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Update for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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Committee Overview

Recent Developments

The United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in recent months has continued its dedication to leading global efforts in refugee response and protection by putting forth new leadership and goals for the next year and beyond.¹ On 11 November 2015, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon announced the nomination of Filippo Grandi for the five-year position of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and Grandi assumed the leadership position at the start of 2016.² Grandi will face many challenges this year stemming from the projected funding gap in the UNHCR budget, which is expected to be larger than the \$3.9 billion gap in 2015.³ However, recognizing the recent increase in displaced persons in the 2016 UNHCR Global Annual Appeal led to higher monetary support from governments compared to January 2015, and the Appeal includes a plan to double the number of countries in which UNHCR conducts public sector funding campaigns.⁴

A major undertaking for the new High Commissioner is UNHCR's new Global Strategic Priorities (GSPs), which provide the outline for international UNHCR work over the next two years.⁵ The GSPs for 2016 and 2017 primarily focus on enhancing the goals of the 2014 and 2015 GSPs, which were the "prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence; child protection; the empowerment of women in leadership structures; host community support; and self-reliance."⁶ New targets for the coming years include increasing global market access by, inter alia, developing Community Technology Access centers in five additional countries, meeting targets for ending statelessness, including helping 100,000 people attain citizenship in their country of birth, and developing plans to cooperate with governments to universalize the issuance of birth certificates to all displaced children under one year of age.⁷

Of much concern to UNHCR this year are regional issues worsening due to climate change and armed conflict, including the crisis in Somalia.⁸ The Ministerial Pledging Conference on Somali Refugees was held on 21 October in Brussels by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the European Union (EU), along with the Republic of Kenya and the Federal Republic of Somalia.⁹ The conference aimed to find sustainable solutions to the over two million internally and externally displaced Somalis.¹⁰ Moreover, attendees developed an action plan on refugee protection, education, livelihood, security, infrastructure, environment, health, hygiene, food and agriculture, and shelter.¹¹ Delegates of 50 Member States provided financial donations of over \$100 million and the American Refugee Committee offered livelihood training to 10,000 young displaced Somalis returning through the November 2013 Tripartite Agreement for the Voluntary Repatriation of Somali Refugees.¹²

October 2015 also saw the publication of *UNHCR, The Environment and Climate Change*, a cohesive document that succinctly describes UNHCR methods for addressing climate change and disaster displacement, and how UNHCR plans to improve the resilience of populations vulnerable to climate-related displacement.¹³ This document integrates UNHCR policies and work related to environmental management in and at all stages of refugee movement.¹⁴

¹ UNHCR, *Global Strategic Priorities 2016-2017*, 2015.

² UN DPI, *Secretary-General Nominates Filippo Grandi of Italy United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (SG/A/1605-REF/1217)*, 2015.

³ UN DPI, *Donors promise initial US\$ 687.2 million for UNHCR operations in 2016, the highest amount ever*, 2015; UNHCR, *Update on UNHCR's budget and funding in 2015*, 2015.

⁴ UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2016-2017*.

⁵ UNHCR, *Global Strategic Priorities 2016-2017*, 2015.

⁶ UNHCR, *2014 – 2015 Global Strategic Priorities*, 2013.

⁷ UNHCR, *Global Strategic Priorities 2016-2017*, 2015.

⁸ UNHCR, *Integrated Action Plan for Sustainable Return and Reintegration of Somali Refugees from Kenya to Somalia*, 2015.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² UNHCR, *Ministerial Pledging Conference on Somali Refugees*.

¹³ UNHCR, *UNHCR, the Environment & Climate Change*, 2015.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

The eighth annual High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges titled “Understanding and addressing root causes of displacement” took place in Geneva, Switzerland, on 16-17 December 2015.¹⁵ Participants discussed prevention measures and early detection mechanisms as the most important component of combatting protection challenges.¹⁶ Other discussion topics included eliminating statelessness, addressing inequality and discrimination, unemployment and access to education, as well as the empowerment of women at the community level.¹⁷ Attendees addressed the difference between migrants and refugees and how they can be legally differentiated while still respecting the human rights of both groups, where solutions for addressing the emerging migrant crisis included new directions “like humanitarian visas, temporary protection, priority migration agreements, inclusion in free movement protocols.”¹⁸

Preparations have been underway for the first World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), a meeting of governments and humanitarian organizations to create an agenda and set of actions on humanitarian work to better prepare entities around the globe for future crises.¹⁹ UNHCR spoke for the interests of displaced persons at the Global Consultation from 14 to 16 October 2015, a meeting which resulted in five key topics to address at the WHS: “dignity, safety, resilience, partnerships, and finance.”²⁰ Outcomes of this Summit, which will be held in May 2016, will have important impacts on the work of UNHCR in these five areas.²¹

UNHCR’s transition into 2016 indicates a structured and extensive vision for mitigating risks, providing aid, and expanding opportunities for displaced persons, with both regional and holistic foci. A key obstacle for UNHCR will be this year’s anticipated funding gap, but the continued global efforts orchestrated by the Commissioner continue to bring positive changes to the multi-faceted issues under the umbrella of UNHCR.

¹⁵ UNHCR, *High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges, 2015*.

¹⁶ UNHCR, *High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges: Understanding and addressing root causes of displacement: Closing remarks by Mr. António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Geneva, 17 December 2015, 2015*.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ World Humanitarian Summit, *About the World Humanitarian Summit*.

²⁰ World Humanitarian Summit, *Global Consultation - Final Report, 2015*.

²¹ World Humanitarian Summit, *About the World Humanitarian Summit*.

Annotated Bibliography

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). *Global Strategic Priorities 2016-2017*. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/564da0e30.pdf>

This segment of the UNHCR's Global Strategic Priorities for 2016-2017 enumerates the eight priorities of UNHCR and their impact indicators and engagement plans. It also overviews some of the implementation challenges that should be taken into account over the next two years. Delegates may use these priorities as both a blueprint of action and a target of engagement for developing solutions to topics discussed at the conference. This resource additionally outlines support and management targets, including impact indicators that will deal with overarching components of UNCHR's work that delegates should consider for each topic.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). *UNHCR, the Environment & Climate Change* [Report]. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: www.unhcr.org/540854f49.html

Climate change is a major factor contributing to the refugee crisis. This document discusses different initiatives for adaptation strategies and climate-related displacement, as well as plans for sustainable environmental management within the scope of UNHCR. Delegates will utilize this source when considering how to assess environmental impacts of UNHCR actions, as well as spreading environmental awareness. Bearing in mind the Sustainable Development Goals, the content of this resource is integral for considering durable solutions for the future of humanitarian response.

World Humanitarian Summit. (2015). *Global Consultation - Final Report*. Retrieved 7 January 2016 from: http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WHS_GloCon_final_report.pdf

The Global Consultation was held in October 2015 to determine the key foci for humanitarian work at the upcoming World Humanitarian Summit. This meeting of UN bodies, states, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental agencies, and affected persons has considered many aspects of the humanitarian crisis relevant to refugees, producing involved discussion and key recommendations during 29 breakout sessions on topics including: Making Humanitarian Action Work for Women and Girls, Cooperation Framework for Collective Crisis Management, and New Deal for Refugees. Three parallel sessions also summarized in this are: Focus on: Islamic Social Finance, Manage Risks Together - 2015 and Beyond, and Focus on: Ethics in Humanitarian Action. Overall, this source will help delegates understand extra- and inter-agency involvement with refugee action.

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United Nations, Department of Public Information. (2015, November 11). *Secretary-General Nominates Filippo Grandi of Italy United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (SG/A/1605-REF/1217)* [Press Release]. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sga1605.doc.htm>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (n.d.). *Global Appeal 2016-2017* [Website]. Retrieved 25 January 2016 from: www.unhcr.org/ga16/index.xml

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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). *Global Strategic Priorities 2016-2017* [Report]. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/564da0e30.pdf>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). *High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges: Understanding and addressing root causes of displacement: Closing remarks by Mr. António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Geneva, 17 December 2015*. Retrieved 3 January 2016 from: www.unhcr.org/567971969.html

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). *Integrated Action Plan for Sustainable Return and Reintegration of Somali Refugees from Kenya to Somalia* [Report]. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/561e54069.html>

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World Humanitarian Summit. (n.d.). *About the World Humanitarian Summit* [Website]. Retrieved 3 January 2016 from: https://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/whs_about

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I. Transforming Refugee Camps into Sustainable Settlements in the Case of Protracted Displacement

Recent Developments

In December of 2015, the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) issued its Global Appeal 2016-2017, which reflects the overall goals of UNHCR's work, with many key developments for addressing the case of protracted displacement.²² One of the key aspects of the appeal is a call to improve conditions for the hosting of refugees.²³ UNHCR's goal for 2016 is to meet a new Global Strategic Priority (GSP) that aims at reaching international standards concerning shelter, domestic energy, water, and sanitation and hygiene, to improve the condition of refugees abroad.²⁴ The priority to provide refugees with safe and dignified housing has also been stressed through the launch of the Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter 2014-2018.²⁵ Through this strategy, UNHCR is working to enhance its capacity to design and develop settlements, which will decrease some of the refugees' vulnerabilities, aid camp management, increase self-reliance opportunities, and thus provide the foundations for durable solutions.²⁶ Additionally, the Global Appeal 2016-2017 also highlights and calls for more focus on developing renewable energy technology to use for different purposes, such the delivery of water.²⁷ This solution aims at reducing fuel consumption, consequently leading to a reduction of the costs associated with hosting refugees.²⁸ An efficient coordination with all the concerned stakeholders will be necessary to achieve this end, and is also something UNHCR is actively working on as it explains in its Global Appeal.²⁹ Therefore, UNHCR plans to cooperate closely with forcibly displaced persons themselves; their hosting communities and Member States; other UN agencies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO); and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Doctors Without Borders.³⁰

Beyond the Global Appeal 2016-2017, as of the end of 2015, UNHCR also moved forward on many other plans to improve the living situation of refugees. In 2015, UNHCR created 12 new camps and expanded seven existing ones as a response to the refugee crises affecting sub-Saharan Africa and Europe.³¹ In 2016, UNHCR envisions improving site-planning techniques together with organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Doctors Without Borders.³² By the end of 2015, the High Commissioner had already increased the number of experts working on site planning and coordination techniques.³³ Moreover, the refugee agency will continue to deploy its Refugee Housing Unit, a sustainable housing solution that can host a family of five members, is easy to transport worldwide, and is designed to last for three years.³⁴ UNHCR has started working with the IKEA Corporation to provide the "Better Shelter units;" by October 2015, more than 2,000 shelters had been built in Iraq, Djibouti, and Greece, while several have now been sent to a transit camp at the border of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.³⁵ UNHCR is also partnering with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) to ensure that the housing units meet the needs of child refugees, as well as with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movements to adapt some of the units to host clinics.³⁶

Related to the work of UNHCR, during November 2015, the IOM held its 106th session, where it promoted its recent launch of the draft Framework on the Progressive Resolution of Displacement Situations.³⁷ With this framework, IOM's focus expands "beyond the traditional focus on refugees and internally displaced persons to include migrants

²² UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2016-2017*, 2015.

²³ Guterres, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2016-2017, Risking All... No Other Option*, 2015.

²⁴ UNHCR, *Global Strategic Priorities 2016-2017*, 2015.

²⁵ UNHCR, *Themes: Settlement and Shelter*, 2015.

²⁶ *Ibid.*; UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2016-2017: Progressing Towards Solutions*, 2015.

²⁷ UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2016-2017: Providing for Essential Needs*, 2015, p. 100.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2016-2017: Progressing Towards Solutions*, 2015.

³⁰ UNHCR, *Global Strategic Priorities 2016-2017*, 2015.

³¹ UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2016-2017: Africa*, 2015, p. 35.

³² Médecins Sans Frontières, *Refugee Health – An approach to emergency situations*, pp. 114-123; UNHCR, *Handbook for Emergencies*, pp. 132-147.

³³ UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2016-2017: Providing for Essential Needs*, 2015, p. 98.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ UNHCR, Innovation Unit, *Better Shelter Unit (Refugee Housing Unit)*, 2015.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ IOM, *Director General's Report to 106th Session of the Council*, 2015.

and other mobile populations and communities affected by displacement.”³⁸ With this policy development, it is likely that IOM will continue to be a crucial partner for UNHCR when addressing protracted displacement, especially in light of its forward-looking focus on resolving displacement situations.³⁹

Finally, at a higher level, the end of 2015 saw the international community reflect on the nature of providing aid to refugees. For instance, the issue of aiding refugees is stressed with the newly codified Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which address many issues related to the improvement of the environment in which refugees forcibly live.⁴⁰ The IOM is a large proponent of this connection and particularly focused on ensuring its work fits into the work of the SDGs.⁴¹ Additionally, at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs’ (OCHA) Global Humanitarian Policy Forum held in New York in December 2015, its Policy Development and Studies Branch Chief called for a new paradigm in aid, avoiding simply funding aid efforts and consequently prolonging protracted displacement.⁴² In order to reduce vulnerability instead of only addressing immediate and basic needs, he stressed that it was necessary to strengthen the potential of those who are affected, and thus to evolve existing local structures, instead of imposing administrative regimes from the outside.⁴³

In conclusion, delegates can see that the aim of turning refugee camps into sustainable settlements is closely associated with technological innovation as well as the improved use of resources.⁴⁴ To properly address the issue of protracted displacement, UNHCR will have to continue cooperating closely with other organizations, as well as with those affected by displacement.⁴⁵ Looking forward to the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016, UNHCR sees this forum as an opportunity to explore new solutions for protracted displacement.⁴⁶

³⁸ IOM, *Director General’s Report to 106th Session of the Council*, 2015, p. 7.

³⁹ *Ibid.*; UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2016-2017: Working in Partnership*, 2015.

⁴⁰ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁴¹ IOM, *Migration Initiatives 2016: Migration Governance and Sustainable Development*, 2015.

⁴² McClure, *How the SDGs Change the Role of Humanitarian Innovation*, 2015.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2016-2017: Providing for Essential Needs*, 2015.

⁴⁵ UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2016-2017: Working in Partnership*, 2015.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Annotated Bibliography

Guterres, A. (2015). *UNHCR Global Appeal 2016-2017, Risking All... No Other Option* [Report]. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Retrieved 29 December 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/564da0e10.html>

This section of the Global Appeal 2016-2017, drafted by António Guterres, is useful to understand the goals that UNHCR wants to achieve in the next two years. The situation created by the refugee crises worldwide has not improved by the end of 2015, and this section of UNHCR's Global Appeal outlines how refugees are still struggling to find secure and sustainable shelter. Moreover, it highlights some of the means through which UNHCR is planning to turn refugee camps into sustainable settlements.

International Organization for Migration. (2015). *Director General's Report to 106th Session of the Council*. Retrieved 20 January 2016 from: <https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/106/C-106-48-DG-Report-to-the-106th-Council.pdf>

This report of the Director General of IOM offers a comprehensive outlook on the state of migration worldwide. Delegates can find an accurate analysis of several partnerships enacted by IOM, with the aim of improving the situation of refugees. Moreover, it offers useful information regarding the financial aspects of the programs enacted by IOM and its partners. Delegates can pay special attention to the section on camp coordination and management, as well as IOM's initiatives to resolve situations of displacement. In particular, IOM's draft Framework on the Progressive Resolution of Displacement Situations, briefly discussed in the report, will represent a crucial tool in the management of protracted displacement situations.

International Organization for Migration. (2015). *Migration Initiatives 2016: Migration Governance and Sustainable Development*. Retrieved 28 December 2015 from:

https://publications.iom.int/system/files/migration_initiatives2016.pdf

In this guide, the International Organization for Migration has outlined the connections between the necessities of migrants and sustainable development. This source provides a useful overview on the particular issues to address while working on this issue, such as legal, financial or gender-related topics. Therefore, it can help delegates understand what issues they must focus on while providing durable and realistic solutions.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). *UNHCR Global Appeal 2016-2017: Progressing Towards Solutions* [Report]. Retrieved 31 December 2015 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/564da0e812.html>

The Global Appeal 2016-2017 launched by UNHCR in December 2015 is a key source to understand the purposes of the agency for the next two years. Finding valid and sustainable alternatives to refugee camps is one of the main goals of UNHCR and its partners. In this source, delegates can find a variety of solutions, such as the implementation of housing units and the creation of clinics. These solutions are closely connected to the SDGs, thus giving practical examples of their realization in a humanitarian context.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). *UNHCR Global Appeal 2016-2017: Providing for Essential Needs* [Report]. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/564da0e715.html>

Since the humanitarian needs of refugees outstrip the resources at the disposal of UNHCR and its aid partners, the agency is working to pursue more cost-effective and sustainable solutions to meet the needs of people of concern. In this source, delegates can find an accurate description of the solutions enacted by UNHCR to improve aid to refugees in different ways, in order to make it more sustainable, for instance through the use of technology to manage critical water resources.

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II. Strengthening the Capacity of Refugee Host Countries

Recent Developments

As highlighted by the newly appointed United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Filippo Grandi, UNHCR is continuing its strong commitment to protect refugees and to appeal for increased support for host countries.⁴⁷ On 1 December 2015, UNHCR issued its Global Appeal 2016-2017, outlining its 2016 strategies for issues such as enhanced preparedness in host countries with limited capacity and the implementation of policies that would equally benefit refugee and host communities, such as the improvement of basic services or the provision of renewable energy.⁴⁸ This year's Global Appeal also assesses the resources needed for the year 2016 and forecasts those required in 2017; one of UNHCR's main concerns is the alarming difference between the funds needed and those received from donors.⁴⁹ In fact, without regular and continued funding, countries affected by the refugee influx are not able to strengthen their capacity to effectively assist both displaced people and locals.⁵⁰ Moreover, half of the 2015 total funds were used to provide for basic, immediate needs in refugee crises in Syria, South Sudan, and Iraq.⁵¹ This resulted in a reduction of financial resources made available to promote durable solutions.⁵² This could result in insufficient investments for the achievement of some of the Global Appeal's goals, such as "Encouraging Self-Reliance," the realization of which would instead reduce refugees' need for external assistance.⁵³

The international community also continues to strive to improve effective partnerships and provide a comprehensive response to refugee crises, as shown by the outcome of an informal meeting of the UN General Assembly (GA) held on 19 November 2015.⁵⁴ The meeting underlined the need for a more coordinated intervention by both humanitarian and development actors to help host countries and refugees build resilience.⁵⁵ The Group of Twenty (G20) leaders, meeting for their 2015 session in Turkey in mid-November, drew similar conclusions: the "G20 Leaders' Communiqué" recognizes the importance of enhancing cooperation with Member States to improve preparedness.⁵⁶ Both the GA meeting and the G20 summit offered the opportunity to discuss alternative approaches to financing for host countries; a feasible solution would be to develop more flexible financing patterns towards host countries, for example, through the provision of soft loans, which are those awarded on concessional terms at a low interest rate.⁵⁷ The G20 Engagement Groups, which gather representatives from civil society, also promoted the financing of social services in host countries to relieve already depleted national resources, and the creation of small and medium enterprises by refugees that would boost long-term economic growth.⁵⁸ Regarding this, a recent intervention model developed by UNHCR and the International Labour Organization (ILO) promotes a stronger focus on the demand side of market development, primarily through market surveys that can identify problematic economic sectors in which to intervene to benefit host communities, rather than purely supply side interventions in the form of enhancing refugee skills or employability.⁵⁹

An appeal to donors for an increase in financial contributions to help host countries accommodate the growing number of displaced people also came from the Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP) 2016-2017, issued in December 2015 by UNHCR and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) to continue responding to the Syrian

⁴⁷ UNHCR, *Filippo Grandi Takes Helm as UN High Commissioner for Refugees*, 2016; UNHCR, *Solutions Needed to Stem Global Refugee Crisis*, Says Grandi, 2016.

⁴⁸ UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2016-2017 – Responding to Emergencies*, 2015; UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2016-2017 – Working in Partnership*, 2015; UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2016-2017 – Private Sector Fundraising*, 2015.

⁴⁹ UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2016-2017 – Needs and Funding*, 2015; Andres-Vinas et al., *Right to a Future*, 2015.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2016-2017 – Needs and Funding*, 2015.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2016-2017 – Encouraging Self-Reliance*, 2015.

⁵⁴ UN General Assembly, *Informal Meeting of the General Assembly to Consider Ways to Advance a Comprehensive Response to the Global Humanitarian and Refugee Crisis*, 2015.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ G20, *G20 Leaders' Communiqué Agreed in Antalya*, 2015.

⁵⁷ UN General Assembly, *Informal Meeting of the General Assembly to Consider Ways to Advance a Comprehensive Response to the Global Humanitarian and Refugee Crisis*, 2015.

⁵⁸ G20, *G20 Engagement Groups' Statement on the Refugee Crisis*, 2015.

⁵⁹ ILO, *Responding to the Global Refugee Crisis: How Market Systems Analyses Can Enhance the Impact of Livelihood Interventions for Refugees*, 2015.

refugee crisis.⁶⁰ One of the Plan's strategic aims is to invest in livelihood, education, and employment programs for displaced and local communities.⁶¹ For example, Lebanon and UNDP continue to promote the Lebanon Host Communities Support Project, which received a substantial donation from Japan in December to help infrastructure and local economy recover, especially in the agricultural sector.⁶² Similarly, the World Food Programme (WFP) will continue to provide both locals and Syrian refugees with training in agricultural activities to increase their income and enhance resilience.⁶³ To address food insecurity, Lebanese citizens affected by the refugee influx have recently benefited from the WFP e-card program, originally addressed to refugees alone and based on debit cards usable to purchase food.⁶⁴

The ongoing refugee crisis has also increased the international community's need to help host countries improve their reception capacity.⁶⁵ At the end of 2015, the European Union (EU), together with UNHCR, reiterated its intention of cooperating with Greece, one of the European countries most affected by the refugee influx, to finance housing programs in the country and make 20,000 reception opportunities available.⁶⁶ Similarly, in Turkey, UNHCR and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) cooperated with the national government to improve its reception capacity, focusing on the management of particularly concerning cases, such as displaced unaccompanied children.⁶⁷ The 65th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme and the High-level Meeting on Global Responsibility-sharing Through Pathways for Admission of Syrian Refugees, scheduled for March 2016, will be important occasions to continue discussing UNHCR's strategies in the field.⁶⁸

⁶⁰ UNHCR, *Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2016-2017 in Response to the Syria Crisis: Regional Strategic Overview*, 2016.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² UNDP, *Japan Grants US\$2 Million to Support Host Communities and Displaced Syrians in Lebanon*, 2015.

⁶³ UN WFP, *Livelihoods and Resilience – Regional Factsheet*, 2015.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ European Commission, *Joint Declaration on the Support to Greece for the Development of the Hotspot/relocation Scheme as Well as for Developing Asylum Reception Capacity (Statement/15/6309)*, 2015.

⁶⁶ UNHCR, *European Commission and UNHCR Launch Scheme to Provide 20,000 Reception Places for Asylum Seekers in Greece*, 2015.

⁶⁷ NATO, *EADRCC Situation Report n.9 – Syrian Refugees in Turkey*, 2015.

⁶⁸ UNHCR, *UNHCR Meetings*, 2016.

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Andres-Vinas, D., et al. (2015). *Right to a Future*. Retrieved 3 January 2016 from: <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/right-to-a-future-empowering-refugees-from-syria-and-host-governments-to-face-a-581896>

This paper was issued in November 2015 by a group of non-governmental organizations (Care International, Save the Children, International Rescue Committee, Norwegian Refugee Council, Danish Refugee Council, Oxfam, and World Vision) to address the empowerment of refugee and host communities affected by the Syrian refugee crisis. It provides useful insight into the policies adopted by the governments involved in the region, namely Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt, in various fields: registration, residency permits, labor market, and access to services. The document also includes recommendations to international donors, national governments, and other actors working to find solutions to the crisis.

International Labour Organization. (2015). *Responding to the Global Refugee Crisis: How Market Systems Analyses Can Enhance the Impact of Livelihood Interventions for Refugees*. Retrieved 3 January 2016 from: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---ifp_seed/documents/briefingnote/wcms_436147.pdf

The International Labour Organization issued this document at the end of 2015, presenting an alternative way to consider labor market integration of refugees. This can be useful for delegates while discussing the economic aspect of host countries' capacity. In fact, instead of only suggesting interventions to enhance refugees' employability or to develop their skills, focusing narrowly on the supply-side of the market, it also recommends an integrated approach that takes into consideration the demand side. This document guides delegates on how countries can develop more opportunities for income growth for refugees and locals alike.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Informal Meeting of the General Assembly to Consider Ways to Advance a Comprehensive Response to the Global Humanitarian and Refugee Crisis [Chair's Summary]*. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: <http://www.un.org/pga/70/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2015/08/Global-Humanitarian-and-refugee-crisis-23-December-2015-1.pdf>

This document contains the Chair's Summary of the UN General Assembly's informal meeting of 19 November 2015, discussing possible approaches to ensure a comprehensive response to the refugee crisis. It outlines the ideas and actions proposed by the heads of important international bodies that work to protect refugees and to support host countries, such as UNHCR, UNDP, and the World Bank. Therefore, the document provides a useful and varied overview of the priorities of different stakeholders that cooperate to enhance emergency response and build resilience.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). *Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan 2016-2017 in Response to the Syria Crisis: Regional Strategic Overview*. Retrieved 3 January 2016 from: <http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/3RP-Regional-Overview-2016-2017.pdf>

The Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP) was created in response to the current Syrian refugee crisis to coordinate strategies of the national governments involved, with the cooperation of other humanitarian and development actors. In December 2015, the 3RP 2016-2017 was released to identify the main priorities to ensure refugee protection in the fields of shelter, livelihoods, food security, and education. The document will be beneficial for delegates in providing detailed information on the strategy followed to protect those displaced and support host countries affected by the refugee crisis.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). *UNHCR Global Appeal 2016-2017 – Needs and Funding*. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/gal6/index.xml>

The document is part of UNHCR Global Strategy 2016-2017, which contains an assessment of the funds needed in the next couple of years to protect people affected by displacement in the world. It also contains thematic chapters that identify priority sectors and UNHCR's main strategies in those fields: ensuring protection, facing emergency, facilitating access to basic services, promoting self-reliance, and fundraising. Delegates will greatly benefit from this document, which is the most recent source of information on UNHCR's global commitment.

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III. Addressing Temporary Displacements Due to Outbreaks and Epidemics

Recent Developments

The United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has recently faced a new challenging type of temporary displacement of large numbers of people, caused by outbreaks and epidemics, as exemplified by the recent Ebola outbreak, and potentially the ongoing situation with the Zika virus.⁶⁹ In light of these epidemics, developmental policy, as exemplified and outlined by the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), becomes especially important.⁷⁰ Likewise, disaster risk reduction (DRR) is a relevant subject area in regards to the topic, as it can be a key tool to counter the immediate effects of displacement in the context of outbreaks and epidemics.⁷¹

The development of the Ebola crisis is now causing the international community to focus on the issue of repatriation following a health crisis.⁷² During the Ebola crisis, some 38,000 Ivoirians fled to Liberia escaping the disease.⁷³ To address the issue of their repatriation, on 9 and 10 December 2015, the fifth technical meeting of the Tripartite Commission on the Voluntary Repatriation of Ivorian refugees was held in Monrovia, and the governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire together with UNHCR agreed to restart voluntary repatriation, as there have been virtually no new Ebola cases towards the end of 2015.⁷⁴ About 11,000 of the 38,000 Ivorian refugees indicated that they wished to return to their home country immediately.⁷⁵ While once there are no new infections from Ebola, repatriation can begin immediately, insufficient information about the disease often results in stigmatization of returnees, who are wrongfully perceived as contagious, rendering reintegration difficult.⁷⁶ To address this problem, information campaigns have been put in place by local UNHCR branches to counter prejudice.⁷⁷ The agency has also provided vocational training for displaced persons to improve their capacity to reintegrate quickly and become economically self-reliant again.⁷⁸ Fear-driven reactions, such as border closures, also complicate the governance of displacement situations.⁷⁹ While the World Health Organization (WHO) does not recommend such measures in cases of outbreaks of epidemics, stressing that they are not in any way effective, they still happen, resulting in negative consequences for both the global and local economy, and especially affecting refugees.⁸⁰

On 1 February 2016, WHO declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern because of the recent global spread of the Zika virus, especially due to the outbreak clusters in Latin America and the Caribbean.⁸¹ It is assumed that the virus, which is transmitted by the bite of the Aedes mosquito, but which has recently also been suspected to be transferrable via bodily fluids, can cause microcephaly and other neurological disorders in

⁶⁹ UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2015 Update – West Africa*, 2015, p. 2; UN DPI, *UN health agency urges action now in European countries to prevent Zika virus spread*, 2016.

⁷⁰ Edelstein et al., *Health Crises and Migration*, 2014, p. 37; UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁷¹ Edelstein et al., *Health Crises and Migration*, 2014, pp. 37-38; UN DESA, *Global Sustainable Development Report: 2015 Edition: Advanced Unedited Version*, 2015, p. 69; UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁷² UNMIL, *Liberia, Cote D'Ivoire, UNHCR facilitate voluntary repatriation of Ivorian Refugees after Interruption by Ebola Outbreak*, 2015.

⁷³ *Ebola Hiatus: UNHCR and Liberia resume repatriation of Ivorian refugees*, Africanews, 2015; Collins, *Living in an Ebola limbo: how long must refugees wait?*, 2015.

⁷⁴ UNMIL, *Liberia, Cote D'Ivoire, UNHCR facilitate voluntary repatriation of Ivorian Refugees after Interruption by Ebola Outbreak*, 2015.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Collins, *Living in an Ebola limbo: how long must refugees wait?*, 2015; The Netherlands, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport of the Netherlands, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, *Frequently asked questions about Ebola*, 2015.

⁷⁷ UNHCR, *UNHCR and Liberia resume repatriation of Ivoirians after Ebola hiatus*, 2015.

⁷⁸ Omata & Takahashi, *Economic reintegration of returnees in Liberia*, 2016.

⁷⁹ Edelstein et al., *Health Crises and Migration*, 2014.

⁸⁰ Ibid.; Smith, *Ebola Outbreak: Why the Fear Factor is as Deadly as the Virus*, 2014; Collins, *Living in an Ebola limbo: how long must refugees wait?*, 2015, The Netherlands, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, *Frequently asked questions about Ebola*, 2015.

⁸¹ WHO, *WHO statement on the first meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR 2005) Emergency Committee on Zika virus and observed increase in neurological disorders and neonatal malformations*, 2016.

newborns.⁸² However, this causality has to be further researched to achieve clarity on how the virus is spread and what its actual dangers are.⁸³ The spread of the virus, however, has caused international concern, as it has currently been diagnosed in 25 countries.⁸⁴ A current priority for action is to contain the virus, preventing its spread to other regions.⁸⁵ Although WHO explicitly underlines that no travel restrictions should be imposed as of yet, it is preparing to handle this situation drawing on its recent experience with Ebola.⁸⁶ Closely related to this issue is DRR, especially the capacity to promulgate early warnings.⁸⁷ Satellite imagery, for instance, can be used to model correlations between topography and the spread of disease cases, in order to survey and manage flows of people.⁸⁸ Such modeling has been done for malaria, Rift Valley fever, or schistosomiasis in West Africa.⁸⁹ The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) pointed out in its recent *Global Sustainable Development Report* that the use of such technology may help in the mitigation and monitoring of outbreaks or epidemics, thus preventing large-scale displacements of people and potential refugee situations.⁹⁰

In conclusion, it becomes apparent that the international community thus far has no sustainable answers to severe public health emergencies.⁹¹ It is mainly in underdeveloped and poor regions that a fatal combination of deficient health infrastructure, political unpreparedness, and other forms of weak governance leads to displacement due to outbreaks.⁹² Therefore, improved DRR for the purpose of immediate action, embedded into the more general implementation of the SDGs as a means to strengthen the long-term resilience of countries, seems to be one promising way to address displacement due to outbreaks and epidemics.⁹³ Working on achieving the SDGs may minimize the probability of such displacements in the first place, while also improving the chances of the economic and social reintegration of returnees through generally improved living conditions.⁹⁴

⁸² Dodson, *Zika Virus: What is the Global Community Doing to Respond?*, 2016; UN DPI, *UN health agency urges action now in European countries to prevent Zika virus spread*, 2016; WHO, *WHO statement on the first meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR 2005) Emergency Committee on Zika virus and observed increase in neurological disorders and neonatal malformations*, 2016.

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⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.; UN DPI, *Zika virus: UN agencies step up response measures following declaration of public health emergency*, 2016.

⁸⁷ UN DESA, *Global Sustainable Development Report: 2015 Edition: Advanced Unedited Version*, 2015, p. 83.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Anyamba et al., *Prediction of a Rift Valley fever outbreak*, 2009; Beck, *Remote Sensing and Human Health: New Sensors and New Opportunities*, 2000; UN DESA, *Global Sustainable Development Report: 2015 Edition: Advanced Unedited Version*, 2015, p. 83.

⁹⁰ UN DESA, *Global Sustainable Development Report: 2015 Edition: Advanced Unedited Version*, 2015, p. 155.

⁹¹ WHO, *WHO Director-General's speech to the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific*, 2014.

⁹² Edelstein et al., *Health Crises and Migration*, 2014, pp. 37-38.

⁹³ UN DESA, *Global Sustainable Development Report: 2015 Edition: Advanced Unedited Version*, 2015.

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This news source provides delegates a realistic and concise overview about the situation of people that have been displaced because of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Further, it illustrates the difficulties associated with their repatriation, such as the preparation of returnees for reintegration. It thus underlines the connection between development issues and fear, stigma and uninformed policy decisions by local authorities. Delegates can use this source to identify some of the barriers to repatriation in situations of epidemics.

Edelstein, M., et al. (2014). Health Crises and Migration. *Forced Migration Review*, 45: 36-38. Retrieved 24 January 2016 from: <http://www.fmreview.org/en/crisis.pdf>

This very informative journal article explains the link between underdevelopment, misinformation, underprepared health systems and migration due to health crises. It is especially relevant as it captures the non-rational considerations behind counter-productive policy measures that are thought to combat an outbreak, while actually worsening its impact. It thus provides relevant thoughts on necessary actions concerning international health regulations, development policy and migration.

Omata, N. & N. Takahashi. (2016). Economic reintegration of returnees in Liberia. *Forced Migration Review*, 51: 85-87. Retrieved 13 January 2016 from: <http://www.fmreview.org/en/destination-europe.pdf>

This journal article draws attention to the wider context of displacement due to outbreaks. It provides information on what can be done when people are forcibly displaced from their homes to prepare for their reintegration into their communities. Yet, it also provides examples of possible hindrances to reintegration after repatriation. The rest of the journal offers further contextualization for this topic.

Smith, L. (2014, October 14). Ebola Outbreak: Why the Fear Factor is as Deadly as the Virus. *International Business Times*. Retrieved 15 January 2016 from: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/ebola-outbreak-why-fear-factor-deadly-virus-1470016>

This article provides a vivid impression of the consequences of policies that do not adhere to policy advice by international organizations such as WHO with regard to the treatment of the risk of the spread of epidemics. The costs of misinformed actions are economic as well as human. Policy choices that are implemented hastily affect not only local economies, but also the global market, due to the interdependence of the world economy. Rather than following a fear-driven approach that is mutually harmful as it aggravates the impact of any outbreak, the article advocates solidary action by the international community for those developing countries where health crises are most likely to occur.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2015). *Global Sustainable Development Report: 2015 Edition: Advanced Unedited Version*. Retrieved 13 January 2016 from:

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This comprehensive report on sustainable development provides substantial information and detailed data in relation to the status of sustainable development policies, for instance in the important area of disaster risk reduction as a crosscutting issue. It therefore illustrates pointedly the correlation between DRR as a means to address displacement due to outbreaks and diseases, and the overall goal of achieving sustainable development. Further, it offers many case studies that foster a better understanding of the topic. Inter alia, there are also passages on the recent Ebola outbreaks, which highlight the importance of scientific expertise to make informed and sustainable policy choices when tackling an epidemic of that scale.

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