



**Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN
Geneva**

Statement

85th Session of the Standing Committee of UNHCR

Agenda Item 2: Programme Budgets for 2023 of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

**Statement by Mr. Sumair Gul, Second Secretary
(19 September 2022)**

Chairperson,

We thank UNHCR team for providing an update on Programme budget for 2023.

It is encouraging to note that UNHCR is making savings from its modernization of systems. We hope that the new information technology tools would boost the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization in delivering results and meeting its operational needs.

My delegation also welcomes the generosity of donors and a positive trend towards flexibility of donor contributions, evidenced by the fact that 36% of funding was either unearmarked or softly earmarked.

Chairperson,

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to highlight that as compared to 2022, the programme and budget document 2023 states a reduction of 13% of funding for Pakistan in impact area 1 (attaining favourable protection environment), 18% reduction in impact area 4 (securing solutions) and an overall 7% decrease in budget for operations in Pakistan. At global level also, there is 1% decrease in budget for voluntary repatriation and only 5% increase in funding for resettlement and complementary pathways. We would like to know to how these budget reduction are commensurate with the recommendations of the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) indicator report 2021, which had underscored the need for increasing investment in voluntary repatriation and resettlements.

Chairperson,

My delegation understands that the budgetary requirement for the purpose of the document programme and budget 2023 were developed before the recent floods and torrential rains in Pakistan which have affected over 33 million people including refugees and host communities. The Government with the assistance of the international community is engaged in immediate flood relief and response. The long and challenging phase of recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction will

follow. This situation calls for a re-appraisal of the anticipated needs of concerned populations and corresponding budget allocations by the UNHCR.

Chairperson,

The challenges of developing countries hosting large refugee populations are compounding with the onset of conflicts, their knock-on effects in the shape of energy and food crises, climate induced disasters and enduring impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on their social and economic infrastructures. Many large refugee hosting countries are in a situation of high risk or debt distress. Without commensurate support from international community, the aims of protection, empowerment, providing enabling environment and securing solutions would become even more challenging for large refugee hosting countries.

It is also worrisome to note that, many refugee situations remained underfunded in 2021 and potentially face budget reductions in 2023. We urge UNHCR to give due attention to the large unmet needs of protracted refugee situations by allocating sufficient resources. We also encourage the UNHCR to enhance its advocacy for grants under the World Bank [International Development Assistance (IDA) Window for Host Communities & Refugees (WHR)]. Instruments of concessional finance for hosting countries undermine the principle of international burden and responsibility sharing.

I thank you.