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### **Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions**

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

### **Report of the Secretary-General**

#### *Summary*

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/134 on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa. It updates information contained in the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the Assembly at its seventieth session ([A/70/337](#)) and covers the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016. The report has been coordinated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and includes information provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, the International Labour Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund. It also includes information drawn from publicly available reports by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre.

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\* [A/71/150](#).



## I. Introduction

1. New and ongoing conflicts have generated further displacement in the Africa region<sup>1</sup> over the past year. Violence in Burundi, the Central African Republic, Nigeria and South Sudan displaced hundreds of thousands of people internally and across borders, while the deteriorating situation in Yemen caused significant numbers to flee across the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden and seek safety in different countries in the region. Meanwhile, protracted conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Somalia and the Sudan prevented millions from returning home.

2. As at the end of 2015, there were around 12 million internally displaced persons in Africa.<sup>2</sup> Their largest numbers were concentrated in the Sudan (3.2 million), Nigeria (2.1 million), South Sudan (1.7 million), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1.5 million) and Somalia (1.2 million). Sub-Saharan Africa was home to the largest number of refugees in the world (an estimated 4.4 million). Refugees originating from the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan accounted for 80 per cent of that figure.

3. The majority of countries in Africa continued to uphold their long-standing tradition of hospitality towards and solidarity with refugees. Five African countries were among the world's top 10 refugee-hosting countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Chad. Despite this generosity, the economic, political and security challenges associated with hosting large numbers of refugees for an extended period cannot be underestimated.

4. The failure to address the root causes of conflict, together with insecurity and widespread human rights violations, were the main reasons behind the chronic nature of displacement in the region and the insufficient progress made with regard to the securing of solutions for displaced people. Meanwhile, food insecurity affected many refugees and internally displaced persons, with levels of acute malnutrition, stunting and anaemia on the rise. Aid agencies faced obstacles to gaining access to affected populations, which further exacerbated the humanitarian situation in some operations. In some of the most affected areas, food insecurity prompted negative coping strategies, including survival sex. Other challenges included the failure to ensure the civilian nature of asylum and of refugee camps, incidents of sexual and gender-based violence and insufficient funding for humanitarian operations.

## II. Subregional overviews

### A. East Africa, including the Horn of Africa

5. East Africa, including the Horn of Africa, had the largest displaced population on the continent, with some 3 million refugees and 6.2 million internally displaced persons as at the end of 2015. Several countries hosted refugees from two or more different conflicts. Uganda was home to more than 525,000 refugees from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as an increasing number from

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<sup>1</sup> In the present report, "the Africa region" refers to sub-Saharan Africa only.

<sup>2</sup> According to statistics from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, available from [www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org).

South Sudan; 79 per cent were women and children. The largest host country in Africa was Ethiopia, which received nearly 75,000 new arrivals from East Africa and Yemen during 2015. This brought the total number of refugees in Ethiopia to 736,000. Altogether, some 87,000 people from Yemen arrived in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and the Sudan, although population movements from the Horn of Africa to Yemen also continued. Owing to its geographical location, Djibouti has increasingly become both a country of transit and of destination with regard to mixed movements to and from the region.

### **South Sudan situation**

6. Intensified conflict between rival factions, a deepening economic crisis and growing food insecurity in South Sudan triggered new waves of displacement. As of June 2016, as the country prepared to mark its fifth year of independence, nearly 2.6 million people had been uprooted from their homes, 1.7 million of whom had been displaced internally and 870,000 across borders. Over 65 per cent of the displaced were children, of whom more than 34,000 were registered as unaccompanied or separated. Forced recruitment, looting by armed militias, sexual and gender-based violence and the abuse and killing of civilians continued. In some cases, those fleeing were reportedly prevented from crossing borders, while others were trapped in conflict areas and were unable to escape. Humanitarian access also remained a challenge.

7. The severe underfunding of humanitarian operations continued to hamper relief efforts. The “South Sudan regional refugee response plan”, which covers the activities of various United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the four refugee-hosting countries, was 17 per cent funded as at the end of June 2016. Only life-saving assistance was available for the majority of refugees; funding shortfalls affected other essential activities, including education. As aid organizations struggled to receive new arrivals, basic services were overstretched and facilities overcrowded.

### **Somalia situation**

8. The humanitarian situation in Somalia remained fragile, as insecurity prevailed in most districts in southern and central Somalia. Over 42,000 people in the southern region were newly displaced as a result of military operations that were launched in July 2015, and a further 90,000 people were temporarily displaced by armed conflict in Gaalkacyo. As at the end of 2015, over 1.2 million people in Somalia were internally displaced and the number of Somali refugees in the region stood at 1.1 million.

9. Despite the volatile situation, some progress was made in the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees. Over the past year and a half, some 14,000 refugees from the Dadaab camps in Kenya returned to Somalia. In May 2016, the Government of Kenya reiterated its intention to close the Dadaab refugee camps. It subsequently clarified, however, that any returns would be voluntary, in accordance with the tripartite agreement signed with the Government of Somalia and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and that Kenya would continue to honour its obligations towards refugees under national and international law. Guided by consultations with Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda and Yemen, the Global Initiative on Somali Refugees, launched in 2013,

continued to facilitate a dialogue on sustainable solutions for Somali refugees. In December 2015, the United Nations launched a solutions initiative for internally displaced persons in Somalia, with the aim of engaging the Government, humanitarian organizations and development partners in designing a countrywide solutions strategy for internally displaced persons. Meanwhile, the onward movement of Somali refugees, notably from Ethiopia and the Sudan, remained a concern, including because of the large numbers of unaccompanied and separated children and the risks associated with trafficking and smuggling.

## **B. Central Africa and the Great Lakes**

10. Crises in Burundi, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to produce large-scale displacement: on average, approximately 100 individuals arrived each day in the various countries of the subregion. As at the end of June 2016, there were over 1.6 million refugees and 1.9 million internally displaced persons in the Central Africa and the Great Lakes subregion, with the Democratic Republic of the Congo accounting for 92 per cent of the internally displaced persons.

### **Burundi situation**

11. The political situation in Burundi remained at a stalemate following election-related violence that began in April 2015. Ongoing violence forced some 263,000 Burundians across borders into the United Republic of Tanzania (138,000), Rwanda (77,300), Uganda (24,000) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (23,000). Just over half of those refugees were children; 35 per cent were under 5 years of age. Although the number of refugees fleeing Burundi slowed from more than 2,500 per day at the peak of the crisis in May 2015 to around 280 per day early in 2016, those who managed to escape reported ongoing attacks, killings, torture and widespread fear. Contingency plans were in place to respond to any further displacement across borders during the year. In particular, agencies struggled to address instances of sexual and gender-based violence and to decongest overcrowded camps. Inside the country, an estimated 1.1 million people required humanitarian assistance and protection.

### **Central African Republic situation**

12. During the reporting period, the Central African Republic witnessed renewed violence ahead of long-awaited presidential elections. However, the inauguration of a new President in March 2016 brought hope for peace, reconciliation and stability in the country. Refugees in three of the four host countries (Cameroon, Chad and the Congo) were able to take part in the elections.

13. Despite political progress, the humanitarian situation remained dire, with some 2.3 million people, or half of the population, in need of assistance. Health-care structures were destroyed during the conflict and less than 35 per cent of the population had access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities. Around one in five Central Africans were displaced by the conflict; some 391,500 individuals were displaced internally and there were 467,000 refugees seeking safety in Cameroon, Chad, the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Some 36,000 internally displaced persons from minority groups remained trapped in enclaves, and between 6,000 and 10,000 children were estimated to have been forcibly recruited by

armed groups. Access to the more than 7,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan in the east of the country was also a major challenge, since humanitarian workers were targeted by non-State armed groups.

### **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

14. The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo deteriorated owing to increasing political instability and clashes among armed groups, both foreign and national, particularly in the eastern parts of the country. By the end of the reporting period, some 2.3 million people were displaced, either internally or externally, as a result of armed conflict and violence. Some 200,000 people were displaced in the eastern provinces in the first quarter of 2016, bringing the total number of internally displaced persons to 1.8 million. Rape continued to be used systematically as a weapon of war, disproportionately affecting internally displaced and refugee women. A recent assessment by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in North Kivu found that only 23 per cent of internally displaced women and 8 per cent of returnee women were registered for ration cards, and although women produced 75 per cent of food in the country, men remained the main recipients of aid in this sector, with 96 per cent receiving agricultural kits. As a result of a lack of solutions for over half a million refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in neighbouring countries, UNHCR continued to implement its resettlement initiative for Congolese refugees and expects to be able to surpass its initial goal of referring at least 50,000 refugees for resettlement by 2017.

15. The Democratic Republic of the Congo also hosted over 380,000 refugees, mainly from Burundi, the Central African Republic and South Sudan. A sharp increase in incidents against humanitarian actors, including ambushes and abductions, restricted their access to those populations.

## **C. West Africa**

16. As at the end of 2015, the subregion hosted some 295,000 refugees and had 2.7 million internally displaced persons. The signing of a peace and reconciliation agreement in mid-2015 notwithstanding, a sporadic resurgence of violence in Mali prevented voluntary return at anticipated levels. Violence in Nigeria escalated, with insurgents attacking civilian populations, including across borders.

### **Lake Chad Basin**

17. In Nigeria, more than half of the 2 million internally displaced persons were children, and 90 per cent of such persons found refuge in host communities, placing a heavy strain on local resources. During the reporting period, the increased activity by non-State armed groups, sometimes operating across Nigeria's borders, caused an additional 155,000 Nigerians to flee the country and triggered internal displacement in Cameroon (157,000), the Niger (130,000) and Chad (66,000). The total number of internally displaced persons reached over 2.4 million. An estimated 96,000 refugees returned to Nigeria, sometimes involuntarily, from Cameroon and the Niger, owing in part to ongoing military operations. The registration of returnees was ongoing.

18. The Second Regional Security Summit, held in Abuja from 12 to 14 May 2016, underlined the need to take immediate action to address the humanitarian crisis and widespread hunger affecting internally displaced persons, refugees and host communities in the four countries concerned. The following month, the Government of Nigeria hosted a regional protection dialogue on the Lake Chad Basin to tackle the worrisome increase in protection incidents, including cases of refoulement. At the close of the dialogue, the Governments of Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria adopted the “Abuja action statement”, in which they promised to take concrete steps to respond to the most pressing protection needs of affected populations.

#### **Mali situation**

19. Despite expectations that conditions in Mali would be conducive to voluntary return, more than 134,000 Malian refugees remained in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger at the end of the reporting period, and some 36,700 Malians were internally displaced. Among the 477,000 returnees in Mali, protection and humanitarian needs remained substantial. In addition, food insecurity continued to be prevalent throughout the country, affecting some 424,000 people.

### **D. Southern Africa**

20. Southern Africa continued to host some 1.4 million displaced persons as at the end of December 2015, including 1.2 million asylum seekers, 190,000 refugees and 4,700 returnees. Ongoing large-scale mixed movements from other parts of the continent fuelled the growing concerns over national security and human trafficking and smuggling. However, identifying people in need of international protection proved difficult owing to constraints faced by the national asylum systems in the subregion. South Africa remained the primary country of destination for most asylum seekers despite a resurgence in xenophobia in 2015. The escalation of conflict in Mozambique resulted in the forced displacement of some 12,000 people fleeing to Malawi. Most have since returned home.

## **III. Protection**

### **A. Protection landscape**

21. While large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers were granted protection during the reporting period, core protection challenges were observed in various parts of the continent, with instances of refoulement and physical and administrative obstacles precluding refugees from gaining access to protection and assistance. Some Governments imposed strict security measures aimed at preventing terrorism but without the safeguards necessary to uphold the principle of non-refoulement. Human trafficking and smuggling, sexual and gender-based violence, forced recruitment and difficulties in maintaining the civilian character of asylum presented difficulties throughout the region. Against that backdrop, the United Nations worked with the Governments concerned to strengthen protection systems and responses.

22. Despite the ongoing generosity shown by many African States hosting large numbers of refugees for prolonged periods, several national asylum systems had not

fully established fair and efficient procedures. Furthermore, restrictions on movement and access to employment limited opportunities for refugees to become self-reliant and contribute meaningfully to their host communities. Owing to increasingly restrictive border control measures in regions of origin, transit and destination, many refugees and asylum seekers resorted to using criminal networks, with reports of human trafficking along the routes.

23. Registration remained an important means of protection, by providing a record of the status of individuals; protecting against refoulement, arbitrary arrest and detention; enabling refugees to access services and assistance; fostering freedom of movement; and keeping families together. Over the past year, efforts were focused on registering new arrivals, updating registration data and renewing documentation through verification exercises. UNHCR introduced a new biometric identity management system in Cameroon, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

24. Family tracing and the reunification of unaccompanied and separated children continued to be a priority in displacement emergencies throughout the region. In East and Southern Africa, more than 37,000 unaccompanied and separated refugee children were assisted in family tracing and reunification and/or placement in interim foster care over the past year. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) launched a tracing application for mobile phones to support efforts to trace the family members of some 3,300 separated Burundian refugee children.

25. Many of the region's internally displaced persons faced similar challenges. Of the 54 members of the African Union, 40 are signatories to the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (the Kampala Convention) and as at the end of June 2016, 25 had acceded to it. Djibouti ratified the Convention during the reporting period. In December 2015, to mark the third anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention, the African Union Commission organized a capacity-building workshop in Addis Ababa and invited government representatives and legal and protection experts to support efforts to amend national legislation and policies to implement the key provisions of the Convention. In that regard, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia were developing national frameworks for internally displaced persons.

## **B. Asylum and migration**

26. During the reporting period, regional dialogues and consultative processes on mixed movements in Africa sought to respond to growing protection concerns. The Valletta Summit on Migration, held in November 2015, was aimed at strengthening cooperation with regard to migration and forced displacement between Africa and Europe. The summit resulted in an action plan outlining a number of priority initiatives and the establishment of a €1.8 billion emergency trust fund. Within this new framework, the European Union, in partnership with relevant Governments, began to address forced displacement and onward movements in the Sahel region, the Lake Chad Basin and the Horn of Africa.

27. A number of economic and political factors accounted for the complex migration patterns in Africa. With the support of the International Organization for Migration, United Nations organizations and concerned Governments developed



strategies and plans of action in response to mixed movements. In June 2015, they finalized a strategy to address human trafficking, kidnappings and the smuggling of persons by strengthening alternatives to onward movements to enhance security and mitigate the risks of trafficking and smuggling, design protection responses for victims and build national capacities.

28. The International Labour Organization (ILO), with the support of the Government of Ethiopia, implemented a one-year technical cooperation project to prevent the exploitation of migrants, including victims of trafficking, through economic and social empowerment. ILO worked closely with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Ethiopia to support its efforts to address the needs of reintegrating returnees. In the southern part of the continent, the Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa submitted its updated workplan on refugee protection and mixed movements to the member States of the Southern African Development Community, for implementation until 2018. These efforts were aimed at supporting member States in adopting and implementing concrete measures to manage mixed migration.

### **C. Addressing sexual and gender-based violence**

29. An estimated one in five refugee or displaced women continued to experience sexual violence.<sup>3</sup> In urban areas, displaced women were at risk of human trafficking by organized crime networks, of harassment, exploitation and discrimination by property owners and employers, and of arbitrary arrest, detention and refoulement. In some cases, insufficient food rations, a lack of livelihood opportunities, barriers to national public services and the lack of documentation for refugees and asylum seekers caused displaced women to adopt negative coping strategies, including survival sex.

30. United Nations organizations responded to sexual and gender-based violence through community engagement, expanded access to essential services and legal aid facilities and the training of paralegals on the related crimes of groups ranging from the military to community leaders. In the Central African Republic, the United Nations Population Fund provided medical and psychosocial care to some 61,000 survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, including 30,000 victims of rape and sexual slavery. During the reporting period, the Government of Zambia, in partnership with United Nations organizations, launched two fast-track courts, the first of their kind, to ensure that cases of sexual and gender-based violence were prosecuted in an expedited manner.

31. In West Africa, United Nations organizations and partners provided support services and protection to refugee women and girls with regard to sexual and gender-based violence. In Adamawa State in Nigeria and eastern regions of Cameroon, some 29,000 people in refugee and host communities, including 16,900 women, 9,200 men and 2,700 children, took part in sensitization activities on women's rights, the risks of early and forced marriages, and sexual and gender-based violence. An emergency programme in Uganda was targeted at host communities and 30,000 women refugees to help to prevent and respond to violence. In Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda,

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Vu and others, "The prevalence of sexual violence among female refugees in complex humanitarian emergencies: a systematic review and meta-analysis", *Public Library of Science Currents: Disasters*, vol. 6 (March 2014). Available from [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4012695/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4012695/).

evidence-based prevention programmes also raised awareness and engaged men and boys in transformative behavioural change.

#### **D. Child protection**

32. Conflict and violence across the region continued to pose increasing risks for children, including physical and psychological harm, forced recruitment and sexual and gender-based violence. Between November 2015 and February 2016, some 6,900 grave violations against South Sudanese children were reported. With a view to contributing to a safer environment for displaced children, United Nations organizations strengthened child protection systems through monitoring and referral mechanisms and established child-friendly spaces. Identifying children at heightened risk, including unaccompanied and separated children, remained a significant challenge. In that regard, resources for targeted responses to child protection needs were inadequate. Legal assistance and psychosocial support services remained overstretched.

33. In the Gambella region of Ethiopia, 11 child-friendly spaces were established for over 76,000 children, and 19 help desks were created, serving over 15,000 children. In the Lake Chad Basin, girls faced heightened protection risks, including forced marriages and sexual abuse, while boys risked being abducted and forcibly recruited. Southern Africa saw the strengthening of community-based protection systems through the establishment of additional child protection committees. A national steering committee was created in South Africa to facilitate access to national services and expedite the process of providing care to unaccompanied children.

### **IV. Statelessness**

34. The right to a nationality is increasingly being recognized as an important human right. Most sub-Saharan African States are parties to relevant international instruments, including 22 that are parties to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and 14 that are parties to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. As of late June 2016, Mali and Sierra Leone had acceded to both conventions and Madagascar, Liberia and Somalia were in the process of reforming their nationality laws. The adoption of a draft protocol on the right to nationality in Africa by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in August 2015 paved the way towards ending statelessness on the continent.

35. Positive steps have been reported in regional efforts to combat statelessness. The Southern African Development Community began to address statelessness at the subregional level through one of its four priority sectors in the "Southern Africa strategic plan of action to address mixed and irregular migration 2015-2018", which was adopted in July 2015. One of its goals includes promotion of the accession to and implementation of both of the statelessness conventions by the end of 2018.

36. In Côte d'Ivoire, the authorities had received, through a special naturalization procedure, more than 120,000 applications for Ivorian nationality from long-term residents as at the end of 2015. As a result, more than 2,000 stateless persons acquired Ivorian nationality. Although the procedure closed in January 2016, applications continued to be processed; thousands of others expect to obtain Ivorian

nationality by the end of 2016. In East Africa, including the Horn of Africa, significant progress was made in birth and civil registration in Uganda, where the births of some 4,700 refugee children were registered, and in Kenya, where efforts were made to ensure the birth registration of children in communities at risk of statelessness.

## **V. Humanitarian response and constraints**

### **A. Delivery of humanitarian assistance**

#### **Food and nutrition**

37. During the reporting period, the World Food Programme (WFP) provided food to 8.2 million refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees in 25 countries across sub-Saharan Africa, including through cash transfers, seasonal support, nutrition assistance, school meals and “food assistance for assets” programmes. Since most refugees were either partially or entirely dependent on aid, nutritional needs were met through direct food assistance, cash or vouchers, which increased diet diversity. In particular, WFP and other United Nations organizations worked to ensure that refugee children, women and vulnerable groups had access to age-appropriate, nutritious food as part of malnutrition prevention and treatment programmes. WFP provided fortified food to pregnant and nursing women and children under 5 years of age. Livelihood and self-reliance initiatives also accompanied food assistance in some protracted refugee situations.

38. Owing to funding shortfalls, food ration reductions threatened the nutrition and food security of many displaced persons. Between September 2015 and February 2016, cuts in food distribution affected 1.97 million, or 56 per cent, of refugees across 15 countries. Refugees in Kenya and Ethiopia saw their rations reduced by between 20 and 30 per cent, as did some refugee groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

39. Reduced food assistance had far-reaching consequences for refugee children. In 2015, some 143,000 refugee children under 5 years of age were treated for acute malnutrition. Of 93 sites surveyed, UNHCR reported that levels of stunting, which is an indicator of chronic malnutrition, were high in 65 sites (70 per cent). Of 90 sites surveyed, levels of anaemia among refugee children under 5 years of age fell within acceptable standards in only six sites (7 per cent). In response to high malnutrition rates among children under 5 years of age in refugee and internally displaced settings, UNICEF implemented therapeutic treatment programmes for some 1,200 refugee children in camps in Rwanda and promoted infant and young child nutrition and supplementary feeding programmes. In South Sudan, an emergency programme, which included the UNICEF and WFP nutrition response, entered its second year in July 2015, reaching 53 per cent more children in 2015 than in 2014.

#### **Health**

40. During the reporting period, a number of factors, including overcrowding in camps, inadequate water supply, poor sanitary conditions and poor vaccination coverage, increased the risk of outbreaks of infectious diseases. Sudden shifts in the

composition of communities as a result of new arrivals also led to outbreaks, including of measles, cholera, malaria and meningitis.

41. Through mobile clinics, strengthened local health-care systems and enhanced surveillance, preparedness and response to diseases, United Nations organizations and partners brought much-needed health care to more than 1.5 million refugees inside and outside camps across the region. Promoting access to national health-care structures was one of the key components of achieving sustainability. The World Health Organization and health partners supported States in their efforts to include refugees in such structures.

42. The United Nations and its partners also advocated for the inclusion of refugees and other displaced persons in national vaccination campaigns. In Ghana, as at the end of 2015, 87 per cent of refugees from Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Togo had gained access to the national health insurance scheme. In Ethiopia, vaccines against measles and polio were delivered, and over 19,600 refugee children were vaccinated against measles and 21,000 were vaccinated against polio.

43. Through a multisectoral response, including with regard to public health, nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene, the quality of water and sanitation facilities in refugee camps improved across the region, particularly in Chad, Malawi, Rwanda and South Sudan. Progress was made with regard to community mobilization on hygiene and health risk education, as well as case management and surveillance. Mortality rates stabilized: most of the refugee sites surveyed fell within acceptable standards. In the Lake Chad Basin, the United Nations Population Fund supported 30,000 safe deliveries, distributed over 50,000 dignity kits, delivered reproductive health supplies to 326 health facilities and provided more than 40,000 women with family planning information and services. Overall, there was a marked improvement for refugees accessing reproductive health services in 2015.

44. New unmet public health priorities have emerged in recent years. Cervical cancer prevention is a priority for which new solutions and innovative models that increase access to affordable and quality health-care services for girls and women were piloted in several countries by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, with the support of United Nations organizations. In Liberia, Rwanda and Uganda, refugee girls who were 11 years of age were successfully included in national human papillomavirus vaccination programmes.

45. Emergencies and conflicts have disrupted services and limited access to life-saving assistance for many people living with HIV. In 2015, United Nations organizations and partners promoted and implemented community-based programmes to prevent treatment disruption for people living with HIV in communities affected by the Ebola crisis. During the reporting period, more references to refugees or internally displaced persons living with HIV were found in national strategic plans. With a view to ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2030, such integration was essential, including to prevent the transmission of HIV from mother to child.

**Education**

46. Meeting the education needs of displaced children and youth across the region, particularly in conflict-affected situations, remained a considerable challenge. Low enrolment in schools, congested classrooms, inadequate water and sanitary facilities and poor teaching qualifications affected the overall quality of education, which often fell below international standards. For many displaced children and youth, other challenges included difficulties with the language of instruction and the lack of access to secondary education. Working groups and tools were created to improve the quality of teaching and data collection and to diversify the donor base to mobilize the necessary resources. United Nations organizations, in collaboration with national authorities and other partners, also supported the inclusion of refugee children in national education systems to ensure sustainable access to education while improving services for both refugees and host communities.

47. Refugee children had access to national education systems in 30 of 37 countries in sub-Saharan Africa surveyed by UNHCR. Not all refugee children had access to education in the Central African Republic, Eritrea, Liberia and the Sudan, while the authorities in Burundi, Djibouti and the United Republic of Tanzania were making efforts to address the situation in their countries.

48. United Nations organizations continued to support education needs in both protracted displacement and emergency situations through the expansion of safe learning spaces, capacity-building for teachers and strengthened partnerships with key education actors. They also provided cash grants and vouchers, promoted accelerated education and distributed school supplies. Education was included as a priority in the emergency responses to the refugee situations in Burundi, the Central African Republic and South Sudan.

49. In the Kakuma refugee camps in Kenya, access to primary education improved; the enrolment rate rose from 65 per cent to 73 per cent in 2015, despite the continued arrival of South Sudanese refugees and the relatively low participation of girls. In Chad, enrolment rates also increased from 68 per cent to 77 per cent, and in Cameroon, enrolment rates for Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region rose from 61 per cent to 90 per cent. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations and its partners provided support to the Ministry of Education to ensure inclusion of Burundian refugee children in primary schools located in close proximity to the Lusenda refugee camp. In Somalia, access to education for refugee children and youth was guaranteed by the Somaliland Ministry of Education in 2015. Refugees were able to enrol at any public school and obtain the same education and qualifications as local students.

50. In South Sudan, an estimated 970,000 children, many of whom were internally displaced, were prevented from going to school in 2015. During the year, some 100 schools were occupied, destroyed or closed. UNICEF scaled up its “Back to Learning” programme, which reached 240 per cent more children than in 2014. WFP supported attendance with school meals for students and high-energy biscuits or snacks at schools affected by a crisis or emergency. Meal assistance often included take-home rations to families with children, particularly girls, who attended school regularly. Inadequate funding hampered the provision of basic education services to refugees and internally displaced persons. On average, the funding gap in the education response over the past year was 77 per cent (ranging

from 31 per cent in South Sudan to 90 per cent for the Burundian refugees in Uganda), amounting to a shortfall of approximately \$21 million.

### **Livelihoods**

51. In sub-Saharan Africa, there were few livelihood opportunities owing to low investment and limited job opportunities, competition over natural resources, scarce financial resources, poor financing and capacity, and climate change. People who were forced to flee their homes and leave their assets behind faced an even greater share of the challenges in that regard.

52. Across the region, agriculture was the most important sector of the economy, accounting for over half of employment and one fifth of the gross domestic product. During the reporting period, refugees in Chad received high-yield maize and sorghum seeds from the Ministry of Agriculture to increase production, as well as technical assistance. In Ethiopia, Somali refugees and host communities were supported through irrigation schemes. Other agricultural programmes that included displaced persons were under development in the Gambia, Ghana, Uganda and Zambia.

53. In the Sudan, the United Nations Development Programme supported 5,200 households, 40 per cent of which included internally displaced persons and refugees in crisis-affected communities, in developing skills and assets, and promoted self-reliance. Some 52 per cent of beneficiaries reported increases in their annual incomes. In South Sudan, 2,200 women and girls from displaced and host communities acquired vocational skills through training programmes provided by UN-Women and engaged in income-generating activities and “cash for work” programmes.

54. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, United Nations agencies and partners carried out pilot projects in four communities to provide conflict-affected populations with sustainable livelihood opportunities. As a result, more than 105,000 people had improved access to basic social services and over 84 per cent of the participants had invested their savings into economic activities, including business development.

55. United Nations organizations, including ILO and UNHCR, collaborated on market-based approaches to livelihoods that benefited refugees and host communities. Market assessments were conducted and livelihood strategies developed to improve opportunities for refugees to participate in the marketplace in 11 countries. New initiatives were launched in Kenya and Uganda to develop job opportunities through teleworking.

## **B. Security and humanitarian access**

56. Attacks and threats against humanitarian workers limited the effective delivery of humanitarian aid and, in some cases, restricted access to displaced populations in many operations in sub-Saharan Africa. In East Africa, including the Horn of Africa, 29 humanitarian workers were killed and 38 were wounded in security incidents and a further 13 aid workers were kidnapped. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 20 aid workers in North Kivu were abducted and later released. In the Central African Republic, NGOs reported that the number of attacks against aid workers was among the highest in the world.

57. In southern and central Somalia, humanitarian access remained limited owing to roadblocks and checkpoints established by non-State armed groups. Security escorts were required owing to security incidents and threats made against aid workers. In the Sudan, access was also restricted in much of the Jebel Marra in Darfur and in areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile States. Insecurity and violence and government restrictions on transport movements and clearances continued to hamper humanitarian access.

58. United Nations organizations faced significant challenges in providing assistance to over 2 million internally displaced persons in Nigeria and more than 150,000 refugees and internally displaced persons in the Niger owing to insecurity. In the Lake Chad Basin, humanitarian escorts were required on key roads, and of particular concern to the security of aid workers and beneficiaries alike were landmines, unexploded ordnance and the threat of improvised explosive devices. Following the signature of the peace agreement in Mali, access had improved, but NGOs reported that security incidents were three times more frequent than in 2014.

## **VI. Solutions**

### **Voluntary repatriation**

59. Although the creation of conditions conducive to voluntary repatriation proved challenging, efforts to facilitate voluntary return in safety and dignity continued. In 2015, some 4,600 people repatriated to Angola, primarily from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. An estimated 4,700 Rwandans also returned home voluntarily, bringing the total number of returns to over 160,000 since 2000. With a view to supporting those efforts, UNHCR facilitated a regional ministerial-level meeting in October 2015 on its comprehensive strategy for the Rwandan refugee situation, during which government representatives agreed to renew efforts to ensure full implementation of the strategy by the end of 2017.

60. In October 2015, at a pledging conference hosted by the European Commission and UNHCR in Brussels, representatives from over 40 countries and organizations pledged \$105 million to support Somali refugees in Kenya, help them to return voluntarily to Somalia and facilitate their reintegration. At the conference, a plan of action designed to improve socioeconomic conditions in Somalia and support refugees preparing for return from the Dadaab camps in Kenya was adopted. As of June 2016, some \$68 million that had been pledged during the conference had yet to be allocated.

61. In West Africa, the repatriation of Ivorian refugees from Liberia resumed at the end of 2015; around 18,000 refugees were assisted in returning home by the middle of 2016. During the reporting period, the voluntary return of Malian refugees continued to be facilitated, including through cash assistance for returnees.

### **Resettlement and alternative pathways to admission**

62. Resettlement and humanitarian entry programmes remained a crucial protection tool, in particular when addressing the needs of vulnerable refugees. In West Africa, emphasis was placed on finding durable solutions for some 70,000 refugees living in situations of protracted displacement, including Mauritanian refugees in Mali and Senegal, Togolese refugees in Ghana, Ghanaian refugees in

Togo, Senegalese refugees in the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, and Ivorian refugees across the subregion.

63. In 2015, resettlement submissions from Africa reached 38,900, the highest number ever recorded. The largest number of submissions involved refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia. During the reporting period, there were departures to resettlement countries from 39 countries of asylum, including Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. A group resettlement initiative was also initiated in the United Republic of Tanzania with a view to resettling some 32,000 Congolese refugees in the next four years, mainly to the United States of America.

64. States in the region are increasingly collaborating to explore the use of complementary pathways to protection and solutions, including in West Africa. Agreements by the Economic Community of West African States that allow nationals of member States of the Economic Community to move and work freely within the subregion may provide solutions for refugees and even facilitate pathways to permanent residency and naturalization.

#### **Local integration and increased access to rights**

65. While opportunities for local integration remained limited, it proved to be a solution for some refugees living in protracted displacement. In West Africa, Liberians in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mali and Sierra Leone received a final set of passports and residence permits. Advocacy efforts helped to accelerate the naturalization of Rwandans in Benin, Guinea, Mali, the Niger, Senegal and Togo. The granting of citizenship to more than 151,000 former Burundian refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania and 36,000 of their descendants continued to represent a notable advance in local integration. In Southern Africa, the Government of Zambia approved expanded criteria for the local integration of Angolans, thereby offering all former Angolan refugees who had arrived in Zambia before 2003, as well as some 4,000 Rwandans, an opportunity to integrate locally.

66. The gradual inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced and stateless persons in their host countries contributed to the progressive attainment of a range of solutions, including voluntary return. While some countries maintained their reservations about key provisions of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, such as the right to work and freedom of movement, others made important progress towards ensuring the greater inclusion and enjoyment of rights of displaced persons. For example, local authorities in the Gambia assisted refugees in acquiring land for residential and farming purposes, and the Government granted a waiver of an income tax previously levied on refugees.

## **VII. Coordination and partnerships**

67. In 2015 and early in 2016, the joint note by UNHCR and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on mixed situations<sup>4</sup> continued to be implemented, where applicable, in refugee operations and complex humanitarian emergencies. Support for implementation included the provision of technical guidance and capacity-building. Inter-agency missions to Cameroon and the Sudan

<sup>4</sup> Available from [www.unhcr.org/53679e679.pdf](http://www.unhcr.org/53679e679.pdf).



also provided support to Humanitarian Coordinators and humanitarian country teams to enhance the coordination and delivery of assistance for all affected populations, including refugees and internally displaced persons. To ensure a more holistic overview of sectoral requirements, the needs and response requirements for refugees were incorporated into the humanitarian needs overviews and humanitarian response plans of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

68. The transformative agenda of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee continued to provide a framework for focused support and enhanced inter-agency coordination. A system-wide level 3 emergency response remained in place for South Sudan until May 2016, enabling a sustained expansion of the response to the crisis. Since key operational benchmarks had been met by May 2016, the level 3 response was deactivated, although it was stressed that sustained capacity, engagement and resources would remain critical in South Sudan as the humanitarian crisis continued to worsen.

69. The Emergency Directors Group of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee continued to support the implementation of the transformative agenda. The Chair of the Group travelled to Nigeria late in 2015 to take stock of the impact of the deteriorating crisis in the north-east of the country and at the regional level. The Senior Transformative Agenda Implementation Team also undertook support missions to Chad and the Central African Republic late in 2015 and early in 2016. Strengthening the collective leadership of humanitarian country teams, accountability to affected people and the centrality of protection in humanitarian action remained crucial objectives for the United Nations and its humanitarian partners.

### **World Humanitarian Summit**

70. The first ever World Humanitarian Summit was held in Istanbul, Turkey, in May 2016. At the close of the Summit, some 1,500 commitments were made, including on upholding international protection standards, strengthening national legislation and policies to protect internally displaced persons, and supporting the implementation of the Kampala Convention. Participants resolved to explore new approaches to reducing internal displacement and better addressing the needs of refugees and internally displaced persons, in particular by creating livelihood and education opportunities and providing more predictable and multi-year funding.

### **ProCap**

71. During the reporting period, the inter-agency Protection Standby Capacity Project (ProCap) facilitated the deployment of 10 Senior Protection Officers to support the United Nations in the Central African Republic, northern Nigeria and South Sudan. The Senior Protection Officers also developed and carried out protection strategies in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad and South Sudan. In addition, deployments were focused on assisting Governments in implementing national policies for internally displaced persons and durable solutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia. At the regional level, ProCap officers were deployed to 25 countries, including to respond to the Burundi situation.

72. As of February 2016, UNHCR assumed the role of Chair of the Solutions Alliance, which brought together host and donor Governments, United Nations organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector, international financial

institutions and academic institutions to seek approaches to resolve situations of displacement and prevent new ones from becoming protracted. In 2016, new national groups for the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda were established, adding to the national groups for Somalia and Zambia.

73. Over the past year, UNHCR and the World Bank deepened collaboration at the global policy and field levels. Three joint studies (in the Sahel, the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa) provided regional situation analyses of forced displacement and informed programming priorities. In May 2016, they also began collaboration on a \$175 million project entitled “Development response to displacement impacts project in the Horn of Africa” to improve access to basic social services, expand economic opportunities and enhance environmental management for refugee-hosting communities in parts of Djibouti, Ethiopia and Uganda.

## **VIII. Funding**

74. In 2015, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator allocated \$246 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund to support life-saving activities in 24 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. This included allocations from the Fund’s rapid response window (\$172 million) and its window for underfunded emergencies (\$74 million), and represented 52 per cent of the \$470 million allocated by the Fund worldwide. Some \$148 million enabled aid agencies to provide humanitarian assistance in response to displacement crises in Africa. A total of 172 Central Emergency Response Fund projects in Africa provided assistance and protection to refugees, internally displaced persons and other affected populations, including host communities.

75. In 2015, the Central Emergency Response Fund also provided funding in response to several regional displacement crises in Africa. During 2015 and January 2016, \$58 million of funding went towards assisting people who had been displaced as a result of conflict in the Lake Chad Basin. In September 2015, the Fund provided \$21 million to help people displaced by violence in Darfur, including internally displaced persons in the Sudan and refugees in Chad, as well as host communities.

76. Aid agencies in the Sudan received the highest amount of funding to respond to the displacement crisis (\$22 million), followed by those in Chad (\$17 million), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (\$15 million), Cameroon (\$14 million) and the Niger (\$14 million). Nearly \$11 million was also provided in response to conflict and displacement in South Sudan, \$12 million in response to the displacement crisis in the Central African Republic, and more than \$5 million for Yemeni refugees in Somalia. The largest sectors receiving financial support were food (\$37 million), refugee assistance (\$20 million) and health (\$16 million).

### **Country-based pooled funding mechanisms**

77. As of May 2016, country-based pooled funds allocated \$426 million for humanitarian activities in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan, 70 per cent of which went to projects addressing needs caused by displacement. In South Sudan, 99 per cent of the pooled fund (\$129 million) went to people affected by displacement, while 67 per cent of country-based pooled funding for the Democratic Republic of

the Congo (\$50.4 million) was allocated to respond to displacement. A similar trend was observed in the Central African Republic, Somalia and the Sudan, where between 43 and 80 per cent of the funds allocated went towards meeting the needs of the displaced.

## **IX. Conclusions and recommendations**

78. Levels of forced displacement in sub-Saharan Africa continued to grow for a sixth consecutive year, forcing hundreds of thousands from their homes and preventing millions of others from returning. This trend is deeply concerning, in particular because it involves a rising number of children and, as noted above, because of the high number of refugee and displaced women experiencing sexual violence. A renewed commitment to address the root causes of conflict, including discrimination, exclusion, growing competition over diminishing resources and impunity, is urgently needed to reverse this trend. Strong collaboration between Governments, affected populations and communities, civil society, United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations remains as crucial as ever to respond to the growing humanitarian needs on the continent.

79. New approaches that recognize that displacement has both humanitarian and development dimensions emerged in some countries, which enabled refugees to become self-sufficient, including through freedom of movement and employment. Multi-donor and multi-year programmes to assist the forcibly displaced and host communities increased, but needs continued to outpace resources. Legal frameworks underpinning the rights of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons were enacted at the national and regional levels to strengthen international protection and assistance instruments. These positive developments notwithstanding, more is needed to prevent conflict and to ensure that national laws and systems provide effective protection to the growing number of forcibly displaced people, in line with international obligations. Against that backdrop:

(a) I urge all States to spare no effort to resolutely address the root causes of all forms of displacement and to intensify their efforts to foster peace, stability and prosperity in Africa with a view to preventing conflict and alleviating human suffering;

(b) I remind all States of their obligation to respect the right to asylum, including the principle of non-refoulement, to keep their borders open to those who flee persecution and conflict, and to find ways of providing appropriate and adequate protection along migratory routes to protect those on the move, especially children and women, from exploitation, trafficking, violence and death;

(c) I encourage the United Nations and its Member States to remind parties to conflicts to respect the civilian and humanitarian character of camps and settlements for refugees and internally displaced persons, and to condemn any attacks on them. All State and non-State actors must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access to people in need, including refugees and internally displaced persons. Humanitarian personnel, supplies and facilities must also be safeguarded and protected;

(d) All African States that have not yet acceded to the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness are urged to do so. I also encourage further action in identifying and addressing incidents of statelessness in Africa in line with the UNHCR global campaign to end statelessness by 2024;

(e) I call upon Member States to ensure that the specific needs of internally displaced persons and refugees are addressed while implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, in line with the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit;

(f) I also call upon Member States and international partners to address the particular needs of youth between 15 and 24 years of age, including through innovative and accessible livelihood and education opportunities, to provide hope and enable them to build a future;

(g) I call upon human rights bodies and humanitarian agencies to better monitor, prevent and respond to serious human rights violations, in particular those committed against women and children, for example through the strengthening of protection mechanisms established by the Security Council in its resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1960 (2010);

(h) I call upon States to include refugees and internally displaced persons, particularly women, in national and intercommunal dialogue and to engage them, along with local and national governments, civil society and United Nations organizations, in matters that affect their daily lives, including policing, justice, access to government services and psychosocial support, as well as sexual and gender-based violence and HIV prevention and response activities;

(i) United Nations organizations, States and the private sector are called upon to contribute to new innovations in technology for energy and the environment and to make them available to the forcibly displaced and host communities in Africa as a way to mitigate the impact of protracted displacement situations;

(j) I encourage and support new partnerships with non-traditional actors and donors to broaden the funding base for humanitarian action in Africa, and I call upon the international community to provide flexible and unearmarked funding in a predictable manner to enable humanitarian organizations and affected States and communities to respond to the unprecedented needs.