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Excellency,

I would like to thank the Republic of Korea for serving as the Institutional Lead for the 2017-2018 MOPAN assessment of UNHCR. UNHCR considers the MOPAN assessment as an important learning and donor accountability tool. It provides us with a useful overview of where the organization stands in key management areas and how we can further improve our organizational effectiveness. We value this joint approach that has the potential to streamline donor assessments in line with the Grand Bargain commitments.

The MOPAN assessment 2017-2018 took place during a critical juncture: when the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) was being developed, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) was being rolled out, and at the time when UNHCR had embarked on the largest internal transformation in its recent history, amidst the broader context of UN reform. The findings of the MOPAN assessment are very timely and are feeding into this ongoing transformation process.

There is a strong management awareness within UNHCR about the need for reform, and we are very pleased that the MOPAN assessment validates the course that UNHCR has taken. We have already started to address many of the areas for improvement, notably: decentralization of decision-making; Results Based Management (RBM) revision; gender equality; strengthening the evaluation function; and moving towards more sustainable approaches through the implementation of the GCR.

In the attached management response you will find more detailed response on the key areas of improvement noted in the MOPAN report.

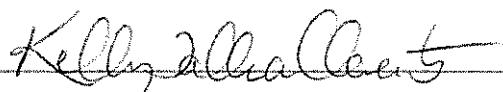
We also appreciate the recognition of UNHCR's strengths highlighted in the report, including clarity of mission and mandate, relevance across the international system, focus on human rights and protection, accountability to affected populations, field presence, coordination with partners, strong risk management systems and generation of global knowledge products.

Her Excellency  
Ms. Ji-Ah Paik  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea

Finally, despite some improvements in the MOPAN methodology, UNHCR would like to note some methodological issues, notably that it still remains largely geared toward development agencies. We also note that, due to insufficient evaluation coverage, the MOPAN assessment included older evaluations where data was collected in 2014 and 2015, which has impacted the assessment findings under results section, including where significant changes have taken place since data was collected.

Once again, UNHCR thanks the Republic of Korea for its leadership of the 2017-2018 MOPAN assessment. We trust you will find the attached management response useful.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Kelly T. Clements

cc: Ms. Suzanne Steensen, Head of MOPAN Secretariat  
Mr. Mitch Levine, Policy Analyst, MOPAN Secretariat

### **Strategic architecture & RBM systems:**

The MOPAN report notes that UNHCR has a clear long term vision, but the strategic structure lacks coherence, highlighting that the Strategic Directions 2017-2021 do not have a clear link to results and are not completely congruent with UNHCR's results framework.

We are fully cognizant that there is a need to improve coherence between strategic vision and corporate results. To address this we have embarked on the Results Based Management (RBM) revision taking into consideration the developments related to UN reform, the development of Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), and Grand Bargain commitments as well as UNHCR's decentralization and regionalization processes. These external and internal transformation processes necessitated redefining the requirements and widening the scope of the RBM revision.

The long-term vision for system-wide refugee responses was articulated in the GCR adopted in December 2018 and it now includes a detailed [Indicators Framework](#) issued in July 2019 that was developed following extensive consultations with a broad range of stakeholders.

As UNHCR is revising the RBM system, we have also conducted a broader review of the organization's programme management function, drawing on the findings of the 2016 headquarters review which highlighted a need for the function to be strengthened and bring together aspects of assessment, planning and budgeting. The outcome of this review was the basis of the High Commissioner's decision to create a new Division bringing together programme, budget, programme partnership and RBM to help drive a more strategic, coherent and efficient approach to how we plan and manage our work.

The new Division of Strategic Planning and Results will guide and support strategic planning, including multi-year planning; ensure that annual planning and resource allocation processes are simplified, evidence-based and coherent; strengthen results-based management and reporting/analysis on impact and outcomes; and strengthen partner management and monitoring. In doing so, the new Division will focus on simplifying our processes and tools to plan for and report on outcomes, serving as an engine for strategic thinking, and ensuring that we deliver on the commitment to devolve greater planning, budgeting and resource allocation responsibilities to the Regional Bureaux and country operations.

### **Results-based budgeting, efficient delivery, cost efficiency:**

The MOPAN report notes that results-based budgeting is not yet fully integrated into UNHCR systems, though elements exist and reforms are underway.

UNHCR would note that its current RBM system fully integrates results-based budgeting principles. We recognize that there is a need to improve reporting on costing of results at the global level, as well as on linkages to Sustainable Development Goals. This is being addressed by the current RBM revision.

The MOPAN report further notes that UNHCR has scope for improvement on efficiency and timeliness, including scaling up resources when conditions require. At the same time, the report notes that UNHCR has robust financial and accountability systems, which is evidenced by highly satisfactory scores on most indicators under KPI 4: "Cost and value consciousness, financial transparency". This confirms that UNHCR has very strong policy frameworks and control mechanisms in relation to cost efficiency.

As part of its internal transformation process, UNHCR is proactively harnessing data and new technologies to measure efficiencies, optimize resources and improve business processes, while reducing waste and decreasing costs. As part of the UN reform, UNHCR is also co-leading the UN Business Innovation Group to increase efficiencies at the system-wide level in order to direct more resources to core programming and delivery.

Our approach to management efficiencies consists of:

- Using data to measure efficiencies, identify challenges, and determine the way forward.
- Optimizing current resources and improving processes to reduce waste and work smarter.
- Exploring technology and automation to strengthen accountability.
- Leveraging partnerships and economies of scale to deliver services more comprehensively.

A few concrete examples of savings achieved:

- With continuous efforts to optimize the use of resources, UNHCR was able to reduce the share of Headquarters costs from 9 per cent in 2010 to 5.6 per cent in 2018. Management and administrative costs have remained at 4 per cent between 2010 and 2018.
- As part of Human Resources (HR) Transformation process, the development of an artificial intelligence system enabled faster pre-screening of the over 30,000 talent pool applications per year. Digitalization of personnel data, including e-contracts, saved 950 days of work for HR staff and 222 days for personnel worldwide.
- Efficiencies and costs savings through improved ICT solutions such as video-conferencing. For example, consolidating UNHCR's web presence resulted in nearly USD 2.5 million in savings over 3 years.
- UNHCR continues to expand its registration and case management tools, biometrics solutions and PRIMES global distribution tool.
- The roll-out of the Global Fleet Management system has resulted in gains of USD 17.5 million over two years.
- UNHCR continues to expand the use of cash, biometrics, registration, case management, and distribution tracking tools, as well as deploying innovative, cost-effective, and environmentally sustainable solutions for water delivery, waste management and energy.
- In Finance, Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is being piloted in the Programme Budget Service, Accounts and Financial Services and in Treasury in an effort to see how these new technologies can be leveraged for efficiency gains.

### **Evidence-based planning and programming:**

MOPAN notes that UNHCR has a strong evidence-based focus under its 2017-2021 Strategic Directions, however, considers that there are technical weaknesses in the RBM architecture and that the use of performance data in planning and design varies.

UNHCR aims to become a data-driven organization and has been strengthening evidence-based planning. Data is a corporate priority and one of the pillars of UNHCR's transformation. While UNHCR has a long history of collecting and using operational data, it has been fragmented across many different systems, impeding the organization's ability to aggregate and leverage its various data sets.

UNHCR has recently developed a Data Transformation Strategy, which will allow consolidating data-related initiatives, modernizing data architecture with inter-operable systems and leveraging innovation and technology. UNHCR sees this piece of the reform process as crucial to ensure collection of consistent, credible data across the organization to monitor progress and impact and to inform forward planning and prioritization of resources.

Furthermore, UNHCR is collaborating with IOM, UNOCHA and the World Bank on joint data collection. UNHCR has significantly increased the scale and scope of joint initiatives with the World Bank on data and analysis in recent years and a UNHCR-World Bank Joint Data Centre was established in Copenhagen to enhance evidence-informed planning and decisions.

### **Evaluation:**

MOPAN notes that the evaluation function has made recent strides but still does not meet the required standards of the UN system. There are two areas highlighted where the report notes that improvements are needed: 1) in budgetary, structural and work planning independence of the Evaluation function; and 2) in systematic and consistent evaluation use, knowledge management and learning.

On the first issue, UNHCR considers the evaluation function to be fully independent (operationally, structurally, behaviourally and budgetarily) in line with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards. Under the 2016 Evaluation Policy, the evaluation function comprises both:

- Behavioural independence - the ability to initiate evaluations at all levels, communicate evaluation results without undue influence by any party, including management, and to carry out evaluative work without fearing negative effects on career development; and
- Organizational independence - the central evaluation function is positioned independently from management functions in order to carry out the responsibility of setting the evaluation agenda for UNHCR, supported by adequate resources to execute it, with the ability to submit evaluation reports to the appropriate level of management and decision-making in the Organization).

The Head of Evaluation reports to the High Commissioner, who is appointed by the General Assembly. UNEG Norms and Standards acknowledge that the reporting line for the Head of Evaluation can be to the Governing Board or the Head of Entity, whichever is applicable. UNHCR is governed by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. It does not have a Board of Directors, therefore the only viable reporting line can be to the High Commissioner. Finally, the Head of Evaluation has full discretion over the workplan, and is adequately resourced to carry out all evaluations without interference. There is a separate budget line for Evaluation, and resources for Evaluation have been increasing steadily since 2017.

On the second issue, UNHCR acknowledges that learning and knowledge management systems need to be reinforced and is revising its RBM system as part of this effort. Evaluation findings and recommendations will be incorporated more systematically in the new RBM, including for planning and strategic course correction. Over the last two years, the use of evaluation findings to develop strategies, improve programmes and demonstrate impact has increased considerably, and continues to be strengthened.

### **Gender equality:**

The MOPAN report notes that UNHCR refreshed its approach to gender equality and diversity, but that human and financial resources constrain effective delivery and that there are weaknesses in related accountability systems.

Gender equality is a high priority for UNHCR and we take these findings very seriously. UNHCR issued the revised [Age, Gender and Diversity \(AGD\) Policy](#) in 2018 and developed the 2019-2020 Action Plan for the roll-out of the Policy with the goal of strengthening corporate ownership and accountability on gender equality, along with our technical capacity and gender

analysis. UNHCR is committed to dedicate additional resources to strengthen gender equality inclusion. For example, in 2019, with support from the Netherlands, UNHCR dedicated additional gender equality resources to cover eight countries in MENA and East Africa as part of a multi-year partnership project with the Netherlands, World Bank, UNICEF, ILO, and IFC.

Further, we are pleased to relate that the 2018 UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) assessment of UNHCR has identified the following achievements:

- Bolstering gender-related SDG results through the 2018 AGD Policy with five core actions on gender equality reflecting target indicators within SDG 5.
- Sustained efforts to address gender-based discrimination in nationality legislation through the #IBelongCampaign, the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness by 2024.
- Wide dissemination of knowledge on gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Efforts towards strengthening gender parity and gender-responsive performance management through leadership and commitment to diversity and inclusion.

At the operational level, UNHCR mainstreams gender equality in all of its interventions. Our participatory assessments include consultations with women and girls, to understand their specific needs and vulnerabilities and help us to design gender-sensitive programmes. Below are examples of areas where UNHCR contributes demonstrably to gender equality results, which also constitute UNHCR's key commitments to women and girls:

- Equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in decision-making and in community management structures.
- Individual registration and documentation of women and girls, equal access to nationality.
- Equal access to cash-based assistance and distribution of food and core-relief items, prioritizing women at heightened risk.
- Removing barriers and facilitating access to education for girls and women at all levels.
- Economic empowerment of women and girls through livelihoods opportunities.
- Prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence.

We acknowledge that there is still a great deal to be done, including on strengthening the collection of sex and age-disaggregated data and tracking resources allocated to gender at the organizational level. We are working on addressing these issues, including through the new RBM system. In the meantime, we have improved the reporting of age and gender disaggregated data in our Global Report, various data portals and operational updates.

UNHCR is strengthening capacity of staff through gender equality learning programmes, trainings and support to country operations on gender equality programming. As part of knowledge sharing among UNHCR operations and partners, UNHCR has also initiated a series of publications on promising practices in promoting gender equality (in the MENA and Asia regions) available on the webpage <https://www.unhcr.org/women.html>.

Through gender audits, UNHCR has supported the inclusion of gender equality in the GCR. Gender audits are also being conducted for the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) related processes and the 2019 annual NGO Consultations.

UNHCR strives to have a diverse and gender-balanced workforce and has introduced policies and special measures that will help more women to take up assignments, including at a higher grade. In line with the Secretary-General's system-wide strategy on gender parity, UNHCR is on track to meet the objectives of gender parity by 2023, well ahead of strategy's deadline of

2026. Currently, 43 per cent of our total workforce is female, and in the international category women represent 46.3 per cent of the workforce, which is a 3 per cent increase over the last five years.

Furthermore, UNHCR has launched the Women and Humanitarian Leadership Forum to engage staff in dialogue on how the organization can strengthen the systems, structures and culture in support of a more enabling, inclusive work environment. Annual awards are issued for Team Achievements in Gender Integration as well as excellence in Leadership and Management, which specifically includes the promotion of gender equality.

We regularly update Member States about UNHCR's efforts on the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment; more information can be found in the report [Our Fight Against Sexual Misconduct - 2018 Review](#).

Unfortunately, the MOPAN methodology does not allow UNHCR to fully reflect its work in this area, as efforts made on achieving gender parity and on prevention of sexual exploitation and harassment are not yet formally part of the methodology.

### **Relationship Management**

MOPAN notes that UNHCR is strongly committed to partnerships but assesses that there is scope for the improvement of operational coherence with UN partners at field level.

We take note of this recommendation. We will continue to strengthen the cooperation with UNHCR's key partners in the UN system, both at the central and field levels.

Some examples of recent developments include global data sharing agreement with WFP and joint principles for targeting assistance, agreement among UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF and OCHA on key principles for a common cash platform open to other agencies, and the joint UNHCR-IOM regional inter-agency coordination platform for Venezuela situation.

The decentralization and regionalization initiative, reflecting broader UN reform efforts, is expected to further advance UNHCR's strategic partnerships at the point of delivery.

### **Sustainability:**

The MOPAN assessment refers to evaluation findings that critique what they describe as UNHCR's short-term programming and weak strategic links to transition and sustainability strategies. At the same time, the evaluations recognize UNHCR's strengths in delivering essential life-saving assistance on a large scale and the provision of protection and basic services to millions, reflecting the type of interventions that were prioritized and the impact of underfunding on sustainability in protracted situations.

As mentioned above, MOPAN has used older evaluations and, while the findings may have been relevant at the time data was collected, UNHCR has made significant progress towards longer-term vision, multi-year planning and sustainable approaches. This is demonstrated by the role UNHCR has played in the development of New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants, in rolling out the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and in the development of the GCR.

UNHCR has made substantial progress on engaging development actors, including cooperation with the World Bank, ILO, OECD, UNDP, engaging the private sector, mobilizing a broad range of stakeholders and forging innovative partnerships. The upcoming GRF taking place in December 2019 will build further momentum for the implementation of the GCR, rallying more broad-based support and sustainable solutions to refugee situations.