



United Nations

**United Nations High Commissioner
for Refugees**

**Report of the Executive
Committee of the Programme
of the United Nations High
Commissioner for Refugees**

**Seventy-first session
(5–9 October 2020)**

**General Assembly
Official Records
Seventy-fifth Session
Supplement No. 12A**



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United Nations • New York, 2020

Note

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I. Introduction

A. Opening of the session

1. The Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme held its seventy-first plenary session at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, from 5–9 October 2020, with many delegations participating remotely due to COVID-19. It was opened by the Chairperson, H.E. Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium).

B. Representation

2. The following Executive Committee members were represented at the session:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, the Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, the Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

3. Other United Nations Member States present as observers were as follows:

Albania, Andorra, Angola, the Bahamas, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Burundi, Cambodia, the Central African Republic, Cuba, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Gabon, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Malaysia, Monaco, Myanmar, Nepal, the Niger, Panama, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam.

4. United Nations non-member States present as observers were as follows:

State of Palestine.

5. The European Union was represented as an observer.

6. Also present were the following intergovernmental organizations and other entities:

Commonwealth of Independent States, Council of Europe, Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, Economic Community of West African States, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Committee of the Red Cross, International Development Law Organization, International

Organization of la Francophonie, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and Sovereign Order of Malta.

7. The United Nations system, specialized agencies and related organizations were represented as follows:

Food and Agriculture Organization, International Labour Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Office at Geneva, World Bank Group and World Food Programme.

8. Some 16 non-governmental organizations and other partners were in attendance.

C. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

9. The Executive Committee adopted by consensus the following agenda ([A/AC.96/LXXI/1/Rev.1](#)):

1. Opening of the session, adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
2. Statement by the High Commissioner.
3. General debate.
4. Consideration of reports on the work of the Standing Committee:
 - (a) International protection;
 - (b) Programme budgets, management, financial control and administrative oversight.
5. Consideration of reports relating to programme and administrative oversight and evaluation.
6. Consideration and adoption of the biennial programme budget 2020–2021 (revised).
7. Review of the annual consultations with non-governmental organizations.
8. Other statements.
9. Meetings of the Standing Committee in 2021.
10. Consideration of the provisional agenda of the seventy-second session of the Executive Committee.
11. Election of officers.
12. Any other business.
13. Adoption of the report of the seventy-first session of the Executive Committee.
14. Closing of the session.

D. Election of officers for the seventy-second session

10. Under rule 10 of its Rules of Procedure, the Committee elected the following officers by acclamation, to serve the Committee from the day immediately following their election to the end of the last day of the following annual plenary session:

Chairperson:	H.E. Ms. Maria Nazareth Farani Azevêdo (Brazil)
First Vice-Chairperson:	H.E. Mr. Salim Baddoura (Lebanon)
Second Vice-Chairperson:	H.E. Ms. Kadra Ahmed Hassan (Djibouti)
Rapporteur:	Mr. Gregor Schotten (Germany)

II. Work of the seventy-first session

11. The High Commissioner's statement delivered during the session and summary records of each meeting will be made available on the following webpage: <http://www.unhcr.org/excom>.

III. Decisions of the Executive Committee

A. General decision on administrative, financial and programme matters

12. *The Executive Committee,*

(a) Recalls that the Executive Committee, at its seventieth session, approved programmes and budgets for regional programmes, global programmes and headquarters under the biennial programme budget 2020–2021, as set out in document [A/AC.96/1191](#), amounting to \$8,667,680,981 and \$8,615,834,612 for 2020 and 2021 respectively; notes that the additional needs under supplementary budgets in 2020 amount to \$463,667,424 as at 15 June 2020; approves the total current requirements for 2020 amounting to \$9,131,348,405; and authorizes the High Commissioner, within these total appropriations, to effect adjustments in regional programmes, global programmes and headquarters budgets;

(b) Approves the revised programmes and budgets for regional programmes, global programmes and headquarters under the proposed 2020–2021 biennial programme budget (revised), as set out in document [A/AC.96/1202](#), amounting to \$8,615,834,612 for 2021, with no change from the original amount, including the United Nations regular budget contribution towards headquarters costs, the reserves and the Junior Professional Officer programme; and authorizes the High Commissioner, within this total appropriation, to effect adjustments in regional programmes, global programmes and headquarters budgets;

(c) Confirms that the activities proposed in the biennial programme budget 2020–2021 (revised), as set out in document [A/AC.96/1202](#), are consistent with the Statute of the Office of the High Commissioner ([A/RES/428 \(V\)](#)); the High Commissioner's other functions as recognized, promoted or requested by the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General; and the relevant provisions of the financial rules for voluntary funds administered by the High Commissioner for Refugees ([A/AC.96/503/Rev.10](#));

(d) Takes note of the financial statements for the year 2019 as contained in the Report of the Board of Auditors to the General Assembly on the financial report and audited financial statements of the voluntary funds administered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the year ended 31 December 2019

(A/75/5/Add.6) and the Report by the High Commissioner on key issues and measures taken in response to the recommendations in the Report of the Board of Auditors (A/AC.96/1201/Add.1); and requests to be kept regularly informed on the measures taken to address the recommendations and the observations raised in these documents;

(e) Requests the High Commissioner, within the resources available, to respond flexibly and efficiently to the needs indicated under the biennial programme budget for the years 2020–2021 (revised), encourages his Office to be as efficient and effective as possible with the funds provided in implementing his mandate, including for durable solutions, while not diminishing life-saving protection and assistance to persons of concern, and authorizes him, in the case of additional emergency needs that cannot be met fully from the operational reserve, to create supplementary budgets and issue special appeals under all pillars, with such adjustments being reported to the subsequent Standing Committee meeting for consideration;

(f) Acknowledges with appreciation the burden that continues to be shouldered by developing and least developed countries hosting refugees; and urges Member States to recognize this valuable contribution to the protection of refugees and to participate in efforts to promote durable solutions and more equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing; and

(g) Urges Member States, in light of the extensive needs to be addressed by the Office of the High Commissioner, and in parallel with the long-standing and substantial support provided by refugee-hosting countries, to respond generously and in a spirit of solidarity to his appeal for resources to meet in full the 2020–2021 biennial programme budget and to ensure that the Office is resourced in a timely and predictable manner, while keeping earmarking to a minimum level.

B. Decision on a revision of the financial rules for voluntary funds administered by the High Commissioner for Refugees

13. The Executive Committee,

Having considered the proposed revision of the current financial rules for voluntary funds administered by the High Commissioner for Refugees (A/AC.96/503/Rev.10),

Recalls the decisions of the Standing Committee, at its seventy-seventh and seventy-ninth meeting, to request the High Commissioner to submit a final draft to the seventy-first session of the Executive Committee;

Acknowledges the replacement of the pillars structure with impact areas for the budget structure, to enhance the organization's capacity to report and demonstrate how its programmes make a difference in the lives of displaced populations;

Acknowledges the introduction of the budget period in lieu of the biennial budget and the flexibility it affords UNHCR to more swiftly respond to new and emerging humanitarian needs;

Recalls the proposed financial rule 2.2 whereby the budget period shall be agreed with the Executive Committee, *endorses* an annual budget period duration of 12 months corresponding to the calendar year starting with the budget for 2022;

Endorses a review on the impact of these changes to budgetary structure and periods on management efficiencies and UNHCR's ability to deliver on its mandate, with a view to any revisions if needed, to be presented to the Executive Committee no later than 2025, with preliminary reviews as needed;

Requests the High Commissioner to ensure that the quality of the budgetary information, reporting and the practice of reviewing it at the Executive Committee are duly maintained; and

Endorses the proposed revision and requests the High Commissioner to promulgate the revised financial rules (A/AC.96/503/Rev.11) with effect from 1 January 2022.

C. Decision on the programme of work of the Standing Committee in 2021

14. *The Executive Committee,*

Having reviewed the issues before it at its seventieth session, and bearing in mind the decisions adopted at that session,

(a) *Decides* to convene three formal meetings of the Standing Committee in 2021, to be held in March, June and September;

(b) *Reaffirms* its decision on the framework for the Standing Committee's programme of work (A/AC.96/1003 paragraph 25, sub-paragraph 2(c)); authorizes the Standing Committee to add and delete items, if appropriate, to this framework for its meetings in 2021; and requests member States to meet in December 2020 to prepare a detailed work plan for formal adoption by the Standing Committee at its first meeting in 2021;

(c) *Calls* upon its members to continue efforts to ensure that debate at the Executive Committee and its Standing Committee is of a substantive and interactive nature, yielding practical guidance and clear advice to the High Commissioner, in keeping with the Committee's statutory functions;

(d) *Calls* upon the Office of the High Commissioner to be explicit and analytical in its reports and presentations to the Committee and to submit documentation in a timely manner; and

(e) *Further* requests the Standing Committee to report on its work to the seventy-second session of the Executive Committee.

D. Decision on observer participation in the meetings of the Standing Committee in 2020–2021

15. *The Executive Committee,*

(a) *Approves* applications by the following Government observer delegations for participation in meetings of the Standing Committee from October 2020 to October 2021:

Guatemala, Honduras, Iraq, Malawi, Panama and Ukraine.

(b) *Authorizes* the Standing Committee to decide upon any additional applications from Government observer delegations to participate in its meetings during the aforementioned period;

(c) *Approves* the following list of intergovernmental and international organizations to be invited by the High Commissioner to participate as observers in relevant meetings of its Standing Committee from October 2020 to October 2021:

United Nations specialized agencies, departments, funds and programmes; African Union; Central African Economic and Monetary Community;

Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf; Council of Europe; East African Community; Economic Community of Central African States; Economic Community of West African States; European Union; Executive Secretariat of the Commonwealth of Independent States; Intergovernmental Authority on Development; International Centre for Migration Policy Development; International Committee of the Red Cross; International Development Law Organization; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; International Organisation of La Francophonie; League of Arab States; Organization of Eastern Caribbean States; Organization of Islamic Cooperation; the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe; Southern African Development Community; and Sovereign Order of Malta.

E. Decision on the provisional agenda of the seventy-second session of the Executive Committee

16. *The Executive Committee,*

Recalling its decision on working methods adopted at its fifty-fifth plenary session (A/AC.96/1003 paragraph 25);

Decides to adopt as the provisional agenda for the seventy-second session of the Executive Committee the standard model contained in sub-paragraph 1(f) of the above-mentioned decision.

F. Decision on the participation of intergovernmental organizations in private meetings of the Executive Committee

17. *The Executive Committee,*

Recalling rule 38 of its Rules of Procedure (A/AC.96/187/Rev.8) and its decision on the participation of intergovernmental organizations in private meetings of the Executive Committee adopted at its sixty-seventh plenary session;

Approves the application by the European Union to participate as an observer in the Committee's private meetings on asylum and refugee matters within its competence during the seventy-second session of the Executive Committee.

G. Decision on a multi-year workplan for Executive Committee Conclusions

18. *The Executive Committee,*

Reaffirming the important role of the Executive Committee in forging consensus on vital international protection and durable solutions issues, standards, policies and practices, as well as the value of Executive Committee Conclusions as guidance for States, UNHCR, non-governmental organizations and other actors in providing protection, assistance and solutions for refugees and other persons of concern;

Having considered the potential contribution of future Executive Committee Conclusions on a range of themes;

Welcoming the proposals received from Member States and UNHCR;

Recognizing the usefulness of an indicative work plan of identified themes for the two-year period ahead, and that such a workplan would enable the Committee and

UNHCR to better plan for relevant conference room papers, Informal Consultative Meetings, and briefings; and

Underscoring that the Committee retains flexibility to adjust and modify the workplan, in particular to consider additional themes as conditions may warrant, as well as to update the workplan annually on a rolling basis, with an enhanced focus on durable solutions and primary considerations for practical ways to effectuate those solutions,

(a) *Agrees* to the following work plan of themes for consideration and development in 2021 and 2022:

- International protection and durable solutions in the context of a public health emergency; and
- Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS).

(b) *Requests* the Executive Committee Bureau and UNHCR to take this work plan into account in preparing a draft programme of work for the Committee's consideration during the December Planning Meeting.

