



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

UNHCR

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Notre/Our code: DER/2015/002

Re: UNHCR's Management Response to the 2014 MOPAN Assessment

Dear Ms. Henning and Mr. Tabah,

UNHCR would like to express its appreciation to the MOPAN members - in particular to the United States and Canada who led the process - and to the evaluation team for undertaking the 2014 MOPAN Assessment Report.

This assessment has provided insights and analysis on different aspects of the organization's management, as well as valuable observations regarding the impact of our humanitarian interventions.

UNHCR is very pleased with the overall positive assessment of its work by its key partners both at the Headquarters and field level. We appreciate the constructive discussions that took place throughout the process and during the presentation of the final report on 30 January 2015.

The MOPAN initiative's objective of providing a framework for a unified organizational assessment tool, thus reducing the number of bilateral assessments, is very welcome. We look forward to continuing this constructive collaboration and partnership with MOPAN members.

Please find attached UNHCR's Management Response to the 2014 MOPAN Assessment Report.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Endres
Director

Division of External Relations

Ms. Wendy Henning
Attaché, RMA
Permanent Mission of the United States of America
to the United Nations Office at Geneva

Mr. Joshua Tabah
Counsellor, Humanitarian Affairs
Permanent Mission of Canada
to the United Nations Office at Geneva

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UNHCR's Management Response to the 2014 MOPAN Assessment

MOPAN Methodology:

The 2014 MOPAN is well researched and is based on a wider range of documentary evidence, structured surveys and interviews with the key stakeholders than the preceding 2011 report. The visits of the evaluation team to UNHCR HQ and their contacts with the field were very useful and enabled the team to gain a thorough understanding of UNHCR's organizational structure and processes.

Strategic Management:

UNHCR is pleased with the positive assessment of UNHCR's focus on humanitarian results, mainstreaming of gender equality and integration of emergency preparedness and response, as well as the confirmation that country strategies are based on reliable needs assessments.

In terms of areas for improvement, UNHCR notes that the recommendations include: translating the organizational mandate into operational objectives; linking the corporate results framework with its strategic plan; further strengthening contingency planning; and reviewing the short-term nature of corporate strategy, given the protracted refugee situations.

It should be noted that UNHCR currently does not operate with one organization-wide strategic plan, but uses a range of measures to cascade down policy directions and strategic guidance, which is found to be effective given the highly dynamic operating environment.

The recommendation on contingency planning has been addressed by UNHCR's new Policy on Emergency Response Activation, Leadership and Accountabilities released in January 2015, and based on lessons learned in recent emergencies. This includes a stronger focus on giving priority to ensuring adequate and timely preparedness, both at global and country levels.

Furthermore, UNHCR is considering a shift towards multi-year planning to strengthen its solutions-oriented approach, which will be piloted in selected operations.

Operational Management:

UNHCR appreciates the positive assessment of its operational strengths in the delegation of authority to the country and regional offices, the conformity of external audit processes to international standards, and the measures put in place for staff security and the reinforcement of the Code of Conduct.

UNHCR notes that the areas indicated for improvement include: the tracking of expenditures by results; greater transparency with regard to the prioritization of country-level funding allocations and performance appraisal; follow-up on poorly performing programmes; the tracking of performance in addressing evaluation recommendations; and responding to the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR).

Measures to improve the results-based expenditure reporting and the process itself are under way to strengthen the linkage between financial and results management.

The prioritization of country allocations is a complex undertaking involving many factors, including the political context in the country, the scale and severity of the needs and the level of earmarked contributions. UNHCR's funding model, based on voluntary contributions,

requires some allocations to be transferred in tranches, and this forces the organization to take difficult decisions not only at Headquarters, but also at regional and country levels. UNHCR will work to provide more systematic and clear communications to its partners on the prioritization process.

UNHCR has recently revised its policies on performance management and on promotions, and is currently reviewing its contracts policy to emphasize the link between performance and rewards/promotions and measures to be taken in the case of unsatisfactory service.

UNHCR recognizes the need for improved follow-up on poorly performing programmes and is looking into how to measure the results more effectively.

The evaluation recommendations are now systematically tracked through a management response matrix tool. This practice is overseen by the Internal Compliance and Accountability Committee.

The newly created Inter-Agency Coordination Service at UNHCR will follow up more closely on reporting on the QCPR resolution. As part of UNDAF and a member of the UNCT and undg, UNHCR works closely with UN development agencies and Governments to realize the strategic objectives of the QCPR.

Relationship Management:

UNHCR appreciates the positive assessment of: its quick response to changing circumstances; the quality of its policy dialogue and advocacy efforts; and its achievements in engaging with partners and inter-agency cooperation. It is also pleased about the recognition of its efforts to align its policies and systems with the IASC Transformative Agenda, including the development of strategies, trainings, guidance and tools for the clusters that UNHCR leads.

The Office will continue to work to improve its leadership/co-leadership of clusters and coordination with operational partners. UNHCR has worked with OCHA and other stakeholders to include the refugee response as a distinct chapter in country-level IASC Strategic Response Plans. As part of the roll-out of the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) and the preparation of the Joint UNHCR-OCHA *Note on Mixed Situations: Coordination in Practice* several inter-agency and inter-divisional missions were undertaken to field operations to provide technical guidance.

Knowledge Management:

UNHCR is pleased to see the recognition of the achievements of the evaluation function, despite limited resources. With regard to the concerns about the independence of the function, UNHCR's revised Evaluation Policy submitted for the High Commissioner's review proposes to eliminate dual reporting lines and improve coverage of the evaluations. UNHCR is moving towards the use of predominantly external evaluators to emphasize the independence of the evaluations. Additional funding has been allocated to increase coverage of the evaluations.

UNHCR notes the areas flagged for improvement in reporting on performance at the organization-wide level and in using lessons learned to inform organizational work process and programmes.

UNHCR has been consistent in its communication to donors about the challenges of aggregating results across its operations which span a wide array of contexts and population groups. It agrees that there is still room for improvement on how best to represent the organization-wide results and is committed to continue discussions with stakeholders.

In addition, the Global Focus website will soon allow for a wider display of information – both aggregated and disaggregated – at organization-wide level, to the extent that UNHCR's systems permit. UNHCR will also continue to enhance the dissemination of lessons learned.

UNHCR Relevance and Evidence of Progress towards Results:

UNHCR is pleased with the strong rating of the organization's relevance and its reputation for leadership in convening stakeholders to set global priorities. The report also notes that UNHCR has made progress towards organization-wide results and presentation of results at country level.

UNHCR agrees with the usefulness of evaluations to further underpin the evidence of progress achieved. Furthermore, UNHCR is working on simplifying the Results Framework and improve reporting at the corporate level.

UNHCR, February 2015

