

# United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

## ***Introduction***

In its report on trends in global displacement, published in December 2013, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) warned that 2013 had witnessed some of the highest levels of forced displacement in history.<sup>1</sup> Due to violent conflicts in the Syrian Arab Republic, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, and Mali, more than 1.5 million people became refugees or internally displaced persons (IDP), with more than 935,000 people displaced from the Central African Republic alone.<sup>2</sup> In response, UNHCR is working to expand its operations to work as a “catalyst,” alongside partners on the ground in order to provide services that are urgently needed to all displaced persons.<sup>3</sup>

## ***Recent Activities***

The UNHCR Executive Committee (ExCom) convened its 64<sup>th</sup> session from 30 September - 4 October 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland.<sup>4</sup> During this meeting, the ExCom reviewed and approved UNHCR program budgets and also deliberated matters of refugee protection, including a particular focus on solutions for the status of Syrian refugees.<sup>5</sup> The committee further surveyed the work of the Standing Committee, which focused its major activities in 2013 on international protection; the coordination, management, financial control and administrative oversight of programs and actions on improving the conditions for refugees and other displaced persons.<sup>6</sup>

In October 2013, the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development "Making Migration Work" of the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly (GA) took place.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore in November 2013 the situation of Somali refugees was specifically addressed as part of the High Commissioner's Global Initiative on Somali Refugees.<sup>8</sup> Finally, in December 2013 the sixth High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges took place to develop strategies on the issue of protecting internally displaced persons.<sup>9</sup> On 30 September 2013, UNHCR honored Sister Angélique Namaika, who has been working with displaced women and girls in northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, with UNHCR's Nansen Refugee Award.<sup>10</sup>

## ***Recent Policy Outcomes***

During its 64<sup>th</sup> session, the Executive Committee of UNHCR adopted a statement, which emphasized the necessity of solidarity and burden sharing with countries hosting Syrian refugees.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, State representatives stressed their support for UNHCR's efforts to strengthen its emergency response capacity.<sup>12</sup> Further, delegations welcomed UNHCR's initiatives in improving children's education; ensuring age, gender and diversity mainstreaming and promoting birth and other civil registration.<sup>13</sup> They expressed appreciation for UNHCR's efforts to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence.<sup>14</sup> Many Member States encouraged UNHCR to continue strengthening

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR Mid-Year Trends 2013*, 2013, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR, *Insecurity pushes number of displaced in Central African Republic past 935,000*, 2014; UNHCR, *UNHCR Mid-Year Trends 2013*, 2013, p. 3; UNHCR, *Update on UNHCR's operations in the Middle East and North Africa*, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR, *Closing Remarks by António Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees at the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges in Geneva, Switzerland*, 11-12 December 2013.

<sup>4</sup> UN General Assembly, *Report of the sixty-fourth session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme: Report of the Executive Committee (A/AC/96/1132)*, 2013, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>7</sup> UN General Assembly, *High-level meetings of the 68th Session of the General Assembly* [Website], 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Das, *The High Commissioner's Global Initiative on Somali Refugees (GISR) Summary report on High Level Panel*, 2013.

<sup>9</sup> UNHCR, *High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges 2013* [Website], 2013.

<sup>10</sup> UNHCR, *Nansen Refugee Award 2013 Laureate* [Website], 2013.

<sup>11</sup> UN General Assembly, *Report of the sixty-fourth session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme: Report of the Executive Committee (A/AC/96/1132)*, 2013, p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

strategic partnerships with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and other partner agencies.<sup>15</sup>

Attendees at ExCom urged states to address legal and practical difficulties in response to civil registration.<sup>16</sup> ExCom highlighted birth registration in particular, through collecting and sharing good practices; holding technical workshops; capacity-building activities; and providing information and advice to concerned persons.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the committee emphasized the need to respect the fundamental principles and international norms and standards governing the protection of personal data. The committee authorized the High Commissioner to create supplementary budgets and issue special appeals in the case of additional emergency needs that cannot be met fully from the operational reserve, and that such adjustments should be reported to the subsequent Standing Committee meeting for consideration.<sup>18</sup> ExCom also approved applications by the observer delegations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Nepal, Slovak Republic and Uruguay for participation in meetings of the Standing Committee through October 2014.<sup>19</sup>

During the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development "Making Migration Work," Member States unanimously adopted the GA declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.<sup>20</sup> The declaration calls for the respect of human rights and international labor standards and further recalls the commitment to fight human trafficking and strongly condemns manifestations of racism and intolerance around the world.<sup>21</sup> In November 2013, the High-Level Panel of the High Commissioner's Global Initiative on Somali Refugees recognized that the situation of Somali refugees and IDP is unacceptable.<sup>22</sup> It consequently formulated the next steps UNHCR should take in order to improve the situation.<sup>23</sup> These steps involve a regional comprehensive plan of action, which includes a set of guiding principles; a regionally oriented plan; and customized plans for each country in order to improve the situation for Somali refugees they host.<sup>24</sup> Spring 2014, UNHCR will continue to advocate for open asylum space in the region and focus on ensuring safe voluntary return of refugees from Kenya under the Tripartite Agreement between Kenya, Somalia and UNCHR.<sup>25</sup>

### ***Policy Implementation***

During the sixth High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges, UNHCR recognized that despite considerable progress in developing tools, policy, legal instruments and legislation on IDPs over the last decade, numerous implementation gaps remain.<sup>26</sup> Accordingly, the participants of the panel agreed that international cooperation concerning conflict-driven displacement and natural disasters needs to be strengthened.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, development actors need to work more closely with humanitarian actors from the beginning of emergencies and involve communities and local civil society organizations in program delivery and planning for solutions.<sup>28</sup> UNHCR has further completed initial testing of a new biometrics system that will streamline with registering requirements.<sup>29</sup>

In addition, the UN Refugee Agency was engaged around the world through evaluation, coordination, and strategic crisis management in affected areas and increased its role in natural disaster response.<sup>30</sup> For example, as Typhoon

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<sup>15</sup> UN General Assembly, *Report of the sixty-fourth session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme: Report of the Executive Committee (A/AC.96/1132)*, 2013, p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5-6.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7-8.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>20</sup> UN General Assembly, *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 3 October 2013 (A/RES/68/4)*, 2013.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Das, *The High Commissioner's Global Initiative on Somali Refugees (GISR) Summary report on High Level Panel*, 2013.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> UNHCR, *High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges Theme – Protecting the Internally Displaced: Persisting Challenges and Fresh Thinking*, 2013, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR pilots new biometrics system in Malawi refugee camp*, 2014.

<sup>30</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR to send aid packs and tents for Typhoon Haiyan victims in Philippines*, 2013.

Haiyan hit the Philippines, UNHCR organized an emergency airlift to the Philippines to help some of the estimated 9.8 million people affected.<sup>31</sup> The agency released supplies from its warehouse in Cotabato, Mindanao Island, and transported 1,400 protection and hygiene kits to the city of Tacloban.<sup>32</sup> To address the power supply system's failure in most parts of the Philippines, UNHCR distributed solar lamps to 6,000 families.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, the agency put up more than 10,000 tents in collaboration with the local government and partner relief agencies.<sup>34</sup> In the last months, UNHCR has provided emergency assistance to some 183,000 people.<sup>35</sup> Beyond natural disasters, as the humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic worsened, UNHCR deployed additional emergency teams in December 2013.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, UNHCR distributed winter aid packages to more than 50,000 refugees in isolated areas in northeast Syria.<sup>37</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The numbers of persons of concern to UNHCR grew immensely in 2013 due to conflicts in locations such as Syria, Central African Republic, and Democratic Republic of the Congo, and also due to the natural disaster in the Philippines.<sup>38</sup> UNHCR, in cooperation with various governments, non-governmental organizations and other UN bodies developed a number of programs and actions to improve those situations.<sup>39</sup> Despite some successful programs like the distribution of tents in the Philippines, the global situation for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons still is severe.<sup>40</sup> As UNHCR emphasized, during humanitarian crises as in the Syrian Arab Republic or the Central African Republic, international solidarity is essential in order to improve the situation for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons.<sup>41</sup> Member States can support UNHCR by providing sufficient financial capabilities, material goods or sending, for example, experienced doctors to affected states. Another possible instrument for supporting affected states can be found in the transfer of expertise with solving humanitarian crises from other conflict affected states as well as those developed nations who have the capabilities to evaluate global refugee situations and develop appropriate solutions. More concrete actions, as well as deeper cooperation between governments and health agencies, are needed. Distributing health packages or nutrition alone will not solve humanitarian crises around the world. Improving living conditions for refugees is an absolute necessity and solutions to solve conflicts need to be found on a political level.

## **The Executive Committee of UNHCR at NMUN•NY 2014**

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has the mandate to address the needs of refugees worldwide by providing humanitarian aid along with protection and asylum processes.<sup>42</sup> UNHCR's work encompasses two main areas of focus: the first area is to work along UN Member States and other UN agencies to ensure that refugees have access to international protection under the auspices of the UN.<sup>43</sup> The second area of focus is to assist refugees in finding permanent solutions, whether they be reintegrated in their own country of origin or resettled into a host country.<sup>44</sup>

At NMUN•NY 2014, we are simulating the **Executive Committee (ExCom)** of UNHCR, which is the governing body for the organization. The ExCom "meets in Geneva annually to review and approve the agency's programmes

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<sup>31</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR to send aid packs and tents for Typhoon Haiyan victims in Philippines*, 2013.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> UNHCR, *Typhoon Haiyan: UNHCR solar lamps ease life after dark*, 2013.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> UN DPI, *As situation worsens, UN refugee agency sends more staff to Central African Republic* [Website], 2013.

<sup>37</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR distributes winter aid airlifted to north-east Syria* [Website], 2013.

<sup>38</sup> UNHCR, *Insecurity pushes number of displaced in Central African Republic past 935,000*, 2014.

<sup>39</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR Mid-Year Trends 2013*, 2013.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> UN General Assembly, *Report of the sixty-fourth session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme: Report of the Executive Committee (A/AC/96/1132)*, 2013, p. 10.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>43</sup> UN General Assembly, *Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/RES/428/V)* [Resolution], 1950, p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

and budget, advise on international protection and discuss a wide range of other issues with UNHCR and its intergovernmental and non-governmental partners.<sup>45</sup>

**Format:** The Executive Committee of UNHCR is a **resolution writing** committee.

**Voting:** Each Member State present may vote once on procedural and substantive matters. Matters are decided by a majority vote.

**Membership:** The Executive Committee of UNHCR consists of representatives from 87 Member States.

Algeria	Argentina	Australia	Austria
Azerbaijan	Bangladesh	Belgium	Benin
Brazil	Bulgaria	Cameroon	Canada
Chile	China	Colombia	Congo
Costa Rica	Côte d'Ivoire	Croatia	Cyprus
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Denmark	Djibouti	Ecuador
Egypt	Estonia	Ethiopia	Finland
France	Germany	Ghana	Greece
Guinea	Holy See	Hungary	India
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Ireland	Israel	Italy
Japan	Jordan	Kenya	Lebanon
Lesotho	Luxembourg	Madagascar	Mexico
Montenegro	Morocco	Mozambique	Namibia
Netherlands	New Zealand	Nicaragua	Nigeria
Norway	Pakistan	Philippines	Poland
Portugal	Republic of Korea	Republic of Moldova	Romania
Russian Federation	Rwanda	Serbia	Slovenia
Somalia	South Africa	Spain	Sudan
Sweden	Switzerland	Thailand	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Togo	Tunisia	Turkey	Turkmenistan
Uganda	United Kingdom	United Republic of Tanzania	United States of America
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Yemen	Zambia	

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<https://papersmart.unmeetings.org/ga/68th-session/hld-international-migration-and-development/statements/>

*This website provides access to all speeches held at the High-level dialogue on international migration and development, which took place from 3 to 4 October 2013 at the United Nations General Assembly. The filter allows users to search for particular nations, which held speeches during the meeting. Furthermore, it is possible to browse through the different agendas or types of statements. Accordingly, this platform gives quick access to each Member State's position concerning the topics, which had been discussed on the high-level dialogue on international migration and development. It can be a useful tool in order to find out the nation's current position on these topics.*

United Nations General Assembly, Sixty-fourth session. (2013, October 2). *Report of the sixty-fourth session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme: Report on the Work of the Standing Committee (A/AC.96/1131)*. Retrieved 30 December 2013 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/524d5aec9.pdf>

*This report summarizes the most important issues covered by the Standing Committee in 2013. While international protection of refugees and other displaced persons was a major concern with*

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<sup>45</sup> UNHCR, *Executive Committee* [Website].

*which the committee dealt during its fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh meeting, program budgets and funding have been discussed during all its meetings. In addition, the Standing Committee discussed management, financial control, administrative oversight and human resources. The work program shows that management and coordination of international programs, which seek to improve the conditions for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, are among UNHCR's major tasks. In addition, readers can find documentation of all activities by the Standing Committee in 2013.*

United Nations General Assembly, Sixty-fourth session. (2013, October 9). *Report of the sixty-fourth meeting of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme: Report of the Executive Committee (A/AC.96/1132)*. Retrieved 28 December 2013 from: [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/AC.96/1132&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/AC.96/1132&Lang=E)

*This report contains all necessary information on the debates and decisions of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme sixty-fourth session. It summarizes the most important proposals made by the delegations during committee sessions and lists all conclusions and decisions of the Executive Committee. During the conference, particular attention had been put on solidarity and burden sharing with countries hosting Syrian refugees. A statement of the Executive Committee on this issue can be found in the annex of the report. The annex further contains a summary of the general debate as well as an explanatory note on the process of the selection of the Executive Committee bureau and indicative application.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-eighth session. (2014, January 21). *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 3 October 2013 (A/RES/68/4)*. Retrieved 28 January 2013 from: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/4](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/4)

*This official declaration of the United Nations General Assembly is the outcome of its High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development 2013. While recognizing the severe situation for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, the declaration contains concrete proposals and requests. Among other requests, the General Assembly emphasizes the need to deepen the interaction between national governments and civil society to find responses to the challenges and the opportunities posed by international migration. It further calls upon all relevant bodies, agencies, funds and programs of the United Nations system, other relevant intergovernmental, regional and sub-regional organizations and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development, within their respective mandates, to strengthen international cooperation in order to improve the situation for refugees and other displaced persons. The General Assembly further requests the Secretary-General to continue his substantive work on international migration and development and, in collaboration with the UN system and relevant organizations, to continue assessing the progress made in the field of migration and development.*

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2013, December 19). *UNHCR Mid-Year Trends 2013*. Retrieved 4 January 2014 from: [http://unhcr.org/52af08d26.html?\\_ga=1.87358552.1998594611.1369595021](http://unhcr.org/52af08d26.html?_ga=1.87358552.1998594611.1369595021)

*This report from UNHCR summarizes most important information on current trends concerning refugees around the world. It provides readers with maps presenting refugees in the international community and statistics portraying current trends in global refugee fluctuations. It further emphasizes the severe situation caused by the civil war in the Syrian Arab Republic and various conflicts in Africa. The report also contains statistics for refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees (refugees and IDPs), stateless persons, and others of concern to UNHCR by country or territory of asylum. A second table distinguishes refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, returnees, stateless persons and other persons of concern to UNHCR by their origin.*

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United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-eighth session. (2014, January 21). *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 3 October 2013 (A/RES/68/4)*. Retrieved 28 January 2013 from: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/4](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/4)

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# I. Advancing Emergency Response for Displaced Populations Affected by Conflict and Natural Disaster

## Introduction

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the primary entity responsible for providing protection for displaced persons in emergency situations as part of the cluster approach to emergency response. UNHCR maintains its dedication to strengthening its efforts to respond to emergencies in conjunction with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and their Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) who is also the Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Assistance.<sup>46</sup> Within these bodies, UNHCR partners with a vast number of agencies and organizations acting inside and outside of the cluster approach system.<sup>47</sup> UNHCR's primary responsibilities in the cluster approach, when emergency action is required, are to provide emergency shelter, camp coordination and management, and protection to displaced persons.<sup>48</sup> However, UNHCR is capable of meeting the basic and essential needs of up to 500,000 persons of concern within 72 hours of a humanitarian emergency.<sup>49</sup> In addition, UNHCR perpetually holds extensive training seminars for relief workers and is able to mobilize over 300 well-prepared workers along with the mobilization of large sums of money to begin emergency response and assistance efficiently.<sup>50</sup>

UNHCR submitted its annual *Report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* to the General Assembly (GA) in October for review at the 68<sup>th</sup> session.<sup>51</sup> The General Assembly adopted several resolutions during the 68<sup>th</sup> session pertaining to the works of UNHCR. On 13 December 2013, the body adopted resolution 68/102 on "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations" and resolution 68/103 on "International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development."<sup>52</sup> On 18 December 2013, GA adopted resolution 68/141 on the "Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees" and resolution 68/142 on the "Enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Program of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees" expanding the membership of UNHCR from 87 members to 94 members.<sup>53</sup> On the same day, GA adopted resolution 68/143 for "Assistance to refugees, returnees, and displaced persons in Africa" and resolution 68/180 for "Protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons."<sup>54</sup> All these resolutions provide additional guidance for UNHCR and the international community in advancing efforts to better respond to emergency situations.

## Recent Developments

### Funding Challenges

In order to get a proactive start to the new year, UNHCR published the *Global Appeal 2014-2015* explaining its current works across the world, achievements, improvement points, fiscal statistics, and, subsequently, the body's appeals for contributions.<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately, humanitarian assistance remains exceptionally underfunded as a whole.

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<sup>46</sup> IASC, *About the IASC* [Website], 2014; OCHA, *Who We Are* [Website], 2014; OCHA, *Head of OCHA* [Website], 2014.

<sup>47</sup> United Nations, *Global Issues: Refugees* [Website], 2014.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> UNHCR, *Emergency Response and Preparedness* [Website], 2014.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> UN General Assembly, *Report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/68/12/Add.1)*, 2013.

<sup>52</sup> UN General Assembly, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/RES/68/102)* [Resolution], 2013; UN General Assembly, *International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development (A/RES/68/103)* [Resolution], 2013.

<sup>53</sup> UN General Assembly, *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/RES/141)* [Resolution], 2013; UN General Assembly, *Enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Program of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/RES/68/142)* [Resolution], 2013; UN General Assembly, *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions: Report of the Third Committee (A/68/450)*, 2013, p. 11.

<sup>54</sup> UN General Assembly, *Assistance to refugees, returnees, and displaced persons in Africa (A/RES/68/143)* [Resolution], 2013; UN General Assembly, *Protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons (A/RES/68/180)* [Resolution], 2013.

<sup>55</sup> UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2014-2015* [Website], 2013.



The Financial Tracking Service (FTS) reports that as of 5 January only five per cent of 2014 financial requirements are covered, leaving a US\$10.98 billion deficit.<sup>56</sup> In contrast to that deficit, OCHA reports in *World Humanitarian Data Trends* (2013) that international humanitarian response organizations targeted 65 million people globally that required relief from conflict and/or natural disasters in 2012.<sup>57</sup>

#### *Implementing the Transformative Agenda*

Despite fiscal concerns, UNHCR is committed to improving its emergency response capacity and assistance delivery in line with the Transformative Agenda (TA) and Transformative Protocols.<sup>58</sup> UNHCR performs in accordance with the TA through partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organizations, emergency staffing, extensive employee training, using technology for management and documentation, improving response times, applying policies, coordination and support planning, strengthening logistical networks, delivering protection and peacekeeping abilities, and maintaining progress obtained in ongoing operations.<sup>59</sup> The TA is an ongoing topic of conversation within UNHCR and is on the agenda at upcoming meetings in March and April 2014.<sup>60</sup>

#### *Ongoing Emergencies*

While UNHCR maintains relief efforts in Syria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, South Sudan and other locations, Typhoon Haiyan devastated the Philippines on 8-9 November and affected around 14 million people, approximately 3 million of which are displaced.<sup>61</sup> UNHCR reported on 11 November 2013 that thousands of emergency supplies were already in the hands of citizens, and that money had been mobilized from the operational reserve and the Flash Appeal to fund relief efforts.<sup>62</sup> Flash appeals are typically sent to OCHA in order to secure operational funds after initial evaluations of humanitarian crises are completed and an agency has created an emergency response plan.<sup>63</sup> On 28 November 2013, UNHCR, the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination and the Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service released the *Supplementary Budget Appeal—Emergency Assistance for the population affected by Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines*.<sup>64</sup> As of 9 January 2014, UNHCR reported that the monetary requirement for the humanitarian assistance in the Philippines has reached US\$ 19 million.<sup>65</sup> This allowed for the distribution of thousands of plastic sheets, tents, blankets, kitchen sets, jerry cans and solar lanterns.<sup>66</sup> Incredibly, UNHCR reports that 75% of their financial needs in the Philippines are met.<sup>67</sup>

#### *Women*

The protection and empowerment of women living in circumstances of conflict, post-conflict, and natural disasters remains a focal point of UNHCR and the UN in its entirety. In 2013, the Security Council (SC) adopted resolutions 2106 (2013) and 2122 (2013) addressing women in peace and security.<sup>68</sup> UNHCR is dedicated to preventing instances of sexual and gender-based Violence (SGBV), abuse, and engaging in survival sex.<sup>69</sup> Promoting gender equality and social independence is crucial and is supported through the Age, Gender and Diversity Approach Forward Plan.<sup>70</sup> UNHCR is working towards ensuring women's security from violence and exploitation in 2014 and 2015 by working under six focal points: assuring SGBV programming in emergencies, providing guidance through the rollout of updated strategies, strengthening monitoring and evaluation, reinforcing SGBV preventing in schools, strengthening partnerships for access to justice, and further developing SGBV capacities.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Financial Tracking Service, *Financial Tracking Service: Tracking Global Humanitarian Aid Flows* [Website], 2014.

<sup>57</sup> OCHA, *World Humanitarian Data Trends* [Report], 2013.

<sup>58</sup> UNHCR, *Global Report 2012, 2013*; IASC, *IASC Principles Transformative Agenda* [Website], 2014.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> UNHCR, *65th Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme: Upcoming Meetings*, 2014.

<sup>61</sup> UNHCR, *Philippines: Haiyan Typhoon—External Update #4*, 2013.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> OCHA, *Humanitarian Financing—Appeals System* [Website], 2014.

<sup>64</sup> UNHCR, *Supplementary Budget Appeal—Emergency Assistance for the population affected by Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines*, 2013.

<sup>65</sup> UNHCR, *Philippines: Haiyan Typhoon—External Update #11*, 2014.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> UN Security Council, *Resolution 2106 (2013) [Women Peace and Security] (S/RES/2111)*, 2013; UN Security Council, *Resolution 2122 (2013) [Women and Peace and Security] (S/RES/2122)*, 2013.

<sup>69</sup> UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2014-2015* [Website], 2014.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

## Conclusion

While UNHCR has made progress in improving emergency response to persons of concern, the needs of refugees in situations of natural disaster and conflict remain dire. The body's dedication to improving humanitarian assistance and advancing emergency response is approached through: the collection, mobilization and delivery of supplies and monetary resources; the training and mobilization of volunteers; the reform of antiquated approaches; and the consideration and implementation of new initiatives. The body must remain cognizant of significant, specific concerns and how to better assist in areas such as the protection and empowerment of women, children, disabled persons, and older persons who are frequently abused and neglected. Finally, embracing unconventional perspectives like the interconnected nature of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment, and then actively participating in methods of reform are paramount. The idea of taking preemptive measures to reduce the impact of crisis situations on populations before a crisis occurs inspires a new vision of the role of humanitarian aid and could ultimately change the requirements of emergency responses.

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*The Financial Tracking Service, supervised by OCHA, provides insight into the fiscal realities of international humanitarian assistance demands. Statistical data is available by date, project, donor, recipient, and more. Transparency from FTS offers the opportunity to evaluate capacity planning and effective humanitarian emergency response.*

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*The "Delivering as One" approach is crucial to the manner and extent the UN provides humanitarian assistance. UNDG's Website for the approach is a comprehensive resource for the framework, guidelines and methods of "Delivering as One." In addition to the theory of the approach, reviews on the effectiveness of various aspects of the program are available in order to acquire an appreciation for the pilot phase of the approach.*

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-eighth session. (2013, December 3). *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions: Report of the Third Committee (A/68/450)*. Retrieved 16 January 2014 from:

[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=a/68/450](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=a/68/450)

*The Report of the Third Committee regarding UNHCR, persons of concern, and humanitarian concerns was created for the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the GA. It highlights key points of interest on the subject of refugees and humanitarian assistance and the works of UNHCR's 54<sup>th</sup> session. Most importantly, the report contains draft resolutions that were considered by the GA and adopted in December 2013.*

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2013). *Global Appeal 2014-2015* [Website]. Retrieved 4 January 2014 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/ga14/index.xml>

*UNHCR's Global Appeal for the upcoming two years delivers an update on specific thematic concerns regarding the provisions of humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced persons. As UNHCR has interests and is present in a vast number of countries, the document is divided by continent, region and country. Each section contains area-specific information about the works of UNHCR and the needs of people affected by conflict and natural disaster. The "Operational Support and Management" section reviews operational methods and implementation as well as statistical data, financial data and projections, and appeals for monetary contributions.*

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2014). *Emergency Response and Preparedness* [Website]. Retrieved 4 January 2014 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/503352e46.html>

*Emergency Response and Preparedness briefly explains the nature of emergency humanitarian assistance and delivering supplies and services to affected people. UNHCR guidelines and*

*resources for methodically providing emergency assistance are available for an in-depth review of UNHCR's works. Additionally, the body's most recent and most significant areas of work are highlighted including emergency response to the Syrian Arab Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, and South Sudan.*

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## II. Improving Public Health Systems for Refugees and Other Forcibly Displaced Persons

### Introduction

In December, UNHCR released new documents reporting achievements in 2013 and new goals and plans for 2014. *Mid-Year Trends 2013* is one of the reports that include a summary of last year's achievements and challenges.<sup>72</sup> According to the report, the highest level of new persons of concern, 5.9 million, developed in the first half of 2013.<sup>73</sup> Due to the increase in the number of refugees, public health systems and assistance remain a priority. The *Global Strategic Plan 2014-2015* is the latest publication from UNHCR. It contains strategic plans for improvement for public health systems to be implemented in 2014.<sup>74</sup> Some public health efforts of UNHCR include reducing mortality, mobility, and malnutrition of refugees in camps and meeting international standards by providing shelter, domestic energy, water, and sanitation.<sup>75</sup> UNHCR works with several other United Nations (UN) bodies and agencies, NGOs and Member States to improve public health systems. One of UNHCR's most effective partners has been the World Food Programme (WFP).<sup>76</sup> Recently, both agencies have been working in countries such as Zambia, Namibia, Burundi, Niger, and Uganda to prevent malnutrition. The agencies started a new alternative for providing food where cash or vouchers are donated to refugees living in Somalia, Pakistan and South Sudan.<sup>77</sup> Additionally, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has also been an effective partner. According to *UNHCR Global Appeal 2014-2015*, UNICEF will work to strengthen its focus on children, thus strengthening UNHCR's partnership with UNICEF.<sup>78</sup> Both agencies are working together to address the need of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) to countries hosting the Syrian refugees.<sup>79</sup> In early 2014 UNICEF and UNHCR are performing trainings that are building understanding for WASH responses to internally displaced persons (IDP).<sup>80</sup>

UNHCR has also been working with funders to improve public health services to refugees. Early in 2014, several Member States pledged approximately US\$2.4 billion to help UNHCR's strategy in Syria.<sup>81</sup> The strategies in Syria and neighboring countries include providing food, water, shelter, medicines, and health services to refugees.<sup>82</sup> In January, UNHCR appealed to donors for US\$99 million to help provide aid such as basic health care provisions to refugees living the crisis in South Sudan and Central African Republic.<sup>83</sup> UNHCR is currently present in about 400 refugee camps in 123 countries.<sup>84</sup> In the beginning of 2014, the agency announced that it will expand existing camps to better serve the constant development of new refugees.<sup>85</sup> In December of 2013, over 86,000 people from South Sudan searched for refugees in neighboring countries like Uganda, Ethiopia, and Kenya.<sup>86</sup> Access to shelter, health care and water is a major concern to UNHCR and many South Sudanese refugees reported waiting four days to have access to it.<sup>87</sup> There are approximately 1500 children malnourished in the refugee camps of South Sudan.<sup>88</sup> Due to malnutrition and poor hygiene, many refugees suffer from several diseases like malaria and diarrhea. To assist these refugees outreach programs, 200 community health workers were mobilized to assist with vaccination, nutrition and promoting good hygiene. UNHCR is urging partners to assist in the expansion of refugee camps in the country.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> UNHCR, *Mid-Year Trends 2013* [Website], 2013.

<sup>73</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR Report Warns of Unusually Large Numbers of Forcibly Displaced this Year* [Article], 2013.

<sup>74</sup> UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2014-2015: Global Strategic Priorities 2014-2015*, 2014.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2014-2015: Working in Partnership*, 2014.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2014-2015*, 2014.

<sup>79</sup> UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2014-2015: Working in Partnership*, 2014.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> UNHCR, *Donor nations pledge US\$2.4 billion at Kuwait meet for Syrians in need* [Article], 2014.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR appeals for US\$99 million for operations in South Sudan and CAR* [Article], 2014.

<sup>84</sup> UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2014-2015*, 2014.

<sup>85</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR to build new camps, expand others to shelter South Sudanese refugees* [Article], 2014.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> UNHCR, *South Sudan: 2014 UNHCR country operations profile - South Sudan* [Website], 2014.

<sup>89</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR to build new camps, expand others to shelter South Sudanese refugees* [Article], 2014.



The control and prevention of diseases is also the subject of great concern for UNHCR. In Haiti, since the tragic earthquake in 2010, many IDPs have suffered from Cholera.<sup>90</sup> This epidemic continues to spread and is now affecting other countries in the Caribbean.<sup>91</sup> Government officials have reported more than 680,000 cases of Cholera from 2010-2013 only in Haiti.<sup>92</sup> There are still almost 300,000 refugees living in camps, and many more persons of concern are living in spontaneous settlements. These refugees are very vulnerable to Cholera and other diseases like Malaria and HIV/AIDS. As a result, UNHCR increased the region's budget to better help these refugees.<sup>93</sup>

### ***Recent developments***

Due to vulnerability of persons of concern in matters of security, many people are becoming targets for assaults, sexual harassment, and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).<sup>94</sup> This insecurity has also caused a great increase in HIV/AIDS cases among refugees, especially in Africa, resulting in more than 4,000,000 cases, comprising approximately 60% of the HIV/AIDS cases worldwide.<sup>95</sup> Due to difficulties in reaching these refugees, many are deprived of prevention commodities that would help in preventing the spread of the disease.<sup>96</sup> The lack of access to supplies that would help in prevention and treatment perpetuates the spread of diseases.<sup>97</sup> UNHCR and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are distributing reproductive health kits for crisis situations.<sup>98</sup> These supplies contain essential prevention commodities that will help prevent HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).<sup>99</sup> On World AIDS Day, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, called on the staff of UNHCR to join the campaign to end discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS," noting refugees and other people of concern to UNHCR "continue to be excluded from the national AIDS strategies in several host countries and their needs were not consistently addressed in proposals submitted to major donor," which "undermines effective HIV and AIDS prevention and care efforts – both for refugees and host communities."<sup>100</sup>

### ***Immunization***

Vaccination and nutritional emergency kits are commonly provided by UNHCR and WHO. However, in almost all cases, vaccines are provided by local Ministry of Health, with the assistance of UNHCR and WHO.<sup>101</sup> Recent developments in Uganda show that UNHCR started a vaccination program for the 59,000 South Sudanese refugees that are suffering from measles.<sup>102</sup> Local authorities reported that the country is receiving around of 250 refugees a day since fighting erupted in the Southern Sudan capital.<sup>103</sup> The UNHCR and its partners reported that they started mass immunizations campaign that will cover all refugees and Ugandan children less than 15 years of age currently living in the north region of the country.<sup>104</sup> UNHCR also reported that the vaccination campaign might not be adequate in meeting the needs of the refugee populations they are serving, as they are over capacity.<sup>105</sup>

### ***Basic and Essential Medicines***

For the purpose of improving the health quality of refugees and their access to medical supplies, UNHCR has updated *Essential Medicines and Medical Supplies: Policy and Guidance*.<sup>106</sup> This document has guidelines in providing Primary Health Care (PHC) to refugees.<sup>107</sup> UNHCR and WHO organized their medical operations to refugees with basic and supplementary units, reproductive kits, post-emergency settings, and the Inter-agency

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<sup>90</sup> UNICEF, *Cholera in Haiti: And End in Sight*, 2011.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> UNHCR, *Policy Brief: HIV and Refugees*, 2007.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR's Essential Medicines and Medical Supplies: Policy and Guidance*, 2011, p. 9.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>100</sup> UNHCR, *Call for UNHCR staff to join goal of ending HIV/AIDS-related discrimination* [Article], 2013.

<sup>101</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR's Essential Medicines and Medical Supplies: Policy and Guidance*, 2011, p. 11.

<sup>102</sup> Sudan Tribune, *UNHCR begins mass Measles immunization of S. Sudanese refugees* [Article], 2014.

<sup>103</sup> Voice of America, *Measles Reported Among South Sudanese Refugees in Uganda* [Article], 2014.

<sup>104</sup> Sudan Tribune, *UNHCR begins mass Measles immunization of S. Sudanese refugees* [Article], 2014.

<sup>105</sup> Voice of America, *Measles Reported Among South Sudanese Refugees in Uganda* [Article], 2014.

<sup>106</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR's Essential Medicines and Medical Supplies: Policy and Guidance*, 2011, p.14.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

Emergency Health Kit (IEHK).<sup>108</sup> Basic and supplementary units contain essential medicines and medical devices for PHC workers such as oral and topical medicines, with the capability of attending up to 10,000 persons in a supplementary unit.<sup>109</sup> Emergency kits are also prepared with the IEHK. This kit is designed to attend the first PHC need for refugees in areas where there are no medical facilities.<sup>110</sup> The medical supply guide further contains policies that assist UNHCR staff members and doctors in managing and monitoring medicines and medical supplies.<sup>111</sup> However, there are still refugees located in countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and South Sudan, that have limited or no access to medical services provided by UNHCR or WHO because of internal conflict hampering the mobility of UNHCR and WHO staff members and health workers to the refugees.<sup>112</sup> In order to better assist refugees with HIV/AIDS and diseases such as malaria and cholera, UNHCR has created an online program called Twine.<sup>113</sup> This online platform helps managing and analyzing the data collected in refugee operations. The data is monitored and evaluated helping by creating evidence-base formulations that might lead to improved actions for refugee health.<sup>114</sup> There are currently 782 active locations that contribute to the database, more than 15,000 reports reviewed, and 11,000 reports published.<sup>115</sup>

### *Mental Health*

The mental health issues of refugees and displaced persons are a concern for UNHCR and the agencies and organizations dedicated to humanitarian assistance. UNHCR in 2007 started to devise new ways to provide mental health assistance to refugees.<sup>116</sup> The UN General Assembly recognized the need to assist displaced persons who suffer from mental health problems resulting from persecution, violence or natural disasters—especially children.<sup>117</sup> These mental health problems may cause social issues at the level of the community structures and the family, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress.<sup>118</sup> Mental health professionals, psychologists, and psychiatrists are being trained based on international and local standards to better attend to refugee needs.<sup>119</sup> The Agency has been working actively to provide mental health services to Syria where the situation remains dire with over 2.3 million refugees.<sup>120</sup> UNHCR included goals in *Providing for Essential Needs* for 2014 to improve mental and psychological assistance by conducting new programs in 10 countries.<sup>121</sup> Other documents were also published in order to better attend to refugees' mental health needs such as the *Operational Guidance Mental Health & Psychosocial Support Programming for Refugee Operations*.<sup>122</sup> This was created to provide a standard amongst UNHCR and its partners, to educate on ways in which to approach mental health in operations, and a practical guide on how to create mental health interventions.<sup>123</sup>

### *Conclusion*

New programs and strategic plans were effectively created to better attend to refugee medical needs, but much more work is still necessary. The health of refugees is necessary for creating durable solutions.<sup>124</sup> By working with its partners, UNHCR is helping more than 35,000,000 displaced persons in several countries.<sup>125</sup> With its new reports, plans, and in-field operations, the Agency is better able to execute assistance to the health issues of refugees. With its emergency kits, vaccine operations, basic and supplementary units, UNHCR is able to reach more refugees around the globe, assist in the control of diseases and improve the public health of refugee populations.

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<sup>108</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR's Essential Medicines and Medical Supplies: Policy and Guidance*, 2011, p. 8.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>111</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR's Essential Medicines and Medical Supplies: Policy and Guidance*, 2011, p. 14.

<sup>112</sup> UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2014-2015: Providing for Essential Needs*, 2014.

<sup>113</sup> UNHCR, *Public Health Data: Twine* [Website], 2014.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> UNHCR, *Twine: Using Data to Improve Humanitarian Decision Making* [Website], 2014.

<sup>116</sup> UNHCR, *Operational Guidance Mental Health & Psychosocial Support Programming for Refugees Operation*, 2012.

<sup>117</sup> United Nations, *Social Inclusion of Youth with Mental Health Conditions*, 2013.

<sup>118</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR's Mental Health and Psychosocial Support: For Persons of Concern*, 2013.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> UN DPI, *World Food Programme chief says tragic Syria crisis is 'more than numbers'* [Article], 2014.

<sup>121</sup> UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2014-2015: Providing Essential Needs*, 2014.

<sup>122</sup> UNHCR, *Operational Guidance Mental Health & Psychosocial Support Programming for Refugees Operation*, 2012.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> UNHCR, *Public Health* [Website], 2014.

<sup>125</sup> UNHCR, *Global Appeal: Update 2013*, 2013.

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*This document is an annual report UNHCR publishes that reviews the previous year's work regarding helping refugees, current refugee situations, and plans for the coming year. Public health is an issue of great importance to the Agency, so the report has valuable information regarding current actions of UNHCR towards providing better medical assistance, nutrition, water, sanitation and protection for refugees. This report also has a detailed outline about each area of the world, assisting when researching for specific locations and public health issues.*

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2013). *Mid-Year Trends 2013* [Website]. Retrieved 18 January 2014 from: <http://unhcr.org/52af08d26.html>

*This report contains a summary of UNHCR's persons of concern and the Agency's main actions in 2013. It contains statistical information concerning refugees around the globe. It is a very useful tool to help understanding major actions of the Agency, where it has been working, and it further contains a more detailed explanation of the several types of refugees that the Agency helps.*

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2014). *Global Appeal 2014-2015: Providing for Essential Needs* [Article]. Retrieved 8 January 2014 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/528a0a12b.html>

*"Providing for Essential Needs" is a part of the annual Global Appeal published by UNHCR. It is important to review this part of the Global Appeal because it contains further information regarding public health services performed by the Agency. It thoroughly explains the current and most pressing needs of refugees regarding their health including HIV/AIDS, water, sanitation, nutrition and shelter. It also explains the plans and operations performed by UNHCR in 2013 as well as future goals.*

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2014). *Public Health* [Website]. Retrieved 8 January 2014 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646cdd.html>

*This website is the main source of information from the UNHCR website concerning public health. The page briefly and effectively explains the Agency's main goals in public health issues and some plans. It also provides several links to useful UNHCR documents related to public health. This website is the best starting place for a deeper understanding of UNHCR actions in improving public health systems for refugees.*

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2014). *Twine: Using Data to Improve Humanitarian Decision Making* [Website]. Retrieved 8 July 2014 from: <http://twine.unhcr.org/app/>

*The Twine website is where UNHCR executes a project of collecting and publishing reports of refugee operations. This is a very good website for statistical data. Twine provides information about refugees in several parts of the world, and the status of their nutrition, health conditions, diseases outbreaks, and water. On this website, anyone that is registered can contribute data and the information can be shared with other members of the website.*

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### III. Providing Humanitarian Assistance to Refugees from and Internally Displaced Persons in Somalia

#### *Introduction*

The commitment for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Somalia, is not only to support refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) originating in Somalia, but also those seeking refuge and asylum from neighboring countries; mainly Ethiopia and Eritrea.<sup>126</sup> By the year 2015, UNHCR projects to assist over 500,000 refugees, IDPs and asylum seekers including originating from other parts of East-Africa.<sup>127</sup> This influx in the return of refugees and IDPs has resulted in an increase in the UNHCR budget for Somalia of about USD \$14.3 million for a total of USD \$69.6 million for the year 2014 with most of the budget aimed at providing basic needs and sustainable solutions for resettlement.<sup>128</sup>

The United Nations Security Council adopted two new resolutions concerning safety and security in Somalia in November 2013.<sup>129</sup> The first adopted on 12 November underlines the Security Council's commitment to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) by increasing the troop amount by 4,395 until October 2014 and calling for further financial support from the international community.<sup>130</sup> The second, adopted on 18 November, addresses the ongoing safety concern of piracy, commending Member States and International Organization prosecuting piracy and promoting joint international anti-piracy efforts as well as the establishment of a coastal policy force.<sup>131</sup>

2013 also saw a renewed commitment from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The High Commissioner's Global Initiative for Somali Refugees (GISR) held a high-level panel meeting on 13-14 November 2013.<sup>132</sup> Twenty-four experts ranging from civil society leaders, academics, businesspersons and UN officials came together to deliberate on a sustainable solutions and the formation of guiding principles for further efforts to secure the region.<sup>133</sup>

#### *Recent Developments*

##### *Role of the United Nations System*

On 10 November 2013 Kenya, Somalia and UNHCR signed a Tripartite Agreement to support the voluntary return of Somali refugees.<sup>134</sup> Over half a million Somali refugees mainly in Kenya's Dadaab refugee camps born after the 1991 civil war in Somalia.<sup>135</sup> The Tripartite Agreement establishes a legal framework to oversee the voluntary return of Somali refugees.<sup>136</sup> The agreement defines roles and responsibilities between Kenya, Somalia, and the UNHCR in accordance with international standards, and emphasizes that the return of refugees to Somalia cannot be forced.<sup>137</sup> Antonio Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, was at the helm of discussions on the operationalization of the Tripartite Agreement.<sup>138</sup> His approach to voluntary return involves UNHCR engaging in programs that first assist those who are immediately willing to return in small numbers and then organizing larger groups to return to areas that have been officially secured of conflict and are capable of supporting returning populations.<sup>139</sup> The first few areas designated safe for return and open for volunteers were Luuq, Baido and Kismayo.<sup>140</sup> UNHCR officials continue to stress the importance of ensuring that all returns are voluntary and that the services provided in the refugee camps by the government of Kenya and UNHCR will not be stopped to force the return of Somalis who do

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<sup>126</sup> UNHCR, *2014-2015 Global Appeal*, 2013, p. 2.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>129</sup> UN Security Council, *Resolution 2124 (2013) [Somalia]*, 2013.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> UNHCR, *High Commissioner's Global Initiative on Somali Refugees* [Website], 2013.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> OCHA, *Somalia: Humanitarian Bulletin – October 2013*, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>135</sup> OCHA, *Somalia: Humanitarian Bulletin – November 2013*, 2013, p. 2.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> UNHCR, *In Kenya, UNHCR Chief discusses Solutions for Somali Refugees*, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR stresses that repatriation of Somalis from Kenya must be voluntary*, 2013, p. 1.



not wish to leave.<sup>141</sup> Apart from the operationalization of the Agreement through pilot programs developed by UNHCR the next goal is to foster similar agreements with the other neighbors of Somalia with high populations of Somali refugees including Ethiopia.<sup>142</sup>

While the agreement was successfully signed with the guidance of UNHCR, the agency faces many challenges in the operational aspects of the agreement.<sup>143</sup> There are concerns regarding the return of refugees into vulnerable areas dominated by the Somalia based militant group al-Shabaab, which have especially roads and border points under their control.<sup>144</sup> The recommended course of action to increase safety is to create designated routes and developed roads for refugees to travel protected by African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Somali forces.<sup>145</sup> Additionally, UNHCR has begun preparing refugees for return through vocational and skills based training conducted in the Kenyan camps there is concern that these programs are not enough to develop sustainable livelihood options once they return.<sup>146</sup>

#### *Humanitarian Assistance and Meeting the Essential Needs of Somali Refugees and IDPs*

Through the increased levels of security, UNHCR has been able to establish field offices in recently secured areas to be fully operational in 2014.<sup>147</sup> The offices will lead UN efforts in providing shelter and protection services.<sup>148</sup> Further, they will aim to implement programs including those in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) prevention.<sup>149</sup> UNHCR offices will expand efforts incorporated into the High Commissioner's Global Initiative for Somali Refugees and promote the adoption of international conventions including the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.<sup>150</sup>

Somalia's Ministry of Interior and National Security is focused on developing a legal framework to address the countries refugee and IDP issues.<sup>151</sup> The ministry and UNHCR are working together to activate the newly constituted Commission for Refugees, Returnees and IDPs.<sup>152</sup> Simultaneously, UNHCR is working with partner UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) under the newly formed Return Consortium to jointly develop strategies, fundraise and oversee the reintegration of returning Somalis.<sup>153</sup> In addition to the Return Consortium, UNHCR has also established a Task Force on Returns with the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and NGO partners.<sup>154</sup> UNHCR reports that NGO partnerships and the formation of umbrella NGOs of national NGOs is key to successfully reaching out to unsecure areas.<sup>155</sup> Additionally, UNHCR will focus on aid for IDPs including the allocation of resettlement land in the coming year.<sup>156</sup> Increased displacement in Mogadishu is also an issue of increased importance under the UNHCR responsibilities in Somalia.<sup>157</sup> UNHCR reports that in the month of October 2013 at least 2,000 households were evicted from a district in Mogadishu neighboring the city's airport.<sup>158</sup> Further, UNHCR reports that over 4,000 households were displaced across the country in October 2013 alone.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> UNHCR, *UNHCR stresses that repatriation of Somalis from Kenya must be voluntary*, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>142</sup> UNHCR, *In Kenya, UNHCR Chief discusses Solutions for Somali Refugees*, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>143</sup> Thomas, *Kenya: Challenges Abound in Voluntary Repatriation of Somali Refugees From Kenya*, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> UNHCR, *2014-2015 Global Appeal*, 2013, p. 2.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>157</sup> OCHA, *Somalia: Humanitarian Bulletin – November 2013*, 2013, p. 3.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

International involvement in Somalia has also increased; in October a surge of emergency funds from the Somalia Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) was used to benefit over 300,000 people suffering from flooding and conflict issues.<sup>160</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) projects a necessary budget of 928 million in 2014 to respond to the increase in humanitarian operations in Somalia.<sup>161</sup> Additionally, the 2013-2015 Consolidated Appeal for Somalia was adopted in December 2013 to emphasize the need for funding and programs to protect children in heavy conflict affected areas.<sup>162</sup> These programs include the training of protection officers and developing response systems.<sup>163</sup> OCHA has been responding to the heavy flooding after a major storm in Puntland that took place on 10 November 2013.<sup>164</sup> Through a UN Agency wide effort a multi-cluster initial rapid assessment (MIRA) was launched and provided accurate data on the amount of food aid needed to respond to severe losses in livestock and farmland.<sup>165</sup>

#### *Obstructions to Providing Humanitarian Assistance*

The new Federal Government of Somalia established in 2012 focused most of its resources on securing territories in 2013.<sup>166</sup> Although access and security in areas such as Puntland and Somaliland have improved, access to South-Central Somalia remains a priority issue for UNHCR in the coming year.<sup>167</sup> The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the National armed forces were mainly able to focus on securing large cities in South-Central regions, leaving many small and rural towns unprotected.<sup>168</sup> Many Somalis are still fleeing instability and conflict; the first six months saw over 45,000 refugees crossing the Gulf of Aden from the Horn of Africa into the Middle East.<sup>169</sup> Somalis made up 16% of those who arrived on the coast of Yemen in the early half in 2013.<sup>170</sup>

#### **Conclusion**

UNHCR and the international community have a renewed commitment to Somalia's security and the safety of its displaced populations. Multiple agencies and international organizations are working in collaboration to ensure safe returns for Somalia's refugees and IDPs. The Tripartite Agreement overseen by UNHCR is a prime example of international cooperation for the care and safe return of refugees from Kenya to their origins. However, the logistics of the agreement led by UNHCR are the key to successful implementation of humanitarian assistance to Somali Refugees and IDPs. Moving forward, UNCHR Executive Committee should be sustaining its commitment to monitoring the safe return of Somalis by promoting close partnerships civil society and security forces. Further, it should take the lead in the international community's crucial and necessary role fostering peace and development in the region.

### **Annotated Bibliography**

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*This article provides a good critique of the implementation of the Tripartite Agreement for voluntary repatriation of Somali Refugees. It outlines the key challenges associated with their return. More importantly, it provides suggestions and solutions to address these main concerns, including increasing travel safety. The suggestions made in this article highlight the importance of civil society input in security policy and programs for the UNHCR, often this ground realities are unknown to, therefore, local groups become key parts of the success of UNHCR responsibilities.*

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<sup>160</sup> OCHA, *Somalia: Humanitarian Bulletin – November 2013*, 2013, p. 4.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> UNHCR, *2014-2015 Global Appeal*, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> UNHCR, *More than 46,000 people cross Gulf of Aden in first six months of the year*, 2013, p 1.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

IRIN. (2013, November 13). *Briefing: Repatriating Somali refugees from Kenya*. Retrieved 10 January 2014 from: <http://www.irinnews.org/report/99117/briefing-repatriating-somali-refugees-from-kenya>

*This article provides a detailed analysis of implications of the Tripartite Agreement between Somali, Kenya and UNHCR. The briefing details key components of the agreement and address the timeline and concerns over the 'voluntary' clause. Additionally, it provides a link to the agreement text in full. The agreement text displays the complexity of the logistical and political concerns of refugees crossing borders and attempting to return to their original homes. This article provides an example of the important role UNHCR plays in protecting and promoting the rights of refugees in situation of conflict.*

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2013, October). *2014-2015 Global Appeal Somalia*. Retrieved 10 January 2014 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/528a0a250.html>

*The Global Appeal summarizes the key areas of need for the programs and protection of Refugees and IDPs in Somalia under UNHCR persons of concern. It includes some of the key accomplishments in 2012-2013 and where the main budget requirements are for the 2014-2015 year. The details of the key areas and operations of UNHCR provide a good understanding for delegates of where persons of concern require the most assistance.*

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2013, November 18). *Somalia: Humanitarian Bulletin November 2013-Issued on 15 December 2013*. Retrieved 10 January 2014 from:

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*The bulletin provides a good brief on overall United Nations Agency efforts to improve the situation in Somalia for refugees and IDPs. UNHCR works in collaboration with many agencies to provide relief, and this bulletin outlines their roles and responsibilities. It also addresses areas where UNHCR is not necessarily involved, but which are growing areas of concern, for example responding to flooding in Puntland.*

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*This resolution is an excellent example of resolution language and style to address the need for security. It covers a range of topics and takes action by increasing troop numbers reaffirming many commitments to security in Somalia. It also provides and supports examples of successful security operations which can be used as models for further intervention. The language in the document puts a strong importance on the close working relationship between AMISOM troops and UNHCR as refugee and IDP protection agencies.*

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