to South Sudanese in the Sudan, and a workshop in Madagascar to devise
a plan of action for addressing the plight of various populations at risk of statelessness.

State control was gradually reimposed in the north of Mali following an upsurge in violence in January, which had caused the displacement of an estimated 284,000 IDPs and approximately 169,000 refugees. UNHCR worked with the Governments of Mali and asylum countries (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger) to facilitate the return and reintegration of Malian refugees by the end of the year. Some 150,000 Malians remained in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger awaiting conditions conducive to return.

The High Commissioner’s Global Initiative on Somali Refugees aimed to focus the international community’s attention on the Somali refugee situation, and ensure that asylum and international legal protection were available for Somali refugees. A high-level panel hosted by the High Commissioner in November saw Somali returnees, members of the Somali diaspora and experts from the political, cultural and humanitarian fields explore solutions and draw up a road map for action.

In 2013, the mixed migratory movements that confronted the Southern African region became increasingly complex. UNHCR used the Southern African Development Community forum to launch its proposals to harmonize approaches to asylum, immigration, security and border control in the region. Throughout the year, the Office worked with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to make governments aware of the need to establish well-defined procedures for the identification, separation and differentiated treatment of asylum seekers travelling in mixed groups.

Owing to the flaring up of two large-scale humanitarian crises in the Central African Republic and South Sudan in 2013, the Office had to divert staff and financial resources from existing programmes to those situations to mobilize emergency responses at short notice. Overall, security remained a major challenge for refugees, IDPs, host communities, partners and UNHCR staff. In addition to workforce and financial constraints, UNHCR was affected by funding shortfalls at the World Food Programme, which had been obliged to reduce the size of its food basket for refugees, sometimes by up to 50 per cent. Compounding the shortage of food were difficulties in gaining access to some remote refugee locations in countries such as Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; poor infrastructure in northern Uganda; and harsh climatic conditions. The Office’s resources were also stretched by its efforts to protect IDPs.

Regarding its financial commitments by sub-region, in 2013, UNHCR spent $589.8 million in East Africa and the Horn of Africa, where there were some 5.7 million people of concern. In Central Africa and the Great Lakes region, $186.8 million were spent on 5.3 million people of concern, while in West Africa $154.6 million were spent on some 1.3 million people of concern. In Southern Africa, UNHCR expended $972.1 million where there were approximately 505,025 people of concern.

**Report of Secretary-General.** Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/150 [YUN 2012, p. 1146], in August [A/68/341], the Secretary-General submitted a report on UN assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa, updating the information contained in the previous report of the Secretary-General to the Assembly on the topic [A/67/323][YUN 2012, p. 1145]. The report provided overviews by subregions.

At the end of 2012, there were nearly 2.8 million refugees in Africa, slightly more than the previous year, representing one quarter of the global refugee population. While some 267,000 refugees returned home including many who had lived in exile for a protracted period of time, more than 500,000 people were forced to flee their countries. The five countries hosting the most refugees in Africa were Kenya (565,000), Ethiopia (376,000), Chad (374,000), Uganda (198,000) and South Sudan (202,500).

Progress was made in the implementation of comprehensive solutions strategies for refugees in protracted situations, allowing for the cessation of refugee status for Angolans, Liberians and, in some countries, Rwandans. With the support of the international community, some 35,000 Burundian refugees returned home from Tanzania, which enabled the Tanzanian Government to close the Mtabila refugee camp.

The number of people internally displaced by violence and conflict in Africa grew to 10.4 million in 2012, an increase of 7.5 per cent over 2011, reversing the decline in the number of IDPs that had started in 2004. While some 1.3 million IDPs returned home during the year, some 2.4 million people were newly displaced. Africa continued to host nearly one third of the world’s IDPs, and the main countries affected were the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2.7 million), the Sudan (2.2 million) and Somalia (1.3 million).

In December 2012, the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa entered into force. Efforts by UNHCR continued to support Governments to transform the provisions of the Convention into national law and to develop national frameworks to prevent, manage and find solutions for internal displacement.

East Africa and the Horn of Africa remained the subregion with the largest refugee population on the continent. There were nearly 2 million refugees and asylum seekers at the end of 2012, compared to more than 1.7 million the previous year. The majority had been living in exile for many years, some for decades, particularly in Ethiopia, Kenya, the Sudan and Uganda. The Central Africa and Great Lakes region saw a net reduction in the number of refugees by some
Asylum applications worldwide, with some 61,500 new asylum procedures. Restrictions on freedom of movement outside of camps were also on the rise. In 2012, South Africa received the third largest number of asylum applications worldwide, with some 61,500 new claims, 42 per cent less than in 2011. As in previous years, the largest number of asylum claims was presented by Zimbabweans.

With regard to registration and documentation, the second Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Civil Registration, held in South Africa in 2012, underscored the necessity of civil registration for all people, regardless of nationality or legal status. The Conference was organized by the African Development Bank, the African Union Commission and the Economic Commission for Africa, with support from UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF and the World Health Organization.

Despite improvements, challenging security situations prevailed in many humanitarian operations in Africa. According to the Aid Worker Security Database, 97 humanitarian workers were killed, wounded or kidnapped in Africa during the reporting period, including 34 United Nations staff.

The Secretary-General called upon African States to renew their commitment to ensure that refugees could seek and enjoy asylum for as long as they needed it, and stressed the importance of States outside Africa to support the principles of international cooperation, solidarity and responsibility-sharing. He also called upon Governments, as well as development, peace-building and humanitarian actors to work together to find solutions for all the refugees and IDPs in Africa, and urged States in Africa to develop national frameworks for IDPs and to ratify the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. He further called on States to provide effective protection to refugee and IDPs, including by maintaining the humanitarian and civilian character of displacement sites and end impunity for acts of sexual violence.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 18 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee [A/68/450], adopted resolution 68/143 without vote [agenda item 62].

**Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa**

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Organization of African Unity Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa of 1969 and the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights,

Reaffirming that the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, together with the 1967 Protocol thereto, as complemented by the Organization of African Unity Convention of 1969, remains the foundation of the international refugee protection regime in Africa,

Welcoming the entry into force on 6 December 2012 and the ongoing process of ratification of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, which mark a significant step towards strengthening the national and regional normative frameworks for the protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons,

Recognizing the particular vulnerability of women and children among refugees and displaced persons, including exposure to discrimination and sexual and physical abuse, violence and exploitation, and in this regard acknowledging the importance of preventing, responding to and addressing sexual and gender-based violence,

Gravely concerned about the rising number of refugees and displaced persons in various parts of the continent,

Acknowledging the efforts of Member States, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other stakeholders in improving the situation of refugees, and expressing grave concern about the deteriorating living conditions in many refugee camps in Africa,
Recognizing that refugees, internally displaced persons and, in particular, women and children are at an increased risk of exposure to HIV and AIDS, malaria and other infectious diseases,

Recalling the Joint Declaration adopted at the joint summit of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the East African Community on the Horn of Africa crisis, held in Nairobi on 8 and 9 September 2011, which, inter alia, expressed concern about the mass exodus of refugees into neighbouring countries, as well as the increased number of internally displaced persons due to the ongoing humanitarian crises of drought and famine in the Horn of Africa,

Recalling also the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, adopted by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in 2006, and its instruments, in particular two of the protocols to the Pact which are relevant to the protection of displaced persons, namely, the Protocol on the Protection of and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons and the Protocol on the Property Rights of Returning Persons,

Acknowledging with appreciation the generosity, hospitality and spirit of solidarity of African countries that continue to host the influx of refugees due to the humanitarian crises and protracted refugee situations, and in this regard expressing particular appreciation for the commitment and efforts of neighbouring countries in the recent humanitarian crises on the continent, and further acknowledging with appreciation the coordination of humanitarian assistance by the United Nations as well as the continuing efforts of donors, the United Nations system, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, regional organizations, international agencies, non-governmental organizations and other partners, with regard to, inter alia, integration, voluntary return, reintegration and resettlement, in addressing the plight of refugees during the emergency,

Recognizing that States have the primary responsibility for the protection of and assistance to refugees on their territory and the need to redouble efforts to develop and implement comprehensive durable solutions strategies, in appropriate cooperation with the international community, and burden- and responsibility-sharing,

Emphasizing that States have the primary responsibility to provide protection and assistance to internally displaced persons within their jurisdiction, as well as to address the root causes of the displacement problem, in appropriate cooperation with the international community,

Welcoming the ongoing implementation of pledges made by States at the intergovernmental ministerial event held in 2011 to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the fiftieth anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness,

1. Takes note of the reports of the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;
2. Calls upon African Member States that have not yet signed or ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa to consider doing so as early as possible in order to ensure its wider implementation;
3. Notes the need for African Member States to address resolutely the root causes of all forms of forced displacement in Africa and to foster peace, stability and prosperity throughout the African continent so as to forestall flows of refugees;
4. Notes with great concern that, despite all the efforts made so far by the United Nations, the African Union and others, the situation of refugees and displaced persons in Africa remains precarious, and calls upon States and other parties to armed conflict to observe scrupulously the letter and spirit of international humanitarian law, bearing in mind that armed conflict is one of the principal causes of forced displacement in Africa;
5. Welcomes decisions EX.CL/Dec.686(XX) and EX.CL/Dec.709(XXI) adopted by the Executive Council of the African Union at its twentieth ordinary session, held in Addis Ababa from 23 to 27 January 2012, and at its twenty-first ordinary session, held in Addis Ababa from 9 to 13 July 2012, on the humanitarian situation in Africa, insofar as they relate to persons of concern to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;
6. Expresses its appreciation for the leadership shown by the Office of the High Commissioner, and commends the Office for its ongoing efforts, with the support of the international community, to assist African countries of asylum, including by providing support to vulnerable local host communities, and to respond to the protection and assistance needs of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa;
7. Notes with appreciation the initiatives taken by the African Union, the Subcommittee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons of its Permanent Representatives Committee, and the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, in particular the role of its Special Rapporteur on Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, to ensure the protection and assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa;
8. Acknowledges the important contribution of age, gender and diversity mainstreaming in identifying, through a participatory approach, the protection risks faced by the different members of the refugee communities, in particular the non-discriminatory treatment and protection of women, children, persons with disabilities and the elderly;
9. Affirms that children, because of their age, social status and physical and mental development, are often more vulnerable than adults in situations of forced displacement, recognizes that forced displacement, return to post-conflict situations, integration into new societies, protracted situations of displacement and statelessness can increase child protection risks, taking into account the particular vulnerability of refugee children to forcible exposure to the risks of physical and psychological injury, exploitation and death in connection with armed conflict, and acknowledges that wider environmental factors and individual risk factors, particularly when combined, may generate different protection needs;
10. Recognizes that no solution to displacement can be durable unless it is sustainable, and therefore encourages the Office of the High Commissioner to support the sustainability of voluntary return, reintegration and resettlement;
11. Welcomes the adoption of the conclusion on civil registration by the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees at its sixty-fourth session, held in Geneva from 30 September to 4 October 2013, and recognizes the importance of early registration and effective registration systems and censuses as a tool of protection and as a means to the quantification...
and assessment of needs for the provision and distribution of humanitarian assistance and to implement appropriate durable solutions;

12. Recalls the conclusion on registration of refugees and asylum seekers adopted by the Executive Committee of the Programme of the High Commissioner at its fifty-second session, notes the many forms of harassment faced by refugees and asylum seekers who remain without any form of documentation attesting to their status, recalls the responsibility of States to register refugees on their territories and, as appropriate, the responsibility of the Office of the High Commissioner or mandated international bodies to do so, reiterates in this context the central role that early and effective registration and documentation can play, guided by protection considerations, in enhancing protection and supporting efforts to find durable solutions, and calls upon the Office, as appropriate, to help States to conduct this procedure should they be unable to register refugees on their territory;

13. Calls upon the international community, including States and the Office of the High Commissioner and other relevant United Nations organizations, within their respective mandates, to take concrete action to meet the protection and assistance needs of refugees, returnees and displaced persons and to contribute generously to projects and programmes aimed at alleviating their plight, facilitating durable solutions for refugees and displaced persons and supporting vulnerable local host communities;

14. Reaffirms the importance of timely and adequate assistance and protection for refugees, returnees and displaced persons, also reaffirms that assistance and protection are mutually reinforcing and that inadequate material assistance and food shortages undermine protection, notes the importance of a rights- and community-based approach in engaging constructively with individual refugees, returnees and displaced persons and their communities so as to achieve fair and equitable access to food and other forms of material assistance, and expresses concern with regard to situations in which minimum standards of assistance are not met, including those in which adequate needs assessments have yet to be undertaken;

15. Also reaffirms that respect by States for their protection responsibilities towards refugees is strengthened by international solidarity involving all members of the international community and that the refugee protection regime is enhanced through committed international cooperation in a spirit of solidarity and burden- and responsibility-sharing among all States;

16. Further reaffirms that host States have the primary responsibility to ensure the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum, calls upon States, in cooperation with international organizations, within their mandates, to take all measures necessary to ensure respect for the principles of refugee protection and, in particular, to ensure that the civilian and humanitarian nature of refugee camps is not compromised by the presence or the activities of armed elements or used for purposes that are incompatible with their civilian character, and encourages the High Commissioner to continue efforts, in consultation with States and other relevant actors, to ensure the civilian and humanitarian character of camps;

17. Condemns all acts that pose a threat to the personal security and well-being of refugees and asylum seekers, such as refoulement, unlawful expulsion and physical attacks, calls upon States of refuge, in cooperation with international organizations, where appropriate, to take all measures necessary to ensure respect for the principles of refugee protection, including the humane treatment of asylum seekers, notes with interest that the High Commissioner has continued to take steps to encourage the development of measures to better ensure the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum, and encourages the High Commissioner to continue those efforts, in consultation with States and other relevant actors;

18. Deplores the continuing violence and insecurity which constitute an ongoing threat to the safety and security of staff members of the Office of the High Commissioner and other humanitarian organizations and an obstacle to the effective fulfilment of the mandate of the Office and the ability of its implementing partners and other humanitarian personnel to discharge their respective humanitarian functions, urges States to parties to conflict and all other relevant actors to take all measures necessary to protect activities related to humanitarian assistance, prevent attacks on and kidnapping of national and international humanitarian workers and ensure the safety and security of the personnel and property of the Office and that of all humanitarian organizations discharging functions mandated by the Office, and calls upon States to investigate fully any crime committed against humanitarian personnel and bring to justice the persons responsible for such crimes;

19. Calls upon the Office of the High Commissioner, the African Union, subregional organizations and all African States, in conjunction with agencies of the United Nations system, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the international community, to strengthen and revitalize existing partnerships and forge new ones in support of the protection system for refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons, and encourages African States that have not yet done so to consider ratifying and enforcing the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel;

20. Calls upon the Office of the High Commissioner, the international community and other entities concerned to continue and, where appropriate, to intensify their support to African Governments through appropriate capacity-building activities, including training of relevant officers, disseminating information about refugee instruments and principles, providing financial, technical and advisory services to accelerate the enactment or amendment and implementation of legislation relating to refugees, strengthening emergency response and enhancing capacities for the coordination of humanitarian activities, in particular those Governments that have received large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers;

21. Reaffirms the right of return and the principle of voluntary repatriation, appeals to countries of origin and countries of asylum to create conditions that are conducive to voluntary repatriation, and recognizes that, while voluntary repatriation remains the pre-eminent solution, local integration and third-country resettlement, where appropriate and feasible, are also viable options for dealing with the situation of African refugees who, owing to prevailing circumstances in their respective countries of origin, are unable to return home;

22. Also reaffirms that voluntary repatriation should not necessarily be conditioned on the accomplishment of political solutions in the country of origin in order not to
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impede the exercise of the refugees’ right to return, recognizes that the voluntary repatriation and reintegration process is normally guided by the conditions in the country of origin, in particular that voluntary repatriation can be accomplished in conditions of safety and dignity, and urges the High Commissioner to promote sustainable return through the development of durable and lasting solutions, particularly in protracted refugee situations;

23. **Calls upon** the international donor community to provide financial and material assistance that allows for the implementation of community-based development programmes that benefit both refugees and host communities, as appropriate, in agreement with host countries and consistent with humanitarian objectives;

24. **Appeals** to the international community to respond positively, in the spirit of solidarity and burden- and responsibility-sharing, to the third-country resettlement needs of African refugees, in notes in this regard the importance of using resettlement strategically, as part of situation-specific comprehensive responses to refugee situations, and to this end encourages States, the Office of the High Commissioner and other relevant partners to make full use of the Multilateral Framework of Understandings on Resettlement, where appropriate and feasible;

25. **Calls upon** the international donor community to provide material and financial assistance for the implementation of programmes intended for the rehabilitation of the environment and infrastructure affected by refugees in countries of asylum as well as internally displaced persons, where appropriate;

26. **Urges** the international community, in the spirit of international solidarity and burden-sharing, to continue to fund generously the refugee programmes of the Office of the High Commissioner and, taking into account the substantially increased needs of programmes in Africa, inter alia, as a result of repatriation possibilities, to ensure that Africa receives a fair and equitable share of the resources designated for refugees;

27. **Encourages** the Office of the High Commissioner and interested States to identify protracted refugee situations which might lend themselves to resolution through the development of specific, multilateral, comprehensive and practical approaches to resolving such refugee situations, including the improvement of international burden- and responsibility-sharing and the realization of durable solutions, within a multilateral context;

28. **Expresses grave concern** about the plight of internally displaced persons in Africa, notes the efforts of African States in strengthening the regional mechanisms for the protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons, calls upon States to take concrete action to pre-empt internal displacement and to meet the protection and assistance needs of internally displaced persons, recalls in that regard the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, notes the current activities of the Office of the High Commissioner related to the protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons, including in the context of inter-agency arrangements in this field, emphasizes that such activities should be consistent with relevant General Assembly resolutions and should not undermine the refugee mandate of the Office and the institution of asylum, and encourages the High Commissioner to continue his dialogue with States on the role of his Office in this regard;

29. **Invites** the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons to continue his ongoing dialogue with Member States and the intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned, in accordance with his mandate, and to include information therein in his reports to the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly;

30. **Requests** the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session, taking fully into account the efforts expended by countries of asylum, under the item entitled “Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions”.

The Americas

According to the UNHCR Global Report 2013, the Office began a series of consultations with governments, international organizations and civil society organizations under the Cartagena+30 process, to commemorate the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. In October, UNHCR convened a round table of experts in Montevideo, Uruguay, on the interpretation of the extended refugee definition of the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees as part of a broader project to develop UNHCR Guidelines on International Protection for people fleeing armed conflict and other situations of violence.

UNHCR Quality Assurance Initiative helped to strengthen and harmonize refugee status determination (RSD) procedures in the region, and was implemented in Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico and Panama. In recent years, the number of asylum applications made by individuals from Central American countries, such as El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, had risen sharply in Canada, Costa Rica, Mexico and the United States. UNHCR provided the receiving States with country of origin information to aid in their RSD processes.

In the Dominican Republic, in September, a constitutional court ruling led to loss of nationality for tens of thousands of Dominicans of Haitian descent, who became stateless. UNHCR and the UN Country Team worked with the national authorities to minimize the impact of the ruling. Additionally, recognition rates were generally low across the region as the number of applications rejected was high. In the Dominican Republic, for example, virtually all applications for asylum in 2013 were rejected.

UNHCR partnership with the Organization of American States (OAS) grew stronger in 2013, and was central to the improvement of national refugee legislation on refugees throughout the region. Members of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, one of the organs of OAS, visited the Dominican Republic to examine issues related to nationality. As part of that effort, an OAS General Assembly resolution on
statelessness called for a comparative study of nationality laws in the Americas.

Key strategic priorities in Colombia were preventing displacement, protecting displaced populations and identifying solutions. Much of the operational focus in the country was centred on the Transitional Solutions Initiative, a joint UNHCR-United Nations Development Programme project that was given considerable priority to help more victims of forced displacement to regain their full rights as citizens, both in rural and urban communities. In May, UNHCR and IOM organized the Caribbean Regional Conference on the Protection of Vulnerable Persons in Mixed-Migration Flows in the Bahamas. Delegates to the conference agreed to strengthen cooperation to assist people in need of international protection, including by building stronger asylum systems throughout the subregion.

UNHCR implemented the age, gender and diversity mainstreaming framework as a priority in the Americas. Sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response initiatives in several operations included data management, protection networks, referral mechanisms and emergency shelter.

In 2013, total UNHCR expenditure in the Americas was $61.1 million for a population of concern of 6.5 million.

Asia and the Pacific

In 2013, UNHCR operations in Asia and the Pacific undertook successful resettlement programmes for some 32,000 refugees. Central Asian States made notable progress in the fight against statelessness. Kyrgyzstan granted citizenship to 14,000 holders of passports of the former Soviet Union, while Turkmenistan had allowed 4,000 individuals to become naturalized citizens since 2011.

The Afghan refugee situation, which had lasted for more than three decades, remained the biggest and most long-standing displacement crisis in the Asia-Pacific region. Even though some 5.8 million people had returned to Afghanistan since 2002, there were still some 2.5 million registered Afghan refugees at the end of 2013, and an estimated 2 million undocumented Afghans. Progress was made in the second year of implementation of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries, under which Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan endorsed a joint response mobilization strategy and developed one portfolio of projects each to address the needs of Afghan refugees, returnees and host communities. UNHCR welcomed the adoption, in December, by the Afghan Government of a National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons.

In November, Typhoon Haiyan swept through central Philippines, affecting 14 million people, 4 million of whom were displaced. UNHCR co-led protection efforts along with the Government, and delivered emergency relief items to more than half a million people.

UNHCR continued to support displaced people in Myanmar’s Rakhine and Kachin States and the southeastern areas of the country. While the situation remained challenging in Rakhine State, progress in peace negotiations between the Government and ethnic minority groups improved prospects for the eventual return of refugees from Thailand.

In Pakistan, UNHCR assisted approximately 93,000 displaced people in three camps, providing them with registration and basic relief. Another estimated 900,000 displaced people remained with host families, having been forced to flee their homes as a result of security operations in areas bordering Afghanistan.

In Sri Lanka, the Office worked with the Government to seek durable solutions for people who remained displaced within their communities, and advocated for the sustainable reintegration of those who had returned.

UNHCR highlighted the role that countries of origin could play in addressing root causes and curbing departures, and promoted burden-sharing and collaboration among the various transit or destination countries such as Australia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. In August, the Office participated in the Special Conference on Irregular Movement of Persons convened by the Government of Indonesia, and helped ensure that the concluding document, the Jakarta Declaration, included a protection-sensitive regional approach.

UNHCR spent $291.5 million on some 7.8 million people of concern in Asia and the Pacific, home to one third of the total number of refugees worldwide.

Middle East and North Africa

Difficult security conditions and political unrest in many parts of the Middle East and North Africa remained major challenges throughout the year. Inside Syria, the deteriorating security situation severely restricted humanitarian access to the displaced populations, while complex humanitarian and security conditions prevailed in other parts of the region, particularly in Libya and Yemen.

Despite the ongoing violence in Syria, UNHCR was able to mount a large-scale humanitarian operation that reached some 3.4 million IDPs across all 14 governorates. The number of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries surpassed 2.4 million by the end of 2013, an increase of 320 per cent since the end of 2012. As the coordinator of the Syria Regional Response Plan, UNHCR worked alongside governments and more than 150 other partners, including non-governmental and other organizations, in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey to deliver protection and assistance to Syrian refugees in both camps and urban areas. Further, UNHCR coordinated the delivery of food vouchers or cash assistance to some 2.3 million refugees and host...
community members. More than 144,000 tents and other temporary and emergency shelters were distributed, and around 840,000 people benefited from shelter assistance and housing rehabilitation.

In 2013, Yemen hosted more than 306,000 IDPs and more than 241,000 refugees, most of whom were Somalis. With the support of IOM and UNHCR, the Yemeni Government hosted in November a regional conference on asylum and migration that adopted the Sana’a Declaration on mixed migration and created a follow-up mechanism for future regional collaboration. UNHCR also worked closely with Yemeni authorities to assist refugees and implement a recently-adopted national IDP policy.

In Iraq, UNHCR helped the Government to end the prolonged displacement of some 95,000 IDPs. In Libya, which counted some 53,000 IDPs at the end of 2013, UNHCR conducted protection monitoring at IDP sites, promoted the physical safety of IDPs and supported their access to basic services, including health care and education. UNHCR worked closely with authorities in Mauritania on a biometric registration programme for the 66,400 Malian refugees living in Mbera Camp.

In 2013, UNHCR welcomed the growing interest among States in developing national asylum systems. In Morocco, the issuance of a new national migration and asylum policy led to the reopening of the Bureau des réfugiés et des apatrides, while in Tunisia the Ministry of Justice worked closely with UNHCR on drafting asylum law. The Office also significantly reduced the refugee status determination backlog in Algeria, Egypt and Libya.

During the year, UNHCR spent $1.05 billion on 11.3 million people of concern in 2013.

Europe

In 2013, almost half a million people sought asylum in Europe, a 32 per cent increase from 2012. The figure, however, should be treated with caution, as many individuals submitted applications in more than one European country within the same year. The largest groups of asylum seekers came from Syria, the Russian Federation, Serbia and Kosovo, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Eritrea and Iraq. The 28 EU Member States registered 87 per cent of all asylum claims in Europe, with Germany, France, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Italy receiving the bulk of the claims.

UNHCR activities in the region included advocacy for access to territory, limits on the use of detention, improved and harmonized asylum procedures, and protection in mixed-migration contexts, including rescue at sea. While the influx of Syrians was the main challenge for operations in the region, UNHCR also focused its attention on protracted refugee situations and related durable solutions, as well as on access to the statelessness conventions—the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The Office called for the eradication of statelessness in Europe by 2024.

Progress was made in efforts to improve asylum systems in Europe by promoting consistency in procedures and better reception conditions, while advocating that detention be used only as a last resort. To foster greater harmonization in the response to asylum seekers across Europe, UNHCR provided guidance on refugee status determination procedures and appropriate reception conditions to governments and partners in the region. It also supported the adoption by the EU Parliament of the Common European Asylum System, which aimed to establish standards for reception and asylum and harmonize procedures throughout the EU.

In response to the rise in the number of refugees and migrants lost at sea, UNHCR developed the Central Mediterranean Sea Initiative. To address the increase in mixed movements of refugees and migrants in South-Eastern Europe, UNHCR and IOM helped governments in the region to strengthen national and regional capacities to respond to the flows in a protection-sensitive manner. Access to protection for those fleeing the conflict in Syria improved, with all European countries offering them some form of protection, which varied from country to country.

During the year, UNHCR began consultations with concerned governments in the Western Balkans on the cessation of refugee status for refugees displaced from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia as a result of the conflicts in the region between 1991 and 1995. In partnership with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Office monitored the Regional Housing Programme in four countries in the Western Balkans, which aimed to facilitate the local integration of 74,000 individuals displaced during the 1991–1995 conflicts. Strong efforts were also made to find durable solutions for the 1,000 long-staying Afghan refugees in need of international protection in the Russian Federation. In Bulgaria, UNHCR helped the Government improve reception conditions for refugees, as the country was unprepared for the surge of arrivals that took place during the year.

Despite progress made by UNHCR in 2013, access to territory, detention, inconsistency in the determination of refugee status, statelessness, xenophobia and racism remained challenges throughout the year. Asylum systems in Eastern Europe remained fragile and vulnerable to political changes and sensitivities. Low recognition rates, as well as cases of refoulement and abduction, were noted in the subregion, while resource constraints hampered local integration. While most governments in South-Eastern Europe adopted legislation that corresponded to international norms, implementation was often inadequate. The rise in the number of arrivals by sea put immense pressure on the coastal countries of Italy, Greece, Spain and Malta, especially in the af-
termath of the October tragedy at the Italian island of Lampedusa, when hundreds of lives were lost at sea.

In 2013, UNHCR spent $93.8 million in Eastern Europe, $26.9 million in South-Eastern Europe, and $170.7 million in Northern, Western, Central and Southern Europe on a total population of 4.2 million persons of concern.

Policy development and cooperation
Partnerships and coordination

According to the High Commissioner’s annual report [A/69/12], the Office collaborated with 733 NGOs, and funding channelled through NGOs and other partners reached a record high of more than $1.5 billion—a 23 per cent increase compared to 2012. High-level bilateral consultations were held with a number of NGOs to advance new partnership agreements and discuss technical cooperation.

UNHCR redoubled its efforts to strengthen partnerships with key United Nations operational agencies. Cooperation with the World Food Programme focused on increasing the use of cash and vouchers, shifting the humanitarian response in protracted situations from food aid to self-reliance, and addressing acute malnutrition and anemia. The agency expanded its partnership with UNICEF, working with the Fund on the provision of community-based health care, immunization programmes and child protection in emergencies.

Implementation of the Transformative Agenda, adopted by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in December 2011, continued. To ensure complementarity of action, UNHCR developed a refugee coordination model, which outlined the interface with the IASC cluster system for internal displacement and applied lessons drawn from the implementation of the Agenda and its principles of leadership, accountability and coordination. In December, IASC adopted a statement on the centrality of protection in humanitarian action, which aimed to reinforce the collective responsibility to ensure appropriate protection responses from the outset of an emergency.

The Office continued to build partnerships with the private sector, the support of which was particularly crucial in a year marked by the eruption of several new crises. Major corporate donors included the IKEA Foundation, LEGO Foundation and UNIQLO. In 2013, Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher bint Mohammed Al Qasimi became UNHCR first Eminent Advocate, helping to raise support for refugees.

In March [A/AC.96/1121], the Standing Committee considered an update [EC/64/SC/CRP.3] on emergency preparedness and response that discussed partnerships and collaboration with governments and NGOs. It noted the importance of national NGOs in terms of access to populations and local knowledge.

In September [A/AC.96/1130], the Standing Committee had before it an update [EC/64/SC/CRP.24] on coordination issues, which emphasized that coordination and partnerships were more important than ever to UNHCR work. The document also focused on the High Commissioner’s structured dialogue with NGOs, the role of UNHCR in the Transformative Agenda, and leadership and coordination in emergencies involving both IDPs and refugees. It also discussed strategic partnerships in the areas of solutions and statelessness, noting that the Office continued to forge stronger links with governments, UN partner agencies, regional organizations, NGOs and academic institutions.

Evaluation activities
Decennial review. Pursuant to resolution 58/153 (YUN 2003, p. 1226), which requested the High Commissioner to include a strategic review of the global situation of refugees and the role of the Office every ten years, beginning at the sixty-eighth session, in August, the High Commissioner submitted a report [A/68/12 (Part II)] to the General Assembly. The review outlined the progress achieved on institutional reform and on strengthening the protection and emergency response capacities of the Office, while noting that substantial challenges remained in realizing the protection and solutions envisioned by the international community. It analysed the role and function of the Office; the situation of refugees over the 2003–2013 decade, including the global context and trends in forced displacement, enhancing solidarity in prevention and response, and the nature of the work of UNHCR; institutional reform, including structural reform, results-based management and internal oversight; and strengthening operational response, including emergency response and protection and protracted displacement and solutions.

Over the past decade, global forced displacement had grown more widespread, more protracted and more complex, mainly due to the multiplication and unpredictability of conflicts. Additional global factors—population growth, urbanization, food insecurity, water and resource scarcity, and climate change—were also converging in such a way that the outlook was one of increasing humanitarian needs. The review concluded by highlighting the importance of the clear mandate of UNHCR, in a context in which mandates were often blurred. With the future scenario of increased need and complicated linkages among the causes of displacement, UNHCR was cognizant of the centrality of partnerships to its ability to deliver upon its mandate. The review emphasized the importance of UNHCR partnerships with States, explaining their unique role in the achievement of protection and solutions for refugees and stateless persons.

Given the scale of displacement, an urgent challenge for UNHCR was to maintain space for protection.
and asylum by better supporting host States and communities in shouldering large-scale influxes. A parallel imperative was catalysing political will and concerted action to unlock solutions for protracted displacement and statelessness in the decade ahead, and to address their root causes.

Policy Development and Evaluation. At its sixtieth session, the Executive Committee had before it a July report [A/AC.96/1128] of the High Commissioner that reviewed the activities of the UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service (PDES) from mid-2012 to mid-2013. The report focused on refugees in urban areas; emergency response and preparedness; protection and solutions; protracted refugee situations; refugee youth; mental health; sexual and gender-based violence; faith and protection; oversight and staffing; external relations; and research and publications.

Having completed earlier evaluations of the implementation of the UNHCR urban refugee policy in Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Kenya, Malaysia and Tajikistan, PDES convened and co-chaired a steering group—the Urban Refugee Steering Group—to oversee the implementation of the UNHCR urban refugee policy while sponsoring two support missions in Ecuador and Cameroon to provide situational analysis and technical expertise. PDES undertook a survey of 24 country offices with large urban refugee populations to ascertain the degree of implementation of the Office’s urban refugee policy. During the reporting period, PDES evaluated the UNHCR emergency response in Ethiopia and South Sudan, and finalized an evaluation on the response to the Libya crisis. It also completed two reviews, one on the Office’s response to the Syria refugee emergency in Jordan, Lebanon and northern Iraq, and one on the protection risks that most commonly arise in the context of natural disasters. PDES commissioned an independent and global review of the strategic use of resettlement, and initiated a review on the extent to which resettled refugees had been able to integrate in the labour markets of the countries that had admitted them. In June, the Service also undertook an assessment of the confidence-building measures between Sahrawi refugees in the Tindouf camps in Algeria and Sahrawi families in Western Sahara. Further, the Service initiated a study of situations where refugees had successfully achieved self-reliance. During the reporting period, PDES published an independent and global review of UNHCR engagement with displaced youth and convened a round-table event for specialists in the field. In 2012–2013, PDES also undertook reviews of the provision of mental health and psychosocial support to UNHCR staff members and to persons of concern, and supported a multi-country review of the safe shelter arrangements provided to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. Four country reports and a synthesis report were launched at UNHCR 2013 Annual NGO Consultations in June. The Service conducted a survey of faith-based organizations and local faith communities involved in humanitarian action, including those in partnership with UNHCR, in order to identify good practices and lessons learned from the field.

Inspections

In October, the Executive Committee had before it a July report [A/AC.96/1127 & Corr.1] covering the activities of the Inspector General’s Office (IGO) from July 2012 to June 2013. The Office had three core functions: inspections of the quality of management of UNHCR operations; investigations of allegations of misconduct by UNHCR personnel; and ad hoc inquiries into violent attacks on UNHCR personnel and operations, as well as into other incidents causing major loss or damage to UNHCR integrity, credibility or assets.

UNHCR overall budget had doubled since 2008, reaching more than $4.3 billion in 2013. Despite the budgetary growth, the oversight functions in UNHCR had not been reinforced accordingly. They remained fragmented, and the synergies among them continued to be in need of improvement. The Independent Audit and Oversight Committee—established in June 2011 by the Standing Committee [YUN 2011, p. 1117] to assist the High Commissioner and the Executive Committee in the exercise of their oversight responsibilities—had emphasized the need for “a comprehensive internal oversight activity” within the agency. In June, the High Commissioner decided to proceed with the planning for an integrated oversight function and requested IGO to coordinate efforts of various divisions to develop and oversee the implementation plan for the establishment of an internal audit service within a new Office of Internal Oversight in UNHCR.

With regard to inspections, since the previous report, IGO conducted seven standard inspections of the following offices: Bangladesh; Botswana; Georgia; Malaysia; Mozambique; the Saudi Arabia regional office, including locations under its purview (Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates); and Yemen. An ad hoc inspection was also undertaken for Mauritania. The Inspection Service issued nine standard and one ad hoc inspection reports, and closure memoranda for five standard inspections that had been conducted in 2010 and 2011. The closure memoranda followed the review of periodic reports of the implementation of the Inspection Service’s recommendations. The rate of compliance with recommendations remained high at 90 per cent.

With regard to investigations, IGO registered 1,204 complaints, of which 864 related to protection and assistance, while 202 (17 per cent) involved allegations of misconduct. During the reporting period, 51 cases were opened and 101 cases were closed. Twenty-two of those cases resulted in the referral of an investigation report to the Division of Human Resources Management for further action, including possible
disciplined measures. The completion of that substantial number of investigations was reflective of the Investigation Service’s concerted effort to clear what had become a significant backlog. Of the cases closed, 7 were opened in 2009; 19 in 2010; 20 in 2011; 46 in 2012; and 9 in 2013. During the reporting period, 18 investigation missions were undertaken. Cases that were investigated on mission included serious allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse; financial fraud; refugee status determination and resettlement fraud; and abuse of authority.

In August, the Independent Audit and Oversight Committee presented its first annual report [EC/64/SCI/CRP.21] covering its work for the period from June 2012 to June 2013. The Committee met four times (Geneva, 4–6 June 2012; 11–13 September 2012; 4–6 February 2013; 4–6 June 2013) and made conclusions and recommendations about internal oversight activities, internal control framework, enterprise risk management, accountability and the Implementing Partnership Management Service.

OIOS activities. In response to General Assembly resolution 66/8 [YUN 2011, p. 1404], the Office of Internal Oversight Services (oios), at the fifty-third session of the United Nations Committee for Programme and Coordination, held in June, presented a March review [E/AC.51/2013/5] of the evaluation capacity of unhcr. The evaluation function in unhcr had not been clearly defined, but that the work of the Policy Development and Evaluation Service had served a useful purpose, given its mandate and resources. The evaluation function also did not fully meet the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group for evaluation independence, credibility and utility. The credibility of the evaluation function of unhcr was constrained by methodological limitations in assessing organizational results. Unlike other UN entities with a strong field presence, unhcr did not have a functional centralized and decentralized evaluation structure, and there was limited evaluative evidence on unhcr country programme performance. Oios made five recommendations, with which unhcr agreed or partially agreed: establishing a dedicated evaluation unit at headquarters; revising the unhcr evaluation policy; strengthening the rigour of unhcr programme evaluations; developing a regular follow-up to evaluation recommendations; and developing a strategy for strengthening decentralized evaluation in the field.

In July, oios submitted a report [A/AC.96/1126] to the unhcr Executive Committee on its internal audit of unhcr from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 in the areas of work planning; staffing and budget; cooperation and coordination; and disclosure of audit reports. Oios issued 31 final reports during the reporting period. Recommendations covered unhcr arrangements for management of international procurement-related activities; information technology security; operations in Ethiopia; unhcr operations in Côte d’Ivoire; and unhcr staff in between assignments.

CPC consideration. At its seventh and ninth meetings [A/68/16], on 6 and 11 June, the Committee for Programme and Coordination (cpc) discussed the report of oios on the evaluation of unhcr [E/AC.51/2013/5] (see above). CPC was deeply concerned that the required programme evaluation report on unhcr, as mandated by General Assembly resolution 66/8 [YUN 2011, p. 1404], had not been submitted. The Committee was also concerned about the lack of unhcr cooperation with oios. CPC expressed its dissatisfaction with the fact that, in the absence of the ability to prepare the mandated report, oios had not sought further guidance on that problem and instead had prepared and submitted to the Committee an alternative report for which it had no specific mandate. CPC strongly recommended that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to entrust oios with conducting the required programme evaluation and to submit the report to CPC during its fifty-fifth session in 2015.

Financial questions

In 2013, unhcr global needs-based budget amounted to $5.3 billion, comprising an initial budget of $3.9 billion approved by the Executive Committee and $1.4 billion for seven supplementary budgets created throughout the year to address unforeseen emergency needs. Africa continued to account for the largest portion of programmed activities at approximately $1.9 billion, or 39 per cent, followed by North Africa and the Middle East at $1.6 billion, or 32 per cent.

The Office received strong support from its donors, reaching a record $2.9 billion in fresh contributions. Only 61 per cent of the budgetary requirements, however, were fulfilled, leaving a significant gap in the resources required to address the increasing humanitarian needs. While work continued to broaden unhcr sources of income in 2013, approximately 52 per cent of the voluntary contributions were provided by its top-three donors (United States, Japan, eu), and 82 per cent by the top-10 donors. Private sector supporters collectively donated $191 million to the Office, a 46 per cent increase over 2012.

Biennial programme budget 2014–2015. In an August report [A/AC.96/1125 & Corr.1], the High Commissioner outlined the biennial programme budget for 2014–2015, which presented consolidated budgetary requirements for the years 2014 (amounting to $5.3 billion) and 2015 (amounting to $5.1 billion).

The proposed 2014 budget for refugees and asylum seekers continued to represent the largest share (some 81 per cent) of required resources, reflecting an increase of 4.2 per cent compared to the 2012–2013
budget. Resources for statelessness accounted for 1.3 per cent of the 2014 proposed budget, a decrease of 14.3 per cent compared to the previous budget. Requirements for reintegration projects increased by 0.2 per cent, to $266.1 million, in the proposed budget for 2014. Requirements for IDPs decreased to 12.5 per cent in 2014, to $665.6 million.

In September [A/AC.96/1125/Add.1], the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) responded to the report on the biennial budget for 2014–2015, as well as to UNHCR accounts for 2012, and noted that it had no objections to the High Commissioner’s proposals for the 2014–2015 biennium. ACABQ requested the UNHCR secretariat, however, to ensure that UNHCR reports were transmitted in a timely manner to allow ACABQ sufficient time for their consideration prior to the session of the Executive Committee. ACABQ also requested that future UNHCR budget proposals be accompanied by supplementary information on actual expenditure and projected requirements with detail by item of expenditure. ACABQ welcomed the issuance of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS)-compliant financial statements in UNHCR, and expected UNHCR to follow up and report on the realization of the benefits of adopting IPSAS in the proposed biennial programme budget for 2016–2017.

**Accounts (2012).** The audited financial statements of voluntary funds administered by UNHCR for the year ending 31 December 2012 [A/68/5/Add.5] showed a total expenditure of $2.3 billion and a total income of $2.4 billion, with a net surplus of $130.9 million.

The Board of Auditors noted that the financial statements presented the financial position of the voluntary funds administered by UNHCR as at 31 December 2012 fairly. UNHCR successfully implemented the IPSAS accounting framework in 2012, but the Office needed to use the new financial information that IPSAS-based accounting provided to better control operations and improve decision-making and financial management. The Board noted that a number of steps had been taken in response to its previous recommendations that UNHCR enhance internal financial reporting and develop scorecards for country office operations. As at 31 March 2013, however, UNHCR had only fully implemented 12 (23 per cent) of the 52 recommendations the Board had made for 2011. The Board also found that the Office needed to adequately respond to the recommendation that it update its anti-fraud strategy; provide sufficient information for the management of the vehicle fleet; address low levels of professionalism and specialist guidance; and provide an overview of vehicle deployment and use between countries.

The Board recommended, inter alia, that UNHCR establish the required number of suitably qualified personnel within its finance and project control posts in the field; review its current scheme of delegations to establish a consistent framework for authorizing the write-off or disposal of assets; review its procedures for the management of inventory throughout the organization; enhance inventory management systems to support better replenishment decisions; perform a comprehensive fraud risk assessment to identify its main areas of risk exposure; establish a policy specifying that only staff possessing internationally recognized qualifications in logistics and fleet management may manage country fleets exceeding 30 vehicles; and compile, by the end of 2014, a comprehensive fleet management manual addressing key gaps in guidance coverage.

In September [A/AC.96/1124], the High Commissioner submitted a note to the Executive Committee on accounts for the year 2012 as contained in the report of the Board of Auditors to the General Assembly on the accounts of the voluntary funds administered by UNHCR [A/68/5/Add.5]. In another September note [A/AC.96/1124/Add.1], the High Commissioner described measures taken in response to the Board of Auditors’ recommendations for 2012.

At the Standing Committee’s fifty-sixth meeting [A/AC.96/1121], the Controller and Director of the Division of Financial and Administrative Management reported [EC/64/SC/CRP.6] on UNHCR’s follow-up to the recommendations of the Board of Auditors on the accounts for 2011 and 2010. She highlighted the progress made on five findings of the Board in its report on the 2011 accounts: preparation of financial statements; financial management; implementation of IPSAS; organization-wide risk management; and procurement. While responsive action was ongoing and full implementation was not possible for all recommendations within one year, UNHCR reiterated its commitment to address the recommendations made by the Board and to continue improving procedures, systems and controls in order to mitigate identified risks.

In October [A/68/12/Add.1], the Executive Committee approved the programmes and budgets for regional programmes, global programmes and headquarters under the proposed 2014–2015 biennial budget. The Committee requested the High Commissioner, within the resources available, to respond flexibly and efficiently to the needs indicated under the biennial programme budget for the years 2014–2015, and authorized him, in the case of additional emergency needs that could not be met fully from the operational reserve, to create supplementary budgets and issue special appeals, with such adjustments being reported to the subsequent Standing Committee meeting for consideration. The Committee requested to be kept regularly informed on the measures taken to address the recommendations and the observations raised in those various oversight documents.
Management and administrative matters

At its March meeting [A/AC.96/1121], the Standing Committee considered a report [EC/64/SC/CRP.4] on supply management that outlined actions taken to ensure the timely and efficient delivery of humanitarian relief items in emergency and non-emergency situations, including efforts to enhance planning processes and procedures, optimize inventory and assets management, and strengthen procurement services. The report also reviewed progress made in the implementation of the supply management strategy of UNHCR, and introduced the next phase—Supply Chain 2015. The latter provided the road map for UNHCR to reach the level of excellence it strove for in the rapid and reliable delivery of relief items to persons of concern in emergencies and in protracted humanitarian situations through coordination with other UN agencies and partners. Also at the March meeting, the Deputy High Commissioner provided an update [EC/64/SC/CRP.5] on management innovation and simplification, a process that was moving forward and was considered a long-term priority. Through that process, the Office would ultimately be in a position to address long-standing challenges through the use of modern technologies and resources while proactively finding solutions to new challenges.

At its June meeting [A/AC.96/1129], the Standing Committee considered a report [EC/64/SC/CRP.13/Rev.1] by the Director of the Division of Programme Support and Management on the implementation of the Global Strategic Priorities (gsps) for 2012–2013 and presented the gsps for 2014–2015. The Director also provided an update [EC/64/SC/CRP.16] on technical integrity, quality and effectiveness of the programmes of UNHCR, covering primarily the sectors of health; reproductive health and HIV/AIDS; nutrition and food security; water, sanitation and hygiene; and shelter and settlements.

At its September meeting [A/AC.96/1130], the Standing Committee considered a report [EC/64/SC/CRP.22] on major developments in human resources management, including staff safety and security. It also discussed priorities for the upcoming biennium, including strengthening policies and procedures to deploy UNHCR staff and affiliate workforce to emergency operations; improving the performance management policy and simplifying the performance management and appraisal system; enhancing outreach for international professional recruitment at the junior and mid-levels; strengthening support to the field on health and accommodation matters; and investing significantly in psychosocial support to staff.