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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Background Guide 2020

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2020 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This year's staff is: Directors Christopher W. Duggan (Conference A) and Jasym Mireles Venegas (Conference B), and Assistant Directors Eric R. Lowe (Conference A) and Omar H. Zaky (Conference B). Christopher will soon graduate from Florida State University with a Bachelor's degree in International Affairs and certificates in U.S. Intelligence and Emergency Management. Jasym graduated with a Bachelor in Business Administration in Finance from The University of Texas. Eric has earned both a BA in History and an MA in Social Science and Globalization from California State University and will begin a PhD program in Fall of 2020. Omar received his BA in Political Science from The American University in Cairo and is now pursuing an MA in International Human Rights Law, with a specific focus on Artificial Intelligence.

The topics under discussion for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees are:

1. Forced Displacement Due to Climate Change
2. Ensuring Access to Safe and Sustainable Energy
3. Improving Employment Opportunities for Refugees and Displaced Persons

UNHCR is the United Nations' agency for providing assistance and other short- and long-term services to refugees and similarly situated individuals, including internally displaced and stateless persons. The agency is responsible for camp administration, repatriation, resettlement, and fostering self-sufficiency among refugees. UNHCR has also been tasked with facilitating crucial partnerships between relevant state, non-governmental, and civil society actors in order to achieve the most effective assistance to these vulnerable refugee populations. Seeing that the number of refugees today is the largest in history, UNHCR is uniquely situated to continue to improve the livelihoods of millions of people throughout the world. It is crucial for delegates to carefully consider UNHCR's priorities, its work, its abilities, and its limitations so that they may understand the actions that UNHCR can take to address the current global situation.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern) on 1 March 2020 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•NY Position Papers](#) website.

Two resources, available to download from the [NMUN website](#), that serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions are the:

1. [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#) - explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not start discussion on the topics with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) - include the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the Conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact the Under-Secretaries-General for the Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Department, Tobias Dietrich (Conference A) and Estefani Morales (Conference B), at usg.hr_ha@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Sincerely,

Conference A

Christopher W. Duggan, *Director*
Eric R. Lowe, *Assistant Director*

Conference B

Jasym Mireles Venegas, *Director*
Omar H. Zaky, *Assistant Director*

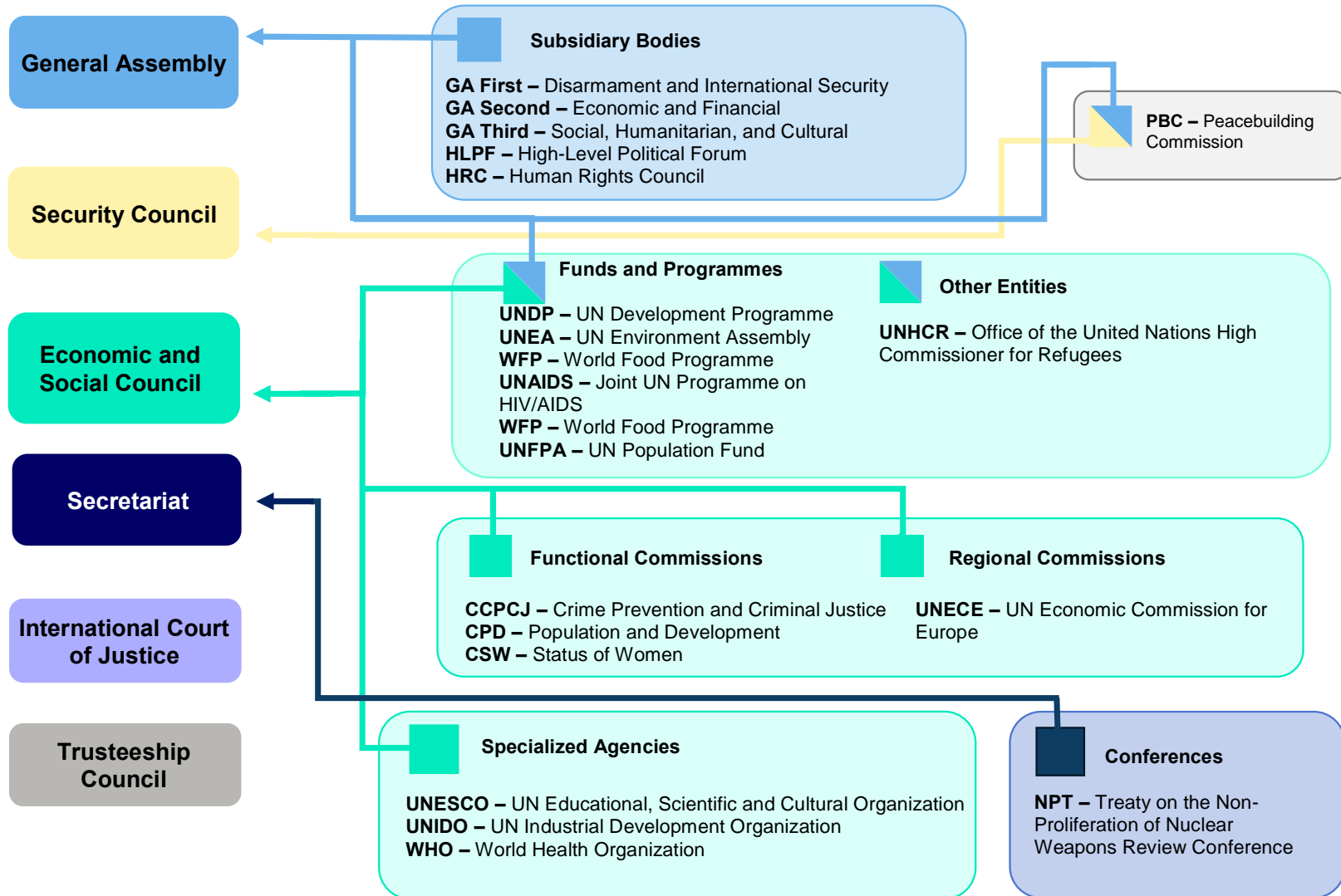


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United Nations System at NMUN•NY

This diagram illustrates the UN system simulated at NMUN•NY and demonstrates the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee's position, purpose, and powers within the UN system.



Committee Overview

Introduction

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the United Nations (UN) agency whose primary purpose is the protection of the welfare and rights of refugees.¹ The UN General Assembly established the body in 1950 to address the high number of displaced Europeans after World War II with a three year mandate.² However, the General Assembly soon began proposing various resolutions to extend the body's work to groups of people not included in its original scope.³ UNHCR's first significant emergency followed a violent Soviet intervention in Hungary in 1956, and highlighted its essential role in delivering aid to those fleeing and seeking refuge in neighboring states.⁴ During the subsequent decades, UNHCR further expanded its reach to Africa, Asia, and Latin America in response to the displacing violence of ethnic cleansing, organized crime, and armed groups.⁵ Due to the need for UNHCR's continued work, the General Assembly decided in 2003 to prolong UNHCR's mandate indefinitely.⁶

Most of UNHCR's resources are dedicated to field operations that address the needs of forcibly displaced persons, including 25.4 million refugees, 40 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), 10 million stateless persons, and 3.1 million asylum seekers.⁷ A refugee is a person who, fearing conflict or persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political conviction, has left the state of their nationality or habitual residence.⁸ Whether they are unable or unwilling to go back to previous residences, refugees are protected under international law from forced return to conditions that may risk their lives and/or freedom.⁹ IDPs differ in that while they have had to flee their homes, they have not crossed an international border, often making them more difficult to reach.¹⁰ Stateless people have been denied a nationality due to discrimination, state succession, or conflict, and subsequently suffer limited access to employment, medical attention, education, and overall freedom of movement.¹¹ Asylum seekers are those looking for protection in a different state, but whose claim for refugee status has not been ascertained.¹² Additionally, UNHCR aids returnees, those who voluntarily return to their states of origin after fleeing.¹³ The rising number "forced migration" victims is usually attributed to the deteriorating situations or ongoing conflicts.¹⁴ In 2018 alone, UNHCR worked alongside other agencies to address the needs of over 30 million people affected by multiple, simultaneous emergencies worldwide.¹⁵

UNHCR provides a variety of humanitarian aid, including food and nutritional supplements, basic shelter as well as long-term accommodation such as camps or other forms of housing, cash assistance, and

¹ UNHCR, *What We Do*, 2019.

² UN General Assembly, *Refugees and Stateless Persons (A/RES/319 (IV))*, 1949; UNHCR, *History of UNHCR*, 2019.

³ UNHCR, *History of UNHCR*, 2019.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ UNHCR, *Americas*, 2019; UNHCR, *Asia and the Pacific*, 2019; UNHCR, *History of UNHCR*, 2019.

⁶ UN General Assembly, *Implementing actions proposed by UNHCR to strengthen the capacity of his Office to carry out its mandate (A/RES/58/153)*, 2003.

⁷ UNHCR, *Executive Committee*, 2019; UNHCR, *Figures at a Glance*, 2019; UNHCR, *Who We Help*, 2019.

⁸ UN Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951; UNHCR, *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1967; UNHCR, *Refugees*, 2019.

⁹ UNHCR, *Figures at a Glance*, 2019; UNHCR, *Refugees*, 2019.

¹⁰ UNHCR, *Internally Displaced People*, 2019.

¹¹ UNHCR, *Ending Statelessness*, 2019; UNHCR, *Figures at a Glance*, 2019.

¹² UNHCR, *Asylum-Seekers*, 2019; UNHCR, *UNHCR 2015 Global Trends, Forced Displacement*, 2016.

¹³ UNHCR, *Returnees*, 2019.

¹⁴ IOM, *Glossary on Migration*, 2019; UNHCR, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018*, 2019.

¹⁵ UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Report 2018*, 2019, p. 180.

legal services.¹⁶ While immediate assistance in crises constitutes a large portion of the body's work, UNHCR's larger goal is to help refugees find durable solutions to rebuild their lives.¹⁷ From 1945 to 1985, UNHCR focused mainly on resettlement, the transferring of refugees from an asylum state to a different one willing to grant them permanent settlement.¹⁸ As the causes of displacement increasingly varied, the agency began to utilize the concept of voluntary repatriation, the refugees' return to their state of origin.¹⁹ As the number of cases related to refugees seeking to return home expanded during the 1990s, UNHCR's role in reintegration into home states evolved to include infrastructure and community development, as well as an increased focus on reconciliation and peacebuilding in affected communities.²⁰ For cases in which repatriation is not feasible, UNHCR focuses its efforts on refugee integration into host states; this includes economic, legal, social, and cultural components and often the granting of asylum or citizenship.²¹ The protection of stateless persons' rights to nationality constitutes a large portion of this work and is carried out through the advocacy of more inclusive nationality laws, provision of guidance materials, highlighting good practices for birth registration, and assistance in overcoming civil registration obstacles.²²

Given the extensive resources needed by host communities for the above strategies, the UN General Assembly adopted the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* (New York Declaration) in 2016, committing global support and responsibility in dealing with the large numbers of forcibly displaced persons.²³ It established the *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework* (CRRF), a global-scale plan to guarantee refugees their rights and the predominant framing tool for UNHCR's *Global Compact for Refugees* (Global Compact).²⁴ The Global Compact is the UN's current major agreement detailing an international, cooperative approach to addressing refugees.²⁵ Another major guiding framework is UNHCR's *Strategic Directions 2017-2021*.²⁶ UNHCR outlines within this document its "five core directions" – protect, respond, include, empower, and solve – in its pursuit to develop more comprehensive approaches outlined in the CRRF and the Global Compact.²⁷

Governance, Structure, and Membership

UNHCR, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, currently employs over 11,517 national and international staff members across 128 Member States.²⁸ Moreover, UNHCR has increased its initial \$300,000 budget to \$8,275,300,000 in 2018 to address the needs of the 68.5 million forcibly displaced persons worldwide.²⁹ UNHCR falls under the UN Programmes and Funds, reports annually to both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and is governed by the Member States that make up its Executive Committee (ExCom).³⁰ The ExCom approves the agency's annual program priorities and budget.³¹ Member States are elected by ECOSOC as members of the ExCom according to

¹⁶ UNHCR, *Cash in Hand: Urban Refugees, the Right to Work and UNHCR's Advocacy Activities*, 2011; UNHCR, *Protection*, 2019.

¹⁷ UNHCR, *Solutions*, 2019.

¹⁸ Chimni, *From Resettlement to Involuntary Repatriation*, 1999, p. 1; UNHCR, *Resettlement*, 2019.

¹⁹ Chimni, *From Resettlement to Involuntary Repatriation*, 1999, p. 1; UNHCR, *What We Do*, 2019.

²⁰ Macrae, *Aiding Peace ... and War: UNHCR, Returnee Reintegration, and the Relief-Development Debate*, 1999.

²¹ UNHCR, *Local Integration*, 2019.

²² UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Report 2017*, 2018, pp. 16, 30, 116.

²³ UN General Assembly, *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/71/1)*, 2016, pp. 1-2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-24; UNHCR, *The Global Compact on Refugees: UNHCR Quick Guide*, 2018, p. 2.

²⁵ UN, General Assembly, *Global Compact for Refugees (A/73/12)*, 2018.

²⁶ UNHCR, *UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2017-2021*, 2017.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

²⁸ UN General Assembly, *Refugees and Stateless Persons (A/RES/319 (IV))*, 1949; UNHCR, *History of UNHCR*, 2019.

²⁹ UNHCR, *Figure's at a Glance*, 2019; UNHCR ExCom, *Update on budgets and funding for 2018 and reporting on 2017*, 2019.

³⁰ New Zealand, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *United Nations Handbook 2017-18*, 2017, p. 258; UNHCR, *Governance and Oversight*, 2019.

³¹ UNHCR, *Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, 2010, p. 2.

equitable geographical allocations.³² The ExCom was originally comprised of 24 members, but has since grown to 102 Member States.³³ The committee reports directly to the General Assembly Third Committee, and follows directives issued by either the General Assembly or ECOSOC.³⁴ The ExCom meets every October to review financial matters for the coming year, advise the High Commissioner, authorize appeals for funds, and approve upcoming targets.³⁵ In 1995, the ExCom created a Standing Committee, which meets three times per year to discuss the work of the body as a whole and any new situations that arise.³⁶ In January 2016, the General Assembly elected High Commissioner, Filippo Grandi, to serve a five-year term.³⁷ Grandi works in close collaboration with the Senior Executive Team, comprised of the Deputy High Commissioner, Kelly Clements, the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, George William Okoth-Obbo, and Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Volker Türk.³⁸

UNHCR's \$8,275,300,000 budget rests on four pillars: refugees, stateless people, reintegration programs, and IDPs.³⁹ The budget stems almost entirely from voluntary donations by Member States, intergovernmental institutions, corporations, foundations, and individuals worldwide.⁴⁰ To acquire these donations, UNHCR releases an annual Global Appeal that provides detailed information regarding the major areas of concern for UNHCR, as well as supplementary appeals that address specific situations.⁴¹ The budget also includes contributions from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund for situations requiring immediate response, such as a natural disaster or violent conflict.⁴²

Mandate, Function, and Powers

The basis for UNHCR's mandate is Article 14 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), which specifically recognizes the right of all individuals to seek asylum in another state.⁴³ The founding document of UNHCR is General Assembly resolution 428 (V), known as the *Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (1950).⁴⁴ Here, UNHCR's mandate is defined as: "providing international protection, under the auspices of the United Nations, to refugees who fall within the scope of the present Statute and of seeking permanent solutions for the problem of refugees by assisting Governments and ... private organizations to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of such refugees, or their assimilation within new national communities."⁴⁵

Other fundamental documents for UNHCR include the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, which defines the term "refugee" as well as the rights and obligations of refugees, and the 1967 *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, which expanded the 1951 Convention and UNHCR's mandate to include refugees from conflicts occurring after 1951.⁴⁶ UNHCR's mandate also includes other

³² UNHCR, *Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, 2010, p. 3.

³³ UNHCR, *ExCom plenary sessions*, 2019.

³⁴ UNHCR, *ExCom Membership*, 2019.

³⁵ *Ibid.*; UNHCR, *ExCom Structure and Meetings*, 2019.

³⁶ UNHCR, *ExCom Membership*, 2019; UNHCR, *ExCom Structure and Meetings*, 2019.

³⁷ UNHCR, *The High Commissioner*, 2019.

³⁸ UNHCR, *Senior Executive Team*, 2019; UNHCR ExCom, *Update on budgets and funding for 2018 and reporting on 2017*, 2018.

³⁹ UNHCR, *Biennial programme budget 2016-2017 (revised) of the Office of UNHCR*, 2016.

⁴⁰ UNHCR, *Donors*, 2018; UNHCR, *Partnerships*, 2019; UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2016-2017: Working in Partnerships*, 2016.

⁴¹ UNHCR, *The Global Appeal and Supplementary Appeals*, 2016; UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2016-2017*, 2016.

⁴² UNHCR, *UN Sister Organizations*, 2019.

⁴³ UN Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951; UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

⁴⁴ UNHCR, *Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, 2010, p. 2.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴⁶ UN Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951; UNHCR, *History of UNHCR*, 2019.

groups, such as stateless people, as defined in the 1954 *Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons*, and the 1961 *Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*.⁴⁷ The 1998 *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, adopted by ECOSOC, outline the rights and protections for IDPs.⁴⁸ However, IDP assistance requires consideration of state sovereignty and therefore strong coordination mechanisms.⁴⁹ In 2007, the ExCom adopted the policy framework and implementation strategy titled *UNHCR's Role in Support of an Enhanced Humanitarian Response to Situations of Internal Displacement*.⁵⁰ The framework emphasizes the agency's primary responsibility to refugees and stipulates that aid to IDPs must be given in collaboration with national governments, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other UN agencies.⁵¹ The mandate of UNHCR was further expanded in the 2011 ExCom report entitled *UNHCR's Role in Support of an Enhanced Humanitarian Response for the Protection of Persons Affected by Natural Disasters*.⁵² The report emphasizes UNHCR's primary focus on conflict-related disasters, and that its role in natural disaster relief should be limited to pre-existing refugee or displacement operations.⁵³

In addition, UNHCR has been involved in multiple thematic and regional consultations, such as delivering key messages for fostering a more inclusive humanitarian system and bridging the humanitarian-development divide.⁵⁴ In line with these activities, the Secretary-General called for the first World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), held on 23-24 May 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey.⁵⁵ At the WHS, participants highlighted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) to overcome the humanitarian-development divide, meaning the lack of coordination between overlapping agencies of humanitarian and development aid.⁵⁶ Further, as pointed out in its preliminary guidance note titled *UNHCR and the 2030 Agenda – Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs), UNHCR has been uniquely positioned to leverage the 17 SDGs for the benefit of refugees, forcibly displaced persons, and stateless people worldwide.⁵⁷ Within the scope of UNHCR in NMUN 2020, the main SDGs are SDG 7 for Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 8 for Decent Work and Economic Growth, and SDG 13 for Climate Action.⁵⁸

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

UNHCR held its 69th ExCom session between 1-5 October 2018.⁵⁹ The ExCom's debate focused on several topics, including the approval of the expanded 2018-2019 UNHCR budget, the increased protection of refugees, and the need to assist developing and least developed countries hosting refugees.⁶⁰ To ensure the creation of durable solutions for refugees in coming years, ExCom urged UNHCR to support innovative ways for the social and economic inclusion of refugees, particularly through the "regionalization process" – that is, the process through which UNHCR supports regional bodies in their localized efforts to mediate problems and assist refugees.⁶¹

⁴⁷ UNHCR, *Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*, 1961; UNHCR, *Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons*, 1954; UNHCR, *Ending Statelessness*, 2019.

⁴⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (E/CN.4/53/Add.2 (1998))*, 1998.

⁴⁹ Cohen, *Sovereignty as Responsibility: The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, 2003; UNHCR, *Internally Displaced People*, 2019.

⁵⁰ UNHCR ExCom, *UNHCR's Role in Support of an Enhanced Humanitarian Response to Situations of Internal Displacement: Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy*, 2007.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² UNHCR ExCom, *UNHCR's Role in Support of an Enhanced Humanitarian Response for the Protection of Persons Affected by Natural Disasters*, 2011.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ UNHCR, *Strategic partnerships, including coordination and the World Humanitarian Summit*, 2016, pp. 6-7; UN OCHA, *Commitments to Action: World Humanitarian Summit*, 2016.

⁵⁷ UNHCR, *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2019.

⁵⁸ UNDP, *Sustainable Development Goals*, 2019.

⁵⁹ UNHCR, *Report of the sixty-ninth session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme*, 2018.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

UNHCR's activities in 2018 were predominately linked to synthesizing the CRRF's lessons learned to develop the Global Compact, which was affirmed by the UN General Assembly on 17 December 2018.⁶² The Global Compact's four objectives, the same as the CRRF's, include easing pressure placed on host states, enhancing the self-reliance of refugees, expanding third-country solutions access, and supporting states of origin to promote returnees' safety and dignity.⁶³ It also establishes the Global Refugee Forum, an annual gathering to outline challenges, expand the number of involved actors, and report on the progress of the compact.⁶⁴ On December 18-19 of 2018, the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges was held, which highlighted and commended the significant role that cities and urban areas play in the successful integration of refugees and migrants.⁶⁵ Notably, UNHCR's *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018* Report provides a statistical yet comprehensive review of the committee's work and UNHCR's ability to provide resources to refugees throughout the globe.⁶⁶

UNHCR's work in 2019 has emphasized the importance of partnerships to solve statelessness, and in October 2019, UNHCR's ExCom will convene at the High-Level Segment on Statelessness to deliver firm pledges to resolve statelessness.⁶⁷ The High-Level Segment on Statelessness will take place during ExCom's 70th Session on 7-11 October 2019, and will focus on providing context to global forced displacement, addressing current refugee protection challenges, and reviewing the Global Compact.⁶⁸ Moreover, one year after historically affirming the *Global Compact on Refugees*, UNHCR and strategic stakeholders will meet from 17-18 December 2019 at the first-ever Global Refugee Forum with the goal of improving the collective response to refugee situations around the world.⁶⁹

Conclusion

As the number of refugees increases year after year, there is a pressing need to mobilize support worldwide and to create durable, long-term solutions for refugees.⁷⁰ UNHCR's recent work exemplifies the 2030 Agenda's goal to encompass all and "leave no one behind" in the greater international agenda.⁷¹ Furthermore, durable solutions are the key for finding greater synergy between the humanitarian and development fields.⁷² The CRRF and *Global Compact on Refugees* have provided unique pathways to address many of the issues faced by refugees today, marking a historic first step in achieving UNHCR's objectives.⁷³

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Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2017). *UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2017-2021*. Retrieved 26 August 2019 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/excom/announce/5894558d4/unhcrs-strategic-directions-2017-2021.html>

This publication breaks down UNHCR's agenda between 2017-2021. After laying out the statistics and challenges currently facing refugees, the document outlines the body's declarations of work within its five core directions: protect, respond, include, empower, and solve. The last section, "Making it Work," provides details on the logistical and technological components needed in all five conceptual areas of focus. Delegates

⁶² UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Report 2018*, 2019, p. 11.

⁶³ UNHCR, *The Global Compact on Refugees: UNHCR Quick Guide*, 2018, p. 6.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ UNHCR, *High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges*, 2018.

⁶⁶ UNHCR, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018*, 2019.

⁶⁷ UNHCR, *High-Level Segment on Statelessness*, 2019.

⁶⁸ UNHCR, *2019 Executive Committee Session*, 2019; UNHCR, *Opening statement of UNHCR at the seventieth session of the ExCom of the High Commissioner's Programme*, 2019.

⁶⁹ UNHCR, *Global Refugee Forum*, 2019.

⁷⁰ UNHCR, *A message to the world's refugees from UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi*, 2019.

⁷¹ Wilton Park, *Forum on new approaches to protracted displacement*, 2016.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Appeal 2018-2019*, 2018.

should use this source for a more concrete understanding of the UNHCR's goals and its plans to achieve them.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2018). *The Global Compact on Refugees: UNHCR Quick Guide*. Retrieved 26 August 2019 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/5b6d574a7>

UNHCR compiled this quick guide as a comprehensive reference outlining the work on the Global Compact for refugees. It delineates the historical steps leading up to the proposed compact released in July 2018. It also summarizes the essential components of the compact and how it will work upon its adoption at the General Assembly's seventy-third session. Delegates should use this source to ground their understanding of this monumental document so that they can utilize the framework in prospective resolutions. Delegates can find the link to the advanced version of the full Global Compact on Refugees in the bibliography section.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2018). *UNHCR Global Appeal 2018-2019*. Retrieved 25 August 2019 from:

http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/ga2018/pdf/Global_Appeal_2018_full_lowres.pdf

UNHCR regularly produces its Global Appeal, and this document is the latest for the years 2018-2019. As a document geared primarily towards donors, it outlines the financial requirements of the body's work for the upcoming year. It also more specifically underlines the hurdles UNHCR and its partners face in their efforts to address humanitarian crises. Delegates should use this document to bolster their understanding of current UNHCR financial priorities and the challenges it faces in carrying out programs.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2019). *UNHCR Global Report 2018*. Retrieved 25 August 2019 from:

http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/gr2018/pdf/GR2018_English_Full_lowres.pdf

This annual report covers UNHCR's work completed in 2018. Following an overview of the year, the report includes regional summaries and thematic updates in sections "Safeguarding Fundamental Rights," "Responding with Lifesaving Support," and "Building Better Futures." This document reviews the responsibilities of UNHCR as well as the body's Global Strategic Priorities for 2018-2019. The report then provides detailed analysis on the body's most recent successes and areas of improvement. It is a vital document for delegates' understanding of the progress of UNHCR's ongoing efforts and the areas still requiring resolutions to challenges.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1)*. Retrieved 25 August 2019 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/1>

This General Assembly resolution provides the New York Declaration, calling for the implementation of the CRRF and the development of a Global Compact on Refugees to be headed by UNHCR. Delegates should use this document to understand the UN's position on refugee and migration issues, as well as a reference for the commitments to solidify a global approach to the growing numbers of refugees made by the General Assembly, and how UNHCR will be instrumental in executing them. More specifically, it places the topic of refugee and migration populations within the context of the 2030 Agenda. Delegates can find details regarding the CRRF and the global compact in Annex 1 of the resolution.

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I. Forced Displacement Due to Climate Change

“Climate change is the defining challenge of our times: a challenge which interacts with and reinforces the other global megatrends such as population growth, urbanization, and growing food, water and energy insecurity. It is a challenge which is adding to the scale and complexity of human displacement: and a challenge that has important implications for the maintenance of international peace and security.”⁷⁴

Introduction

Throughout the world, natural disasters are occurring in greater frequency and with higher intensity as a result of climate change.⁷⁵ Limited natural resources are creating scarcity, with crops and livestock struggling to survive in climates where conditions have been severely altered.⁷⁶ Such change is threatening everyday life and food security and is forcing many to look elsewhere for improved living conditions.⁷⁷ Although social and economic reasons for migration have always existed, many people throughout the international community are becoming more and more involuntarily displaced due to climate change both within and across borders.⁷⁸ According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the likelihood of being displaced due to climate change and natural disaster has more than doubled since 1970, with an estimated 203.4 million people displaced between 2008 and 2015.⁷⁹ UNHCR recognizes that limited resources and environmental changes are forcing people from their homes and spurring such displacement.⁸⁰ UNHCR marks climate change as a serious peril, threat multiplier, and a driver for refugee crises, armed conflict, resources depletion, and risk for being uprooted from everyday life more than once, also known as secondary displacement.⁸¹ While refugees are defined as those forced to flee their country due to persecution, war, or violence, there is no international recognition for those displaced and fleeing across borders due to climate change.⁸² Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), the group receiving the most assistance from UNHCR, are those who are displaced within the confines of their own state, and include those affected by climate change and subsequent natural disaster.⁸³ However, IDPs are not protected by international law, and typically go without international aid as they are legally under the protection of their own government.⁸⁴ Those considered to be refugees or IDPs due to violence or persecution often reside in areas highly susceptible to the effects of climate change and global warming, also known as climate change hot zones, and may fall victim to secondary displacement due to climate change.⁸⁵ Refugee law has a pivotal role to play in establishing international protection for these groups and UNHCR is furthermore aiming to provide protection and assistance for those displaced by climate change and disasters.⁸⁶

⁷⁴ UNHCR, *Statement by Mr. António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Security Council Briefing “Maintenance of International Peace and Security: “New Challenges to International Peace and Security and Conflict Prevention”*, 2011.

⁷⁵ International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *Aggravating Factors: Climate Change*, 2019; Njorge, *Africa’s Humanitarian Action in Migration Policy: Adjusting to Environment and Climate Change*.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019.

⁷⁸ UNHCR, *UNHCR Viewpoint: ‘Refugee’ or ‘Migrant’ – Which is Right?*, 2016; UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement: An Overview of UNHCR’s Role*, 2017.

⁷⁹ UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement: An Overview of UNHCR’s Role*, 2017.

⁸⁰ UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019.

⁸¹ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Compact on Refugees, Thematic Discussion 4 (Solutions)*, 2017, p. 1; UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement: An Overview of UNHCR’s Role*, 2017; UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019.

⁸² UNHCR, *What is a Refugee?*, 2019.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement: An Overview of UNHCR’s Role*, 2017; Union of Concerned Scientists, *Climate Hot Spots*, 2011.

⁸⁶ UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019.

International and Regional Framework

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948) serves as the first internationally recognized framework protecting human rights at the international level, emphasizing that these rights are to be universally recognized and observed by people within Member States and the territories they control.⁸⁷ The *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1951), also referred to as the “Refugee Convention”, serves as the main instrument of refugee law building on Article 14 of the UDHR.⁸⁸ The convention details the characteristics of a refugee as well as the legal protection and rights they should receive from states who choose to sign onto the convention.⁸⁹ When introduced, the convention was limited to the protection of European refugees after World War II.⁹⁰ However, the *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1967) expanded the limitations of the previous convention to include refugees displaced by conditions emerging after 1951.⁹¹ Resolution 70/1 on “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, adopted by the General Assembly in 2015 serves as landmark document and as the international community’s effort to steer towards a sustainable future.⁹² The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* highlights an array of international topics, including goals that assure refugee, IDP, and migrant needs are recognized through policy cohesion at the state level with that of international law.⁹³ The *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* (New York Declaration) was adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly as resolution 71/1, highlighting commitments to migrants and refugees on a large scale.⁹⁴ In 2018, the Intergovernmental Conference on the Global Compact for Migration convened in pursuant to the New York Declaration under the auspices of the UN.⁹⁵ The conference produced the *UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration*, addressing all dimensions of migration at the international level including forced migration due to climate change and disaster.⁹⁶ Furthermore, the General Assembly adopted the Global Compact for Migration as resolution 73/195, recognizing forced migration due to climate change.⁹⁷

The *Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa* (OAU Convention) (1969) serves as a regional effort to advance on measures of the 1951 Refugee Convention.⁹⁸ The convention, adopted in Addis Ababa by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and ratified by 45 of 54 Member States of the African Union, expanded the definition of a refugee and includes those “fleeing environmental catastrophes.”⁹⁹ The *Cartagena Declaration on Refugees* (Cartagena Declaration) (1984) was heavily influenced by the OAU Convention, and was adopted by ten Latin American states as a result of the Colloquium on International Protection of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Central America, Mexico, and Panama.¹⁰⁰ The Cartagena Declaration also expanded on the refugee definition, with UNHCR highlighting the protection of refugees due to natural disasters.¹⁰¹ The *Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action* (2014) was adopted by acclamation by a coalition of Latin American states in 2014, and urged the extension and application of regional refugee definitions at the state level, while mirroring

⁸⁷ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ UNHCR, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951.

⁹⁰ UNHCR, *What is a Refugee?*, 2019.

⁹¹ UNHCR, *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1967; UNHCR, *What is a Refugee?*, 2019.

⁹² UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁹³ UNHCR, *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2019.

⁹⁴ UN General Assembly, *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1)*, 2016; UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019.

⁹⁵ UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Okello, *The 1969 OAU Convention and the Continuing Challenge for the African Union*, 2014.

⁹⁹ Ibid.; UNHCR, *Summary Conclusions on the Interpretation of the Extended Refugee Definition in the 1984 Cartagena Declaration*, 2014.

¹⁰⁰ UNHCR, *Summary Conclusions on the Interpretation of the Extended Refugee Definition in the 1984 Cartagena Declaration*, 2014.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

regional initiatives previously mentioned in the Cartagena Declaration.¹⁰² The *Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action* also aims to address international and regional efforts for those internally displaced.¹⁰³

Role of the International System

After the adoption of the *UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration* and the *New York Declaration*, the international community made it clear they aim to protect the rights of refugees and migrants, with those rights coinciding with all universal human rights and fundamental freedoms.¹⁰⁴ UNHCR has engaged in climate-based displacement initiatives since the mid-1990s, with concrete policy and operational responses in the early 2000s.¹⁰⁵ Their work focuses primarily on legal guidance, development, promotion of policy coherence, research to fill knowledge gaps, and field-based operations to address internal and cross-border displacement, environmental impact, and overall risk reduction activities, including those intended to reduce or avert displacement overall.¹⁰⁶ Since 2015, UNHCR has remained active in climate change displacement alleviation efforts, partnering with additional UN entities such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), intergovernmental organizations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and others including the Global Protection Cluster and the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD).¹⁰⁷ In 2015, UNHCR hosted a regional workshop focusing on domestic implementation of the *African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa*, also known as the Kampala Convention (2009).¹⁰⁸ The convention recognizes persons internally displaced by armed conflict, but most notably, by climate change and disaster, with Article 5 formally establishing state responsibilities, protection, and assistance of such individuals displaced by climate change and disaster.¹⁰⁹ UNHCR has supported the PDD since 2016, reinforcing the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda, a joint consultation approach by states and multinational stakeholders in effort to synthesize international cooperation, treatment standards of those displaced, and operational mechanisms.¹¹⁰ In 2017, UNHCR made efforts to effectively provide international protection and humanitarian assistance with their action on forced migration due to climate change and disaster through its *2017-2021 Strategic Directions*.¹¹¹ This plan of action contains five core directions: “Protect, Respond, Include, Empower, and Solve.”¹¹² The strategic directions serve as UNHCR’s way of charting the issues surrounding displacement with relation to major global issues impacting the international community over the next five years.¹¹³

In 2018, UNHCR commissioned the *Mapping of Existing International and Regional Guidance and Tools on Averting, Minimizing, Addressing and Facilitating Durable Solutions to Displacement Related to the Adverse Impacts of Climate Change*, collaborating with the Task Force on Displacement.¹¹⁴ The purpose of the mapping tool and collaboration is to avert forced migration due to climate change, and it includes an array of tools and guidance to reduce the frequency of displacement, exposure to the hazards

¹⁰² UNHCR, *The Brazil Declaration*, 2019.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ UN General Assembly, *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (A/RES/73/195)*, 2018.

¹⁰⁵ UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ African Union, *African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Person in Africa (Kampala Convention)*, 2009; UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Norwegian Refugee Council, *The Nansen Conference: Climate Change and Disaster Displacement in the 21st Century*, 2019; The Nansen Initiative, *About Us*.

¹¹¹ UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement: An Overview of UNHCR’s Role*, 2017.

¹¹² Ibid.; UNHCR, *UNHCR’s Strategic Directions 2017-2021*, 2017.

¹¹³ UNHCR, *UNHCR’s Strategic Directions 2017-2021*, 2017.

¹¹⁴ UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019.

responsible for such displacement, and to improve future resilience amongst populations.¹¹⁵ The compiled tools include: regional translation of available climate data and research, framework and guidelines to strengthen land use and productivity, regional and national policy to strengthen economic and environmental development, as well as management of natural resources.¹¹⁶ UNHCR also undertook a study in 2018, *In Harm's Way: International Protection in the Context of Nexus Dynamics Between Conflict or Violence and Disaster or Climate Change*, to address policy solutions in the occurrence of nexus dynamics.¹¹⁷ The study focuses on action taken in four countries within the Horn of Africa and the Americas, and aims to provide practical solutions and strengthen international response to displacement across borders.¹¹⁸

The Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility (Advisory Group) aims to provide technical support to UNFCCC on all aspects of human mobility, particularly to that of forced migration, displacement, or planned relocation due to climate change.¹¹⁹ The group consists of UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations University for Environment and Human Security, the United Nations Development Programme, and several others who better analyze the action taken around displacement and migration due to climate change.¹²⁰ Parties to UNFCCC aim to implement effective adaptation strategies against climate change-related displacement, such as those highlighted in the *Paris Agreement*.¹²¹ Such suggestions on behalf of the Advisory group include the temporary or permanent resettlement of those at risk of climate change displacement, also known as facilitated migration and planned relocation.¹²²

Effects of Climate Change and Disasters

Climate Change and Conflict

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change indicated in a 1990 report that the most significant effect of climate change could be on human migration.¹²³ Climate change could lead to a displacement of millions due to an array of factors, such as shoreline erosion, flooding, drought, and food scarcity.¹²⁴ Forced migration due to these issues already exists internally, but has even forced many to cross borders to seek better living conditions, spurring further humanitarian crises.¹²⁵ Depletion of resources in areas affected by climate change and disaster often leads to increased tension, armed conflict, and secondary displacement.¹²⁶ Violence and armed conflict are more likely to occur in lower developed areas experiencing significant climate change, as these areas often have little resources to effectively mitigate such conflict.¹²⁷ UNHCR aims to promote policy coherence at multiple levels, including: international humanitarian aid foundations, national authorities such as the UN, and institutional norms of Member States.¹²⁸ Such coherence aims to address institutional gaps, as well as consolidation and overlap issues, while also ensuring newer policies address climate change displacement are mainstreamed and reflect

¹¹⁵ UNHCR, *Mapping of Existing International and Regional Guidance and Tools on Averting, Minimizing, Addressing and Facilitating Durable Solutions to Displacement Related to the Adverse Impacts of Climate Change*, 2018; UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019.

¹¹⁶ UNHCR, *Mapping of Existing International and Regional Guidance and Tools on Averting, Minimizing, Addressing and Facilitating Durable Solutions to Displacement Related to the Adverse Impacts of Climate Change*, 2018.

¹¹⁷ Platform on Disaster Displacement, *Climate Change, Conflict, and Displacement: Understanding the Nexus*, 2018; UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ UNHCR, *Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change UNFCCC-Paris COP-21*, 2015.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Brown, *Climate Change and Forced Migration: Observations, Projections, and Implications*, 2007.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.; UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019.

¹²⁶ Edwards, *Forced Displacement Worldwide at its Highest in Decades*, UNHCR, 2017.

¹²⁷ UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement: An Overview of UNHCR's Role*, 2017.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

UNHCR's 2017-2021 Strategic Directions; however, research to fill gaps and overlap in policy, such as those affecting Refugee Status Determination at a regional and state level, remain a priority.¹²⁹

Internal vs. Cross-Border Displacement

The effects of Climate change traditionally lead to internal displacement of many before it becomes an issue of cross-border displacement.¹³⁰ Due to the complexity of displacement and predicting the occurrence and severity of climate change and natural disasters, an exact figure of those displaced both internally and cross-border is difficult to determine.¹³¹ Two forms of cross-border displacement exist: voluntary refuge to another country in the instance of climate change or natural disaster, and residence in another country at the time of a disaster, leading to a permission to extend the stay.¹³² In cases of severe disaster or climate-based occurrences, such as drought and famine, displacement can cross borders.¹³³ Once it does, protection and assistance for those displaced becomes increasingly uncertain, as there is no internationally recognized term for those displaced in the context of climate change, and little framework for those displaced in areas less developed.¹³⁴ The nature of the displacement may fall within an area known as "Nexus Dynamics," where an issue overlaps or is correlated to another event.¹³⁵ Such an example lies with climate change and armed conflict, as in the Horn of Africa, and an increase in natural and weather-related disasters in the Americas.¹³⁶ Such dynamics have presented a challenge to reintegration of those displaced, and remain a focal point of further UNHCR facilitation in the support and facilitation of climate-based refugee protection mechanisms.¹³⁷

Adaptation Strategies to Displacement

Policy Cohesion: Nexus Dynamics

Due to the increasing frequency and intensity of climate change-related incidents and disaster, scientists anticipate a vast number of people will be displaced from their homes by sudden onsets of disasters, including tropical cyclones, floods, as well as slower onsets in the form of droughts and rising sea levels.¹³⁸ Forced Migration due to such adverse effects of climate change and disaster often correlates with armed conflict, requiring a unique form of assistance and protection from UNHCR.¹³⁹ In 2018, UNHCR's study, *In Harm's Way: International Protection in the Context of Nexus Dynamics Between Conflict or Violence and Disaster or Climate Change*, was constructed to examine international protection by refugee law in response to famine in Somalia and Ethiopia, as well as Earthquake response in Haiti by Brazil and Mexico.¹⁴⁰ The study examined the response by these four states, and concluded that existing legal refugee frameworks play a significant role in the response to the protection and needs of those displaced by conflict, but also have the ability to interact with those displaced due to disaster.¹⁴¹ Through the study, UNHCR recommended further legal interpretative guidance, country-specific guidelines on eligibility, and regional specific strategies to promote the application of the Refugee Convention with respect to nexus dynamics.¹⁴² Despite these findings and recommendations, a significant knowledge gap

¹²⁹ Ibid.; UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019.

¹³⁰ UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² The Nansen Initiative, About Us.

¹³³ UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Weerasinghe, *In Harm's Way: International Protection in the Context of Nexus Dynamics Between Conflict or Violence and Disaster or Climate Change*, 2018; UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019.

¹³⁸ Platform on Disaster Displacement, *Climate Change, Conflict and Displacement: Understanding the Nexus*, 2018.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.; Weerasinghe, *In Harm's Way: International Protection in the Context of Nexus Dynamics Between Conflict or Violence and Disaster or Climate Change*, 2018.

¹⁴² Platform on Disaster Displacement, *Climate Change, Conflict and Displacement: Understanding the Nexus*, 2018; UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019; Weerasinghe, *In Harm's Way: International*

still exists, and has been a focal point of UNHCR in its 2017-2021 Strategic Directions.¹⁴³ Because of this, UNHCR suggests an increased investment in monitoring and evaluation techniques to better learn from those displaced.¹⁴⁴

Planned Relocation

The effects of climate change and natural disasters have displaced an estimated 27 million people per year from 2008 to 2013, with that number likely increasing due to climate change and increasing environmental hazards.¹⁴⁵ Through the UNHCR study, *Mapping of Existing International and Regional Guidance and Tools on Averting, Minimizing, Addressing and Facilitating Durable Solutions to Displacement Related to the Adverse Impacts of Climate Change*, the concept of planned relocation, or the process where a group of people are moved from their original homes to a new location and assisted with the tools to rebuild their lives, has been presented once more.¹⁴⁶ In 2013, the *Peninsula Principles on Climate Displacement within States* were established and organized through the non-governmental organization Displacement Solutions.¹⁴⁷ The idea behind the principles is to promote climate change resettlement for those at risk, while also preserving the social and cultural institutions of those settling in new areas.¹⁴⁸ The principles also indicate such action should promote comprehensive disaster risk reduction techniques and bolster capacities in order to assist with the process of resettlement.¹⁴⁹ Moving certain populations from such climate related hazards, particularly those affected by rising sea levels, may serve as a viable solution.¹⁵⁰ UNHCR, along with the Brookings Institute and Georgetown University, developed the *Guidance on Protecting People from Disasters and Environmental Change through Planned Relocation* in 2015, in an attempt to establish guidelines for Member States that need to undertake planned relocation as a way to address displacement due to climate change.¹⁵¹ However, determining when to relocate such populations will depend on the nature of such hazards, economic provisions, political implications, and should only be used as a last resort option for Member States.¹⁵² UNHCR recognizes such action as an effective adaptation strategy toward climate change, but still a process, as legal and institutional frameworks for such action must be in place.¹⁵³

Protection in the Context of Nexus Dynamics Between Conflict or Violence and Disaster or Climate Change, 2018.

¹⁴³ Platform on Disaster Displacement, *Climate Change, Conflict and Displacement: Understanding the Nexus*, 2018; UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019; Weerasinghe, *In Harm's Way: International Protection in the Context of Nexus Dynamics Between Conflict or Violence and Disaster or Climate Change*, 2018.

¹⁴⁴ UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement: An Overview of UNHCR's Role*, 2017; UNHCR, *UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2017-2021*, 2017.

¹⁴⁵ UNHCR, *Guidance on Protecting People from Disasters and Environmental Change Through Planned Relocation*, 2015.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*; UNHCR, *Mapping of Existing International and Regional Guidance and Tools on Averting, Minimizing, Addressing and Facilitating Durable Solutions to Displacement Related to the Adverse Impacts of Climate Change*, 2018.

¹⁴⁷ Displacement Solutions, *The Peninsula Principles on Climate Displacement within States*, 2013; UNHCR, *Guidance on Protecting People from Disasters and Environmental Change Through Planned Relocation*, 2015; UNHCR, *Mapping of Existing International and Regional Guidance and Tools on Averting, Minimizing, Addressing and Facilitating Durable Solutions to Displacement Related to the Adverse Impacts of Climate Change*, 2018.

¹⁴⁸ Displacement Solutions, *The Peninsula Principles on Climate Displacement within States*, 2013; UNHCR, *Guidance on Protecting People from Disasters and Environmental Change Through Planned Relocation*, 2015; UNHCR, *Mapping of Existing International and Regional Guidance and Tools on Averting, Minimizing, Addressing and Facilitating Durable Solutions to Displacement Related to the Adverse Impacts of Climate Change*, 2018.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ UNHCR, *Guidance on Protecting People from Disasters and Environmental Change Through Planned Relocation*, 2015.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

Conclusion

Climate change and disasters have forced many to migrate and have displaced millions throughout the world.¹⁵⁴ UNHCR has made forced migration due to climate change and disaster a focal point in their efforts to protect those most vulnerable to such displacement through the 2017-2021 Strategic Directions, UNFCCC Advisory Group partnership, IOM collaboration, and involvement with several other climate change displacement initiatives.¹⁵⁵ Additionally, regional organizations and coalitions have taken efforts since the Refugee Convention in 1951 to expand on the protection of those displaced internally and across borders.¹⁵⁶ However, displacement due to climate change and disasters is expected to continue, with many at risk, particularly in less developed areas.¹⁵⁷ Those displaced due to these conditions are susceptible to secondary displacement, or failure to reintegrate altogether.¹⁵⁸

Further Research

Delegates should consider the following questions when conducting their research: What can UNHCR do for the protection of refugees and migrants displaced due to climate change? How will these protections affect national governments and their interests? What practices or strategies have been implemented in areas considered to be climate change hot zones? How does conflict play a role in areas already feeling the effects of climate change and natural disaster? How can UNHCR address forced migration due to climate change with respect to the SDGs? How should UNHCR and the international community go about climate change resilience?

Annotated Bibliography

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). *Guidance on Protecting People from Disasters and Environmental Change through Planned Relocation*. Retrieved 19 July 2019 from: <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/environment/562f798d9/planned-relocation-guidance-october-2015.html>

This guidance was compiled and published by UNHCR in 2015 and focuses on forced displacement due to climate change and disaster through planned relocation. The report highlights planned relocation as an adaptation strategy against climate change, and provides legal and policy frameworks, implementation strategies, and oversight mechanisms. The report also provides a set of principles in accordance with the guidance, focusing not only on response to climate change and disaster, but also anticipation of future climate change. Delegates will find this source particularly helpful, as it provides suggested action directly from UNHCR.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2019). *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*. Retrieved 18 July 2019 from: <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/climate-change-and-disasters.html>

The source provided comes directly from UNHCR's website and contains a brief background into the recent work of the committee in the realm of climate change and disaster displacement. The source summarizes UNHCR's role when addressing climate change and disaster displacement, while also highlighting suggested policy action and framework on the topic. Delegates will find this source significantly useful when first

¹⁵⁴ UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement: An Overview of UNHCR's Role*, 2017; UNHCR, *UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2017-2021*, 2017; UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Okello, *The 1969 OAU Convention and the Continuing Challenge for the African Union*, 2014; UN Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951; UNHCR, *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1967.

¹⁵⁷ UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement: An Overview of UNHCR's Role*, 2017; UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019.

¹⁵⁸ Edwards, *Forced Displacement Worldwide at its Highest in Decades*, UNHCR, 2017; UNHCR, *Climate Change and Disaster Displacement*, 2019.

conducting research on climate change and its relation to displacement. Furthermore, the website provides links to many other relevant documents on the issue.

Platform on Disaster Displacement. (2018, October 6). *Climate Change, Conflict and Displacement: Understanding the Nexus*. Retrieved 19 July 2019 from: <https://disasterdisplacement.org/climate-change-conflict-and-displacement-understanding-the-nexus>

The PDD works to protect people displaced across borders due to climate change and disaster. The article provides insight into a recent study conducted by UNHCR, International Protection in the Context of Nexus Dynamics Between Conflict or Violence and Disaster or Climate Change. The study aims to explain the correlation of nexus dynamics, particularly that of climate change displacement and armed conflict. The source will be useful to delegates as they consider the impact climate change has on not just displacement, but war and conflict.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-third session. (2019). *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (A/RES/73/195)*. Retrieved 20 July 2019 from: <https://undocs.org/A/RES/73/195>

The Intergovernmental Conference convened under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly, and pursuant to the New York Declaration (2016). The Global Compact on Migration was adopted by the General Assembly in 2018, and attempts to address all dimensions of international migration, including forced migration due to climate change and disaster. The source provided contains definitions, shared responsibilities, and purposes. Delegates will find this source useful, as it displays action taken by the international community immediately after the New York Declaration.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-third session. (2018). *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Part II: Global Compact on Refugees (A/73/12 (Part II))*. Retrieved 18 July 2019 from: [https://undocs.org/A/73/12\(Part%20II\)](https://undocs.org/A/73/12(Part%20II))

The report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees aims to reflect on past actions, while also highlighting the challenges going forward when addressing refugees. UNHCR indicates several root-causes with climate change, disasters, and environmental degradation receiving attention. The New York Declaration for Migrants and Refugees receives significant reference, as the report aims to highlight areas of concern moving forward. Delegates will find the source useful when researching suggested courses of action.

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II. Ensuring Access to Safe and Sustainable Energy

Introduction

As of 2019, there are over 70 million refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and asylum seekers in the world.¹⁵⁹ Of those, almost 30 million are refugees, who by definition are forced to live in countries outside of their own, either within cities or in refugee camps.¹⁶⁰ More than half of the refugees under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have come from nations in the Middle East and North African region, and 80% of those refugees have settled in a neighboring country.¹⁶¹ Increasing refugee flows in the region are putting a great amount of strain on the infrastructure of the countries which now host refugees, and ensuring access to energy has proved challenging.¹⁶² With only 16% of the world's refugees currently residing in developed countries, the remainder are housed in developing countries often without adequate infrastructure to provide energy access to refugee populations.¹⁶³ UNHCR is mandated to protect and ensure fundamental human rights are upheld during a refugee's time outside of their home country.¹⁶⁴ As part of that mandate, UNHCR has aimed to ensure that refugees have access to safe and sustainable energy sources for heating, lighting, cooking, and power.¹⁶⁵ Reliance on traditional fuel sources, such as firewood, for cooking and heating can be dangerous for refugees and damaging to the environment.¹⁶⁶ Achieving access to more sustainable and renewable forms of energy is a complex matter of understanding the individual needs of each refugee settlement, forming the right partnerships for development, and preparing for refugee flows before they occur in order to provide adequate energy.¹⁶⁷

International and Regional Framework

The international community has worked to provide numerous frameworks relating to the protection of refugees and displaced persons, beginning with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948), which established the right of a person to leave their home country or seek asylum elsewhere.¹⁶⁸ The 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* provided a working definition for the terms 'refugee' and 'asylum seeker', while outlining the basic rights refugees should be afforded by all states.¹⁶⁹ As refugee populations changed drastically during the 1960s, the *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1967) was adopted in order to update the definitions and aims of the original convention.¹⁷⁰ Most importantly, the 1967 Protocol expands the definition of the term refugee to cover those who were displaced after 1951 and those outside of Europe, applying official refugee status to displaced persons around the world.¹⁷¹ In 2016 the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/1, *The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* (New York Declaration), outlining the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (2016) and the Global Compact on Refugees (2018).¹⁷² These two most recent frameworks aim to enhance responsibility sharing and encourage innovative solutions to address the rising number of refugees across the globe.¹⁷³

¹⁵⁹ UNHCR, *Figures at a Glance*, 2019.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Rosenberg-Jansen, *Refugee Energy*, 2019, p. 1.

¹⁶³ UNHCR, *Figures at a Glance*, 2019.

¹⁶⁴ UN General Assembly, *Statute of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (A/RES/428 (V))*, 1950.

¹⁶⁵ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE): A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

¹⁶⁹ UN Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951.

¹⁷⁰ UNHCR, *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1967.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² UN General Assembly, *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1)*, 2016.

¹⁷³ UN General Assembly, *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/73/12 (Part I))*, 2018.

The development of frameworks relating to sustainable energy began at the 1992 United Nations Convention on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.¹⁷⁴ This conference produced a number of significant outcome documents and treaties, including the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* (1992) and the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) (1992).¹⁷⁵ The *Rio Declaration* outlined 27 core principles necessary to combat greenhouse gas emissions and the effects of global warming, including provisions for safeguarding the environment and natural resources of those experiencing conflict or oppression.¹⁷⁶ UNFCCC is an international treaty which also aims to reduce the effects of climate change through targeted reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁷⁷ Member States who have signed the treaty meet at an annual Conference of the Parties to monitor progress towards the treaty's goals, as well as to develop updated protocols, such as the *Kyoto Protocol* (1995) and the *Paris Agreement* (2015).¹⁷⁸ UNFCCC and its subsequent protocols have contributed to a global shift towards the adoption of sustainable energy practices and policies, and the commitments of its signatories directly impact the way in which refugees access energy.¹⁷⁹ The most impactful framework relating to the topic of ensuring refugee access to safe and sustainable energy is General Assembly resolution 70/1 (2015), which contains the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁸⁰ The SDGs are comprised of 17 interconnected goals to be achieved by the year 2030, all of which address improving sustainable development while avoiding any further damage to the environment.¹⁸¹ SDG 7 aims to ensure access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable forms of energy for all, a goal which is of particular importance to vulnerable refugee populations.¹⁸² Since the SDGs are being implemented across all UN operations, UNHCR must look to include the goals of SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy) within its initiatives to ensure that refugee populations have access to sustainable energy.¹⁸³

At the regional level, agencies and organizations have adopted similar frameworks to their international counterparts, though the specific goals of each region may differ.¹⁸⁴ The African Union (AU) has implemented its *Agenda 2063*, a strategic plan which is poised to address a number of different environmental, social, and developmental goals for the continent.¹⁸⁵ This strategy is being carried out by individual Member States, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI), and AU itself.¹⁸⁶ While the partnership between AU and AREI aims to address the need for sustainable energy in Africa, neither *Agenda 2063* nor AREI's *Plan of Action* contain strategies pertaining to the specific energy needs of refugees, highlighting a critical gap in the current roadmap for achieving SDG 7 at the regional level.¹⁸⁷ Refugee settlements, which are often separate from and lacking the significant infrastructure of host communities, are at risk of being excluded from safe and sustainable energy strategies and frameworks.¹⁸⁸

¹⁷⁴ UN CED, *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, 1992.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ UN CED, *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1992.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Rosenberg-Jansen, *Refugee Energy*, 2019.

¹⁸⁰ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.; UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE): A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014.

¹⁸³ UNHCR, *UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2017-2021*, 2017.

¹⁸⁴ Abebe, *AU Summit 32: Renewed Focus on Refugees*, 2019.

¹⁸⁵ *Africa Renewable Energy Initiative*, 2019.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Bellanca, *Sustainable Energy Provision Among Displaced Populations: Policy and Practice*, 2014.

Role of the International System

The role of UNHCR in ensuring access to safe and sustainable energy has increased in accordance with the adoption of the SDGs, with SDG 7 specifically geared towards energy access.¹⁸⁹ While UNHCR has not focused its efforts on sustainable energy in the past, it has embraced the system-wide attention to sustainability in recent years.¹⁹⁰ In 2014, UNHCR initiated its *Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE): A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, a plan of action for addressing the energy needs of refugee resettlement communities.¹⁹¹ The SAFE initiative features numerous strategies, such as: including energy access in emergency response plans, scaling relief efforts to the household level, and implementing country level plans.¹⁹² While the four-year period of the plan's original scope has passed, the goals of SAFE have not been achieved universally.¹⁹³ Within its *Strategic Directions: 2017-2021*, UNHCR has included energy needs in its current operational plan, specifically through its focus on engaging third-party solutions and empowering refugees to find their own solutions.¹⁹⁴ Thusly, UNHCR and its partners must continue to work towards the goals of SAFE as they enter into new operations.¹⁹⁵ Apart from UNHCR, various actors within the United Nations (UN) system are engaged in researching and addressing the energy needs of refugees in accordance with the SDGs.¹⁹⁶ The United Nations Environment Programme has partnered with the Technical University of Denmark to provide research on refugee fuel needs, including case studies on refugee settlements in Tanzania and Uganda to assess the viability of alternative household fuels.¹⁹⁷ The Tanzanian report conducted a cost-benefit analysis, which confirmed the long-term benefits of investing in light petroleum gas stoves as an alternative to wood-burning stoves.¹⁹⁸ Research indicating the financial viability of sustainable fuel interventions in refugee settlements may assist in the development of key funding partnerships.¹⁹⁹

In addition to actors within the UN system, various NGOs and private-sector entities have also approached the topic of sustainable energy for refugees.²⁰⁰ Sustainable Energy for All is three years into its *Strategic Framework for Results: 2016-2021*, a plan of action through which the NGO seeks to address the energy needs of developing nations by engaging leadership, collecting and analyzing data, and creating worthwhile partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including UN and private-sector actors.²⁰¹ This strategy is not aimed at refugee communities specifically, but outlines strategies that would be effective in assisting refugee populations, specifically in terms of developing partnerships and fostering third-party solutions.²⁰² Another NGO that works to assist refugees is Practical Action, which has partnered with UNHCR and the IKEA Foundation to establish Renewable Energy for Refugees, working to build renewable energy sources at refugee resettlement camps in Jordan.²⁰³ The partnership has taken advantage of IKEA's funding, UNHCR's guidance regarding the needs of Jordan's refugees, and the NGO operations of Practical Action, exemplifying UNHCR's dedication towards engaging third-party solutions.²⁰⁴

¹⁸⁹ UNHCR, *UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2017-2021*, 2017.

¹⁹⁰ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE): A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ UNHCR, *UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2017-2021*, 2017.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Rosenberg-Jansen, *Refugee Energy*, 2019, pp. 2-4.

¹⁹⁷ UNEP & Technical University of Denmark Partnership, *Sustainable Energy Use in Refugee Camps*, 2009.

¹⁹⁸ Rivoal & Haselip, *The True Cost of Using Traditional Fuels in a Humanitarian Setting: Case Study of the Nyarugusu Refugee Camp, Kigoma Region, Tanzania*, 2017.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Pielli & Kapadia, *Serving Refugee Communities with Tech, Energy Access, Entrepreneurship: Mastercard and USAID's Collective Approach*, 2019.

²⁰¹ Sustainable Energy for All, *Strategic Framework for Results 2016-21*, 2016.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Dunsmore, *Jordan's Azraq Becomes World's First Clean Energy Refugee Camp*, UNHCR, 2017.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

Sustainable Energy at the Refugee Scale

One of the challenges facing refugee settlements is the type of energy and fuel sources that refugees need to carry out their day to day tasks.²⁰⁵ While many of the initiatives and operations that are being conducted to achieve SDG 7 concern shifting large-scale energy production towards more sustainable methods, improving sustainability within refugee settlements often concerns small scale energy consumption at the individual and household level.²⁰⁶ UNHCR's SAFE describes refugee energy needs as being focused on cooking, heating, lighting, and power needs.²⁰⁷ Many refugees rely on fuel sources such as firewood for these needs, which presents a number of hazards in both use and collection of materials.²⁰⁸ As a fuel source for lighting and cooking, or heating, firewood can be a dangerous material capable of starting structure fires, as well as creating toxic fumes which harm personal air quality and contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.²⁰⁹

When viewed through a gender perspective, the collection of firewood constitutes a potentially dangerous activity for women, who are at risk of sexual and gender-based violence when travelling to collect fuel.²¹⁰ The dangers that women face when collecting wood fuel have long been understood, with NGOs such as the Women's Refugee Commission having brought it to the attention of the global community over a decade ago.²¹¹ However, interventions that would phase out the use of wood fuel have not been widely implemented.²¹² Bearing all of this in mind, energy sustainability for many refugees means transitioning away from firewood as a source of fuel and adopting renewable energy sources that don't need to be sourced by venturing into wilderness.²¹³ However, current UNHCR interventions, which include solar lanterns for lighting and gas stoves for cooking, are not meeting the energy needs of refugees, as they only provide an alternative fuel source for one household need and can be expensive.²¹⁴ In order to provide a comprehensive solution, it is necessary to first analyze the impact that a change in fuel source can have at the household level and then create interventions that are effective and sustainable.²¹⁵

On the other end of the refugee energy spectrum, larger-scale energy sources do play a vital role in improving the lives of refugees by providing critical access to power.²¹⁶ Within larger refugee settlement environments, specifically urban areas which house refugee populations, the need for access to electricity is vital for the operation of civic and social infrastructure, including schools and hospitals.²¹⁷ Access to education and healthcare are human rights which are easily endangered within refugee settlements, and a lack of sufficient power to adequately operate these buildings is a common issue.²¹⁸ Ensuring that these large refugee settlements are able to rely on renewable sources of energy such as wind and solar, as opposed to more damaging sources such as coal power, is a necessary aspect of UNHCR's implementation of SDG 7.²¹⁹

The challenge presented by these differences of scale is that there is no single solution or approach when considering the energy needs of refugees.²²⁰ While developed states and NGOs may be able to provide

²⁰⁵ IRENA, *Harnessing the Power of Renewables in Refugee Camps*, 2018.

²⁰⁶ Melzer, *Bottled Gas Scheme Eases Fuel Crisis for Rohingya Refugees*, UNHCR, 2018.

²⁰⁷ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE): A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ Melzer, *Bottled Gas Scheme Eases Fuel Crisis for Rohingya Refugees*, UNHCR, 2018.

²¹⁰ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE): A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014.

²¹¹ Gerrard, *Influx of Refugees and Limited Firewood Leads to Spike in Gender-Based Violence*, *Women's Refugee Commission*, 2016.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE): A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ Lehne et al., *Energy Services for Refugees and Displaced People*, 2016.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ Hashem, *Jordan's Za'atari Camp Goes Green with New Solar Plant*, UNHCR, 2017.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE): A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014.

²²⁰ Bellanca, *Sustainable Energy Provision Among Displaced Populations: Policy and Practice*, 2014.

technical expertise and assistance with renewable energy technology, that will be of little use to refugees who are living in rural encampments with no electrical infrastructure.²²¹ In a similar fashion, concentrating on the coordination of aid which can provide gas powered stoves and solar lighting for refugee households will not address the needs of urban settlements which require access to sustainable power.²²²

Case Study: Azraq Refugee Camp, Jordan

Following the outbreak of civil war in the Syrian Arab Republic, more than 6.7 million refugees have fled the country in search of a safe environment to live in until it is safe to return.²²³ While many have journeyed to western nations, a majority of Syrian refugees have remained in the region, within countries neighboring Syria.²²⁴ The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has been inundated with Syrian refugees, and its Azraq camp houses over 35 thousand individuals.²²⁵ Situated in the middle of the Jordanian desert, Azraq camp features unique energy needs for its habitants, who relied on solar lamps and no form of cooling for the first three years of the camp's existence.²²⁶ UNHCR, in conjunction with the IKEA Foundation and the NGO Practical Action, were able to build a 9.6 million dollar solar power facility at the camp in 2017.²²⁷ This facility has allowed for residents to transition to electric lighting, allowing them to safely go about their lives after dark, as well as introducing electric cooling systems to combat the desert heat.²²⁸

For Azraq, the addition of solar power has led to an improvement in quality of life for its displaced inhabitants.²²⁹ The positive outcomes within the household are numerous: residents have access to light after dark, they can invest in cold storage options to preserve food and prevent waste, they can cool their homes via electric fans, and they can utilize washing machines and other home appliances in order to save time for other activities.²³⁰ There are other benefits as well, including the fact that the solar facility and its construction have provided training in technical skills and work for many of the camp's inhabitants.²³¹ Giving refugees within the camp the opportunity to learn how to construct, operate, and maintain their solar power infrastructure will play a vital role in ensuring that the community is resilient and capable of creating solutions within settlements.²³² The solar power facility is connected to Jordan's national power grid, meaning that Azraq is able to transfer any unused energy to its host community, which represents a sustainable use of precious resources.²³³ Lastly, the solar power generated in Azraq allows for the operation of schools for the more than 12,000 children in the camp, of which 86% are enrolled in formal schooling.²³⁴ While this solution has worked spectacularly to meet the needs of Azraq camp, it is not applicable in all refugee settlements, as solar power is not effective in all climates and not all refugee settlements have sufficient electric infrastructure to make use of this technology.²³⁵ UNHCR and its partners should seek to take a similar approach to meet the needs of other refugee communities as well, meeting their needs through strategic partnerships to bring sustainable energy where it is needed.²³⁶

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ UNHCR, *Figures at a Glance*, 2019.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ UNHCR, *Azraq Fact Sheet*, 2019.

²²⁶ Dunsmore, *Jordan's Azraq Becomes World's First Clean Energy Refugee Camp*, UNHCR, 2017.

²²⁷ UNHCR, *Azraq Fact Sheet*, 2019.

²²⁸ Dunsmore, *Jordan's Azraq Becomes World's First Clean Energy Refugee Camp*, UNHCR, 2017.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Hujale, *The Best Way to Achieve Sustainable Energy for Refugees Is to Make Them Partners and Not Just Recipients*, UNHCR Innovation Service, 2015.

²³³ Dunsmore, *Jordan's Azraq Becomes World's First Clean Energy Refugee Camp*, UNHCR, 2017.

²³⁴ UNHCR, *Azraq Fact Sheet*, 2019.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE): A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014.

Conclusion

The task of addressing the individual needs of every refugee settlement is a complex task in light of the nearly 30 million refugees in the world today.²³⁷ To carry out the mandate of UNHCR and adhere to the system-wide aims of the SDGs, it is imperative that the international community works together to find innovative solutions that include refugees in the process.²³⁸ This will necessitate the involvement of regional actors, especially given the fact that most refugees are housed within neighbors of the states of origin.²³⁹ As refugee crises in Syria, Myanmar, South Sudan, and Venezuela continue to forcibly displace citizens, the international community must find a way to ensure that the communities and settlements which will host these refugees are equipped with sustainable energy sources capable of meeting their needs.²⁴⁰

Further Research

When moving forward with their research, delegates should ask themselves the following questions: How can UNHCR facilitate greater regional cooperation towards achieving SDG 7? Considering the different needs of both smaller and larger refugee settlements, what types of partnerships can effectively address the needs of both? How can successes such as the Azraq Refugee Camp be translated to other locations? What are the key setbacks to current UNHCR interventions for energy, and how can they be overcome?

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Dunmore, C. (2017, May 17). Jordan's Azraq Becomes World's First Clean Energy Refugee Camp. *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. Retrieved 19 July 2019 from: <https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2017/5/591bfdbb4/jordans-azraq-becomes-worlds-first-clean-energy-refugee-camp.html>

This UNHCR news article was released following the completion of the solar power plant at the Azraq refugee settlement in 2017. While the article does contain some statistics on the settlement's energy needs, its main focus is the impact that the introduction of solar energy has had on the camp. The article also discusses the vital role of public and private-sector partnerships in achieving renewable energy for Azraq's 35 thousand residents, which may prove useful as delegates seek to find similar solutions for refugees around the world. This article can provide a quick overview of the impact of renewable energy at Azraq, which is featured as a case study within this background guide.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2014). *Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE): A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*. Retrieved 19 July 2019 from: <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/environment/530f11ee6/global-strategy-safe-access-fuel-energy-safe.html>

This four-year strategy was the most recent large-scale UNHCR plan for implementing access to safe and renewable energy sources within refugee settlements. The strategy highlights the dangers of currently used sources of fuel, possible alternatives, and future goals. Delegates can use this resource as a tool to better understand the scope of energy issues within refugee centers, especially the differences between the needs of smaller/rural centers and larger/urban ones.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2017). *UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2017-2021*. Retrieved July 16 2019 from: <https://www.unhcr.org/excom/announce/5894558d4/unhcrs-strategic-directions-2017-2021.html>

²³⁷ IRENA, *Harnessing the Power of Renewables in Refugee Camps*, 2018.

²³⁸ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE): A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014.

²³⁹ UNHCR, *Figures at a Glance*, 2019.

²⁴⁰ UNHCR, *UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2017-2021*, 2017.

This report serves to highlight the current direction of UNHCR operations worldwide, providing a five-pronged approach to addressing the issues facing refugees. While the strategy is not geared specifically towards efforts to ensure access to sustainable and safe energy sources, it outlines the agency's larger goals and strategies. When thinking about how to approach solutions for this topic, delegates may refer to this as a guide to understanding the ways in which UNHCR is currently seeking to solve problems for the refugees of the world.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2019). *Azraq Fact Sheet*. Retrieved 20 August 2019 from:

<http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR%20Jordan%20Azraq%20Refugee%20Camp%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20January%202019.pdf>

This brief document provides a succinct collection of data relating to the Azraq Refugee Camp in Jordan, which became the first refugee settlement to incorporate a solar power plant in 2017. The Azraq fact sheet includes relevant information such as demographic data, a list of UN and international agencies currently operating within the camp, and updates on the status of health and education for the refugees who live there. Seeing as the Azraq settlement is the focus of the case study, this fact sheet can aid delegates in assessing the how and why Azraq has been successful in implementing solar energy for its residents, as well as how similar successes can be achieved elsewhere.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1)*. Retrieved 19 July 2019 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/1>

The New York Declaration is one of the most recent General Assembly resolutions pertaining to refugee issues. The declaration includes the structures of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, which stands as one of the two current international frameworks for bolstering the capacities of host nations to address large-scale refugee crises. This framework can serve as a starting point for delegates in their research relating to sustainable energy capacity within host nations.

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III. Improving Employment Opportunities for Refugees and Displaced Persons (DPs)

Introduction

The adoption of resolution 62 (I)-(I) on “Refugees and Displaced Persons” by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1946, marked the beginning of the UN’s commitment towards improving employment opportunities for refugees and displaced persons.²⁴¹ The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is at the forefront of UN-lead efforts, initiatives, and programs related to this topic. In 2003, UNHCR expanded its efforts to include internally displaced persons (IDPs).²⁴² According to Article 1 of the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, a refugee is “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.”²⁴³ While there are no official definitions of an IDP, the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* set by UNHCR holds internally displaced persons to be “persons or groups of persons who have been forced to flee, or leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, and habitual violations of human rights, as well as natural or man-made disasters involving one or more of these elements, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border”.²⁴⁴

In situations where an individual is internally displaced or is unable to return to their home country, UNHCR cooperates with Member States to explore and promote sustainable solutions.²⁴⁵ Sustainable solutions for refugees and IDPs can include, but are not limited to, local integration within the host-country, voluntary return, and repatriation.²⁴⁶ According to UNHCR’s *Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern*, sustainable solutions are defined as “stable living conditions for refugees that end the cycle of displacement.”²⁴⁷ It is recognized by the World Bank that the local integration of refugees through improving employment opportunities has a positive impact on a country’s economy and society.²⁴⁸ UNHCR encourages Member States to find alternative durable solutions to improving employment opportunities for refugees and displaced persons.²⁴⁹ According to UNHCR’s *Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, this can be done through the development of policies and programs that help refugees become self-reliant, which helps them integrate into the local society of their host-country.²⁵⁰ Improving employment opportunities for refugees is facilitated by providing them with legal and material instruments to develop livelihoods, through which they can become self-reliant and live harmoniously in their new home.²⁵¹ According to UNHCR’s *Global Strategy for Livelihoods*, legal instruments entails domestic legislation that can assist refugees during their stay in host countries while material instruments entails tangible things that benefit refugees, such as shelter, welfare, food, and transportation.²⁵² Furthermore, some challenges to improving employment opportunities for refugees and displaced persons include lack of integration programs, lack of refugee skill assessment, and legal barriers that

²⁴¹ UN General Assembly, *Refugees and Displaced Persons: Constitution of the International Refugee Organization, and Agreement on Interim Measures to be Taken in Respect of Refugees and Displaced Person A/RES/62(I)*, 1946, p. 99.

²⁴² UNHCR, *UNHCR’s Role in Support of the Return and Reintegration of Displaced Populations: Policy Framework and Implementation Strategy (EC/59/SC/CRP.5)*, 2008, p.1; UNHCR, *Voluntary Repatriation: International Protection Handbook*, 2018.

²⁴³ UN Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*; UNHCR, *Global Appeal 2018-2019*, 2018, p. 202.

²⁴⁵ UNHCR, *Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern*, 2003, pp. 5-6.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ The World Bank, *The Impacts of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: a Development Challenge*, 2010, p. 1.

²⁴⁹ UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, 2013, p. 4.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁵¹ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods: a UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014.

²⁵² *Ibid.*

impede refugees from being employed.²⁵³ Nevertheless, UNHCR plays a key role in facilitating cooperation and leading the way for building the world's capacity to improve employment opportunities for refugees and IDPs.²⁵⁴

International and Regional Framework

The strategy for improving employment opportunities for refugees and displaced persons intersects with one of the UN's most fundamental principles: the protection of human rights.²⁵⁵ The legal framework for UNHCR's engagement in the protection of refugees finds its basis in Article 14 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948), "which recognizes the right of persons to seek asylum from persecution in other countries."²⁵⁶ Article 14 of the UDHR is also the legal background for the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and the *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1967) in which a refugee is defined as someone who is forced to leave their country because of the fear of being persecuted for reasons such as racial, religious, or ethnic discrimination.²⁵⁷ The 1951 Convention sets the legal framework for creating conditions that allow refugees to achieve self-reliance in countries of asylum by detailing that refugees possess economic rights within their host countries, including the right to access employment opportunities.²⁵⁸ Closely linked to these documents is the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR), which aims to ensure the protection of economic rights such as: the ability to exercise employment freely and without discrimination.²⁵⁹ It is important to note that discrimination is one of the main roadblocks for refugees and IDPs when it comes to attaining their right to employment.²⁶⁰ Despite the existence of the UDHR and ICESCR, refugees and IDPs still face several restrictions in finding employment opportunities, including limited access to education and legal restrictions within their host countries.²⁶¹

Improving employment opportunities for refugees and displaced persons also works towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015), which promotes inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.²⁶² Closely linked are the 2016 *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).²⁶³ Both of these revitalized the international community's pledge towards upholding human rights obligations towards refugees and IDPs.²⁶⁴ Furthermore, the *New York Declaration* reaffirmed Member States' support towards enhancing refugee self-reliance under the framework of the SDGs.²⁶⁵

Role of the International System

According to UNHCR, cooperation among Member States, and between States and other actors, is a core principle for capacity building, under which improving employment opportunities exists, and a

²⁵³ ILO, *The Access of Refugees and Other Forcibly Displaced Persons to the Labour Market*, 2016.

²⁵⁴ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods: a UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014, p. 8.

²⁵⁵ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015; UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goals*, 2019.

²⁵⁶ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A(III))*, 1948.

²⁵⁷ UN Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951; *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1967.

²⁵⁸ UNHCR, *UNHCR's Mission*, 2017; UN Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 1951.

²⁵⁹ UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*; UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods: A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014, p. 15.

²⁶¹ De Vriese, *Refugee livelihoods: A Review of the Evidence*, 2006, p. 7.

²⁶² UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015; UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goals*, 2019.

²⁶³ UN General Assembly, *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1)*, 2016.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

principle on which UNHCR relies upon in order to fulfill its mandate.²⁶⁶ Collaboration between international organization such the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Member States, the private sector, and regional organizations such as the African Union (AU) is a key pillar in improving employment opportunities for refugees and IDPs.²⁶⁷ This has been reaffirmed in UNHCR's *Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration: 10-Point Plan in Action*, which recognized that cooperation amongst international actors, along with NGOs and civil society organizations, can be an effective solution in improving employment opportunities for refugees and IDPs.²⁶⁸

The international system, specifically UNHCR, plays a key role in improving employment opportunities for refugees and displaced persons.²⁶⁹ This was reinforced by the *Global Strategy for Livelihoods: A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, which aimed to strengthen UNHCR's own capacity to facilitate refugees' self-reliance through employment opportunities.²⁷⁰ UNHCR accomplished this through the implementation of approaches that improved refugees' access to multiple social fields, especially labor markets, which contributed to a sustainable economic development of host countries and built livelihoods for refugees.²⁷¹ According to UNHCR, livelihoods are "activities that allow people to secure the basic necessities of life, such as food, water, shelter and clothing."²⁷² The Global Strategy for Livelihoods is linked to the achievement of the Global Strategic Priorities (GSPs) set by UNHCR.²⁷³ The GSPs represent several areas in which UNHCR is attempting to strengthen protection, improve life quality, and seek permanent solutions for the integration of refugees in host countries.²⁷⁴ One of the goals set through the GSPs is to establish durable solutions that achieve sustainable reintegration and local settlement in host countries via improving employment opportunities.²⁷⁵

Supporting refugees' livelihoods and developing employment opportunities for them are both fundamental factors for the success of the UNHCR's programs.²⁷⁶ The Global Strategy for Livelihoods is further reinforced through UNHCR's Operational Guidelines on the Minimum Criteria for Livelihoods Programming, which aims to aid Member States in achieving and measuring the greater impact in livelihoods programming.²⁷⁷ Additionally, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has worked with Member States for decades to support effective management of migration and the integration of migrants, especially the most vulnerable, into the labor market and society of their host countries.²⁷⁸ To support OECD countries in improving integration policies, OECD's Secretariat launched the *Horizontal Project on Ensuring Better Integration of Vulnerable Migrants* in 2017.²⁷⁹ In particular, this report is aimed at informing stakeholders, sharing policy experiences and good practices, and helping governments promote the integration of refugees and other vulnerable migrants.²⁸⁰ In addition, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the IOM, and UNHCR worked together to issue the *2019 International Migration and Displacement Trends and Policies Report to the G20*, which analyzes the latest trends regarding labor market integration of migrants and refugees in G20 countries.²⁸¹ Furthermore, the ILO has partnered with the AU Commission to support the sustainable socio-economic

²⁶⁶ UNHCR, *Capacity Building*, 2015.

²⁶⁷ UNHCR, *Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration: The 10-Point Plan in Action*, 2011, p. 10.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ UNHCR, *Capacity Building*, 2015.

²⁷⁰ The World Bank, *The Impacts of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: a Development Challenge*, 2010, p. 12.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods: a UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014, p. 7.

²⁷³ Ibid., p. 9.

²⁷⁴ UNHCR, *Global Strategic Priorities 2014-2015*, 2014, p. 1.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 1, 3.

²⁷⁷ UNHCR, *Operational Guidelines on the Minimum Criteria for Livelihoods Programming (UNHCR/OG/2015/4)*, 2015.

²⁷⁸ OECD, *Ready to Help?: Improving Resilience of Integration Systems for Refugees and other Vulnerable Migrants*, 2019.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ OECD, *2019 International Migration and Displacement Trends and Policies Report to the G20*, 2019.

integration of forcibly displaced populations within host communities in Africa.²⁸² This partnership aims to avail technical assistance in employment and job creation for the Ethiopian government, which aligns with the CRRF mechanism, a commitment made at the Leader's Summit on Refugees, which took place in 2016 as part of the Global Compact for Refugees.²⁸³

The current refugee situation has emphasized the importance of civil societies in assisting Member States and other efforts.²⁸⁴ In an attempt to improve employment opportunities for refugees and displaced persons, some members of civil society have created several online initiatives that aim to promote integration, social cohesion, and work skills.²⁸⁵ Kiron University, an online university for refugees, has played a unique role in providing access to free higher education for refugees and IDPs.²⁸⁶ Notably, UNHCR considers that access to education is one of the grassroots approaches towards improving employment opportunities for refugees.²⁸⁷ Additionally, Microsoft, the IKEA Foundation, UNIQLO, and several other corporations have created partnerships with UNHCR, demonstrating that private-sector entities can have significant impact on supporting UNHCR initiatives to improve employment opportunities for refugees and IDPs.²⁸⁸ These partnerships aim to provide financial and technical support in field operations, which could create sustainable solutions for millions of refugees worldwide.²⁸⁹ Furthermore, civil societies, including the IKEA Foundation, have empowered refugees and displaced persons by diversifying employment opportunities and providing financial and technical support to small businesses.²⁹⁰

Obstacles to Improving Employment Opportunities

Access to employment opportunities may be prohibited or limited by existing legal frameworks, and refugees who manage to attain work do so, in many instances, through the informal economy – the main unregulated labor-sector in many refugee-impacted countries.²⁹¹ According to the ILO's 2016 report titled *The Access of Refugees and Other Forcibly Displaced Persons to the Labour Market*, a minority of the 17.4 million registered asylum seekers and recognized refugees manage to attain employment in the formal economy.²⁹² Due to the regulation that exists within the formal economy, the formal economy's legal framework allows refugees to have satisfactory conditions for employment; this includes, but is not limited to, fair and equal opportunities for decent work and human rights protection within the workplace.²⁹³ Accordingly, UNHCR recognizes the importance of improving community safety and stability through incorporating refugees in the formal economic sector, with minimal legal impediments so that refugees and IDPs may garner its protections.²⁹⁴ Allowing refugees and IDPs access to the formal economy improves the likelihood of them attaining stable means of generating income, as they are better equipped to avoid unsafe labor, criminal acts, and survival sex.²⁹⁵

In 2012, UNHCR created the Operational Guidelines for Livelihood Programing, an initiative that aims to provide guidance and support to field staff and partners who work with refugees.²⁹⁶ The guidelines aim to assist in understanding refugee populations in terms of economic and social capacities including in understanding the refugee context, specifically the market opportunities for the host-country, building

²⁸² ILO, *ILO-AUC Future of Work, Advancing Social Justice, Promoting Decent Work*, 2019.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Zugasti, *Special Report: Civil Society Responses To Refugee Crisis*, 2016.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Kiron, *Kiron At a Glance*, 2016.

²⁸⁷ UNHCR, *Refugee Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion 2019-2023 Global Strategy Concept Note*, 2019 p. 8.

²⁸⁸ UNHCR, *Private Partnerships*, 2019.

²⁸⁹ IKEA Foundation, *About Us*, 2016.

²⁹⁰ IKEA Foundation, *Circles of Prosperity*, 2015.

²⁹¹ ILO, *The Access of Refugees and Other Forcibly Displaced Persons to the Labour Market*, 2016.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods: a UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014, p. 19-21.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ UNHCR, *Livelihood Programming in UNHCR: Operational Guidelines*, 2012, p. 2.

upon positive coping strategies that were previously developed by Member States, communities or private initiatives, and engaging non-traditional actors from the private sector and public institutions.²⁹⁷ In addition, UNHCR's mandate to protect "persons of concern," including refugees through providing improved employment opportunities, is supported by the UNHCR Operational Solutions and Transition Section.²⁹⁸ Furthermore, UNHCR recognizes the important role that private initiatives and partnerships can play in improving employment opportunities for refugees and displaced persons.²⁹⁹ Showcasing the importance of working with the private sector, UNHCR has collaborated with Microsoft in creating the Microsoft and UNHCR App Factory in the Dzleka, Malawi refugee camp, which aims to provide digital skills training and coding capabilities to the refugees residing within the camp.³⁰⁰ Moreover, UNHCR's Private Sector Employment and Entrepreneurship Forum seeks to develop an action plan towards the abolishment of legal barriers for official employment and also outlines the next steps surrounding labor market inclusion of IDPs in Ukraine.³⁰¹

In improving employment opportunities for refugees and displaced persons, UNHCR recognizes the importance of trust building between host countries and refugees.³⁰² This is supported by UNHCR's report on *The Integration of Resettled Refugees* (2013), which emphasized supportive, hospitable, and welcoming communities as important factors in promoting social cohesion.³⁰³ Furthermore, ensuring that the citizens of the host-country are aware of the political, economic, and social situations in the refugees' home country allows citizens to acknowledge and often welcome refugees.³⁰⁴ Accordingly, UNHCR supports initiatives that aim to promote awareness and diverse representation within host countries.³⁰⁵ According to UNHCR's Global Strategy for Livelihoods, refugee workers offer diverse skills, goods, and services to host-country markets.³⁰⁶ UNHCR has emphasized that these varied skills and services lead to market diversification, which in turn, benefits both refugees and host communities.³⁰⁷

Improving Skills, Training, and Language to Increase Employment Opportunities

Per UNHCR, there are several ways through which Member States can improve livelihoods for refugees, most notably via skill development and economic self-reliance.³⁰⁸ Economic self-reliance can be achieved through wage employment, skills training, language improvement opportunities, and safe value chains.³⁰⁹ Safe value chains offer employment or livelihood opportunities for refugees, based on their skills, and do not expose them to major risks to their safety or wellbeing.³¹⁰ The immediate impact of short-term measures, such as cash, food, and rental assistance, related to livelihood programming is evident.³¹¹ In 2008, UNHCR a Livelihoods Unit that is responsible for increasing refugees' access to vital resources and has invested in the technical capacity of its regional field offices.³¹² Despite these efforts, the livelihood programming of UNHCR still reaches very few refugees.³¹³

Member State self-reliance strategies and private-sector initiatives aim to develop unique country-based frameworks that help employers understand how they can diversify and improve their workforce by

²⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 1.

²⁹⁹ UNHCR, *Private Partnerships*.

³⁰⁰ Microsoft, *Increasing Access to Digital Skills Through Partnerships*, 2019.

³⁰¹ UNHCR, *Employment opportunities of asylum seekers in Ukraine*, 2019.

³⁰² UNHCR, *The Integration of Resettled Refugees: Essentials for Establishing a Resettlement Programme and Fundamentals for Sustainable Resettlement Programmes*, 2013, p. 8.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods: a UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014, p. 19-21.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods: A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2016.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ UNHCR, *Safe Value Chains*, 2019.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods: A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2016, p. 14.

³¹³ Ibid.

actively engaging with refugees.³¹⁴ These unique country-based frameworks were launched because refugees still face barriers to employment despite having the requisite skills, experience, and qualifications.³¹⁵ A recent study of organizations supporting refugees into employment in the United Kingdom identified several of these barriers, including limited English-language literacy, limited skills and/or experience, personal circumstances including past trauma or low confidence, and practical barriers to employment including limited access to transportation and/or childcare.³¹⁶

Ensuring the Legal Right to Work

In accordance with Article 23.1 of the UDHR and Article 6 of the ICESCR, the right to work is a human right guaranteed and protected for all people.³¹⁷ In addition, both the Global Strategy for Livelihoods and the ICESCR establish that the right to work allows men and women of all ages and backgrounds to attain livelihoods, be free from discrimination, and enjoy fundamental economic and political freedoms.³¹⁸ However, legal barriers remain one of the main impediments towards the improvement of employment opportunities for refugees.³¹⁹ In many cases, these barriers un-incentivize financial service providers (FSPs) and the private sector from assisting refugees, thereby creating difficult hurdles for refugees to overcome.³²⁰ These barriers can also un-incentivize refugees themselves from approaching said formal financial institutions.³²¹ In addition to the obstacles to financial inclusion, refugees are often faced with uncertainty regarding their duration of stay in host nation and their legal status within these host countries.³²² This uncertainty often causes limited legal protections when it comes to a refugees' right to work or their ability to travel and move within host nations.³²³ Furthermore, when refugees are in the process of escaping from their country of origin, some lose their identification papers.³²⁴ Accordingly, some refugees fear that official registration to regain their identification papers might increase their risk of being detained or deported, and in some cases, refugees may not even have access to registration.³²⁵ In cases where refugees manage to obtain UNHCR registration cards, relevant entities, such as employers and national authorities, may not always recognize the UNHCR registration cards as valid legal identification, which in turn limits the access that refugees and displaced persons have to employment opportunities.³²⁶

In several Member States, refugees and IDPs do not meet certain credit worthiness requirements.³²⁷ This can include an inability of the refugee or IDP to produce a proof of income or to establish credit history, both of which are common requirements needed in order to utilize the host-country's financial services.³²⁸ If a refugee or IDP does not have access to the host-country's FSPs, he or she is more likely to participate in employment opportunities in the informal market, which has minimal to no legal protection, and subsequently entails more risk to refugees and IDPs.³²⁹ One of the main avenues through which UNHCR is attempting to combat this is through its Population Registration and Identity Management

³¹⁴ Milestone Tweed, *Refugee Employment Support in the UK*, 2018.

³¹⁵ BITC for the Refugee Employment Network (REN), *Effective Partnerships: A Report on Engaging Employers to Improved Refugee Employment in the UK*, 2018.

³¹⁶ Milestone Tweed, *Refugee Employment Support in the UK*, 2018, p. 5.

³¹⁷ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948; UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966, p. 4.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ UNHCR, *Serving Refugee Populations: The Next Financial Inclusion Frontier*, 2017, p. 9.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

³²¹ *Ibid.*

³²² *Ibid.*

³²³ *Ibid.*

³²⁴ Sylvester, *Beyond Making Ends Meet: Urban Refugees and Microfinance*, 2011.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ UNHCR, *Serving Refugee Populations: The Next Financial Inclusion Frontier*, 2017, p. 10.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

EcoSystem (PRIMES).³³⁰ This initiative can link digital refugee registration ID cards to methods of payment for refugees.³³¹ If successful, this initiative can provide an access point through which refugees can approach FSPs, which may mitigate the legal barriers they face when accessing employment opportunities.³³² Specific to UNHCR, it has outlined important steps towards ensuring the right to work for refugees and IDPs.³³³

Barriers to Education

According to UNHCR's *Refugee Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion 2019-2023 Global Strategy Concept Note*, access to quality education is the foundation for ensuring that refugees gain the skills and competencies they need to ensure employment and successfully integrate in local economies.³³⁴ Refugees and IDPs are facing various educational barriers towards improved employment opportunities.³³⁵ These barriers are often intertwined, and as a result, require tailored strategies to address their complexity.³³⁶ The *Declaration on the Future of Education* by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization outlined that education can play a major role in ensuring improved employment opportunities while also encouraging sustainable development.³³⁷ Furthermore, the declaration recognizes that education plays an important role in providing refugees and IDPs with an access point to integrate themselves into local communities.³³⁸ It is important to note that UNHCR differentiates between several levels of education: basic education, life-skill education, primary, secondary, tertiary, and non-formal education.³³⁹ According to UNHCR's Education Field Guidelines, completion of the full cycle of education increases the likelihood of sustainable livelihoods for refugees and IDPs, while promoting safer refugee communities and self-reliance.³⁴⁰ However, refugees still face limited access to schooling, as many are unable to complete the full cycle of education.³⁴¹ Furthermore, the enrollment rates for refugee children, globally, remain low, at an estimated 63%, with the global enrollment rate for children at 91%.³⁴²

UNHCR categorizes barriers hindering access to education, which in turn impact employment opportunities, as hard and soft barriers.³⁴³ Soft barriers are defined as those that exist within an education setting, such as a refugees' inability to speak the host-country's language, racial or other forms of discrimination, and even bullying, which in many cases may cause refugees to stop attending school.³⁴⁴ Hard barriers include mostly legal and financial barriers, such as financial obstacles, lack of transportation, poor wages, missing official identification documents, and lack of sufficient capacity in educational establishments, all of which can act as roadblocks towards school enrollment.³⁴⁵ The importance of the aforementioned hard and soft barriers is further emphasized in UNHCR's Education Strategy, which aims to act as a blueprint in providing a sustainable learning environment for refugees to

³³⁰ UNHCR, *PRIMES*, 2019.

³³¹ UNHCR, *Serving Refugee Populations: The Next Financial Inclusion Frontier*, 2017, p. 10.

³³² *Ibid.*

³³³ UNHCR, *Livelihoods*, 2016; UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods: a UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014, p. 19-21.

³³⁴ UNHCR, *Refugee Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion 2019-2023 Global Strategy Concept Note*, 2019 p. 8.

³³⁵ Educate A Child, *Barriers to Education and Strategies to Address Them*, 2016.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷ UNICEF, *World Education Forum Adopts Declaration on the Future of Education*, 2015.

³³⁸ Dryden-Peterson, *Refugee Education: A Global Review*, 2011, p. 7.

³³⁹ UNHCR, *Education: Field Guidelines*, 2003, p. 59.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³⁴¹ Dryden-Peterson, S, *The Educational Experience of Refugee Children in Countries of First Asylum*, 2015, p. 1.

³⁴² *Ibid.*; UNHCR, *Stepping Up: Refugee Education in Crisis*, 2019, p. 6.

³⁴³ UNHCR & REACH, *Barriers to Education for Syrian Refugee Children in Lebanon: Out of School Children Profiling Report*, 2014, p. 12-13.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*; Dryden-Peterson, S, *The Educational Experience of Refugee Children in Countries of First Asylum*, 2015, p. 1-2.

³⁴⁵ UNHCR & REACH, *Barriers to Education for Syrian Refugee Children in Lebanon: Out of School Children Profiling Report*, 2014, p. 12-18.

attain primary education.³⁴⁶ Additionally, it is important to note that the quality of education itself can also act as a barrier for refugees in accessing employment opportunities.³⁴⁷ This is emphasized in situations where the quality of education is low, or when refugees are placed into education programs that are below their knowledge level and thus do not challenge refugees to learn new skills.³⁴⁸

Conclusion

Emphasized in the *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, the UDHR, and UNHCR's mandate, improving employment opportunities is a necessary component concerning the field operations of UNHCR.³⁴⁹ With the Global Strategy for Livelihoods and 2030 Agenda, current approaches towards improving employment opportunities for refugees are enhanced; nonetheless, more can be achieved.³⁵⁰ Employment opportunities for refugees and IDPs can still be improved, specifically through education, cultural integration, promotion of livelihoods and curtailing legal barriers that impede refugees from seeking or having employment.³⁵¹ Additionally, vulnerable groups, which include women, children, and elderly people, need to be integrated into strategic approaches, and recommendations need to be mindful of different contexts and the unique situation of each Member State.³⁵² With a rising number of displaced persons and emergency cases, UNHCR has to adapt and further develop current plans to secure a sustainable approach towards improving employment opportunities and creating self-reliance mechanisms.³⁵³ Improving employment opportunities for refugees and displaced persons is thus a multifaceted process involving numerous actors working alongside UNHCR.

Further Research

Reflecting on the challenges ahead, delegates should consider the following questions: how can improving employment opportunities be ensured through durable solutions? How can the international community provide sustainable employment opportunities for vulnerable groups? Delegates should also consider what creative and innovative ways can be found to improve employment opportunities for refugees and displaced persons. Which partnerships are needed to provide employment opportunities? In what way can new technologies be used more efficiently to improve employment opportunities for refugees and displaced persons?

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<http://www.unhcr.org/partners/partners/3f1408764/framework-durable-solutions-refugees-personsconcern.html>

This document includes important information related to the procedures that UNHCR follows to address forced displacement. In section 3, this document offers a general understanding of the 4Rs approach (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and

³⁴⁶ UNHCR, *Education Strategy: 2012-2016*, 2012, p. 8.

³⁴⁷ Dryden-Peterson, *The Educational Experience of Refugee Children in Countries of First Asylum*, 2015, p. 1-2; De Vriese, *Refugee livelihoods: A Review of the Evidence*, 2006, p. 7; UNHCR, *Promoting Livelihoods and Self-reliance: Operational Guidance on Refugee Protection and Solution in Urban Areas*, p. 7.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ The World Bank, *The Impacts of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: a Development Challenge*, 2010, p. 12; UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods: a UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014, p. 7; UNHCR, *Global Strategic Priorities 2014-2015*, 2014, p. 1; UNHCR, *Refugee Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion 2019-2023 Global Strategy Concept Note*, 2019 p. 8; ILO, *The Access of Refugees and Other Forcibly Displaced Persons to the Labour Market*.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Livelihoods: a UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*, 2014, p. 7; UNHCR, *Stepping Up: Refugee Education in Crisis*, 2019, p. 6.

³⁵³ Ibid.

Reconstruction) and technical recommendations on how this approach can be applied. Delegates can use these recommendations to understand the technical effectiveness of this approach and the facilities that it can provide given today's new displacement trends. It will be useful as delegates create solutions aligned with UNHCR's approach on return and reintegration and how that ties into improving employment opportunities.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2011). *Promoting Livelihoods and Self-reliance: Operational Guidance on Refugee Protection and Solution in Urban Areas*. Retrieved 16 August 2019 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/4eeb19f49.pdf>

This report deals with the key principles and operational guidelines to promote livelihoods and self-reliance for refugees. Closely linked to the report Ensuring Access to Education: Operational Guidance on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas, this report helps to understand the interdependence between education, employment opportunities, and livelihoods. This report allows delegates to understand the different avenues that could lead to improved employment opportunities for refugees and IDPs.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2012). *Education Strategy: 2012-2016*. Retrieved 16 August 2019 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/5149ba349>

The Education Strategy Report provides UNHCR's strategic education objectives with a special focus on the Member State level. Based on the 1951 Refugee Convention and taking into consideration human rights instruments, the Millennium Development Goals, and strategic priorities, the report offers a "bigger picture" on access to education for refugees and displaced persons. The outlined objectives help to structure the topic of refugee education and how it may be applied to Member States. The report will be a useful source for delegates to gain a better understanding of the recent Education Strategy and the included GSPs, as education is one of several factors that have important impact on employment opportunities for refugees and displaced persons.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2014). *Global Strategy for Livelihoods: A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018*. Retrieved 16 August 2019 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/530f107b6.pdf>

The document, issued by UNHCR, contains the UNHCR strategy guidelines for the years 2014-2018 regarding livelihoods. First, it outlines the guiding principles of the strategy, such as protection, equity and the Age, and a Gender and Diversity (AGD) approach. Second, the document focuses on the relatively current situation of refugees and IDPs. Third, the strategic objectives are clearly pointed out: the main ones promote the right to work and the right to development, as well as facilitate economic self-reliance. The last section of the document is devoted to different strategic approaches aimed at improving livelihoods, including employment, for refugees. This document is a useful source for delegates since it outlines some of UNHCR's goals and discusses possible approaches in attaining them. Importantly, the document allows delegates to understand that promoting livelihoods is an important avenue towards improving employment opportunities.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). *Operational Guidelines on the Minimum Criteria for Livelihoods Programming (UNHCR/OG/2015/4)*. Retrieved 16 August 2019 from: <http://www.unhcr.org/publications/operations/54fd6cbe9/operational-guidelines-minimum-criteria-livelihoodsprogramming.html>

Closely linked to the Global Strategy for Livelihoods 2014-2018, the Operational Guidelines on the Minimum Criteria for Livelihoods Programming outlines the main operational guidelines that should be met when conceptualizing and conducting livelihoods programs. All nine criteria are precisely explained and linked to their respective requirements. Each section makes references to existing support mechanisms. In addition, delegates should play close attention to the findings from the "Operational Solutions and Transitions" section since they directly relate to improving employment opportunities. Being that the guidelines are intended to maximize the impact of livelihoods programming, delegates will be able to evaluate if their ideas, determine if

they meet necessary requirements, and decide if they have the realistic potential to be implemented.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2018). *UNHCR Global Appeal 2018-2019*. Retrieved 16 August 2019 from:

http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/ga2018/pdf/Global_Appeal_2018_full_lowres.pdf

This Global Appeal, regularly produced by UNHCR, is the latest for the years 2018-2019. Its information has been used by governments, private donors, partners, and other interested parties to more fully understand the financial requirements of the body's work for the upcoming year. Delegates may find this useful in their research as it highlights the work of UNHCR, as well as its financial needs and available resources.

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