

# Vulnerability assessment of refugees: Approaches to targeting humanitarian assistance



Lecture 1 of 3 – An introduction to UNHCR

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# Outline

- Introduction
- Background and overview
- Facts and figures
- Recent developments
- Cash assistance and livelihoods
- Q & A

# Introduction

# UNHCR – Key organizational figures

- Present in over **130 countries**, with over **16,800 staff** – around **90% based in the field**
- Required budget for 2019: US\$ 8.6 billion
- In 2018, of a required US\$ 7.7 billion, only received US\$ 4.2 billion – around 55% of needs



# MENA Bureau

- Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Bureau, located in Amman, Jordan
- Covers 19 countries in the region
- This includes some of the largest displacement crises:
  - Syria situation: 5,714,664 persons of concern
  - Yemen situation: 3.65 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)
  - Iraq: over 570,000 IDPs

# Background and overview



# Background of the United Nations

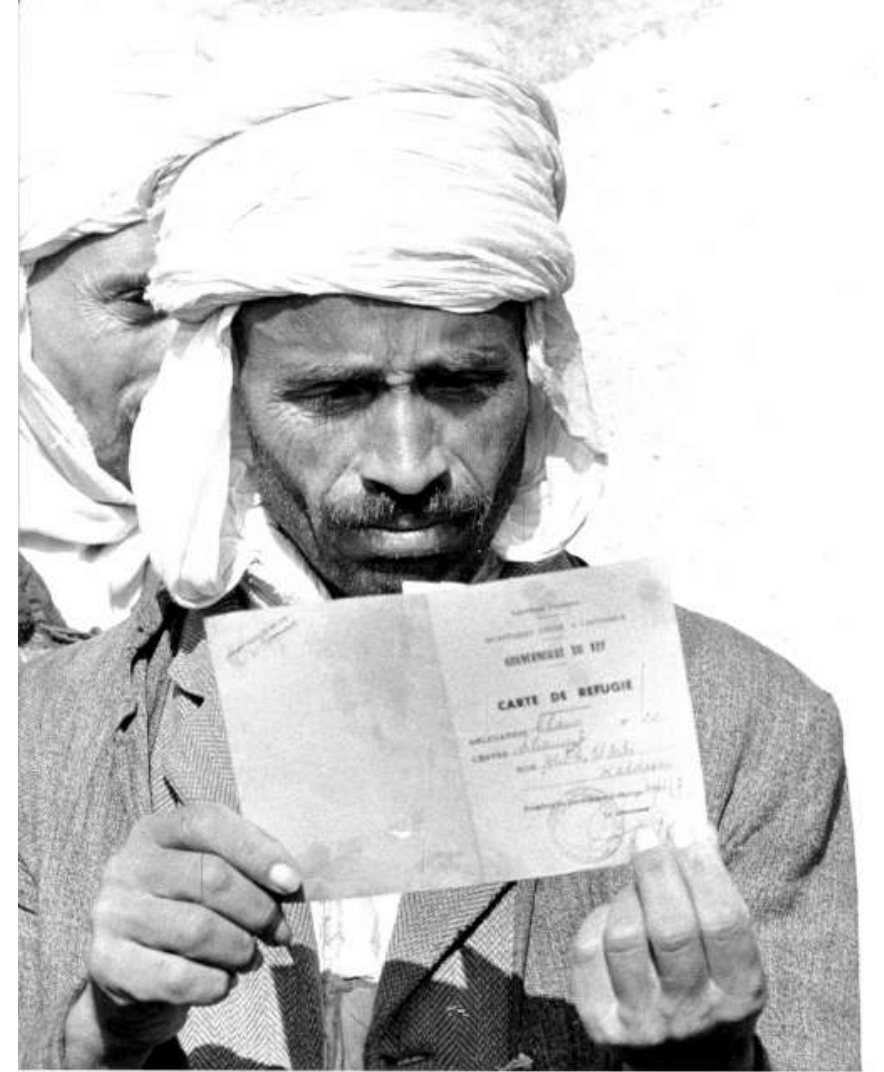


- United Nations officially came into existence in 1945, after World War II
- Different agencies with different mandates:
  - WFP
  - UNICEF
  - UNFPA
  - UNDP
  - Etc.



# History of UNHCR

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) created in 1950 – technically for only three years
- First task was to respond to the aftermath of WWII
- First post-war emergency: Hungarian uprising
- Africa's first modern refugee crisis: Algeria





# 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

- Aka **1951 Convention**, is the key legal document forming basis of UNHCR's work
- Defines the term “refugee”
- Outlines: rights of the displaced and legal obligations of States to protect them
- The 1967 Protocol broadened the applicability of the 1951 Convention

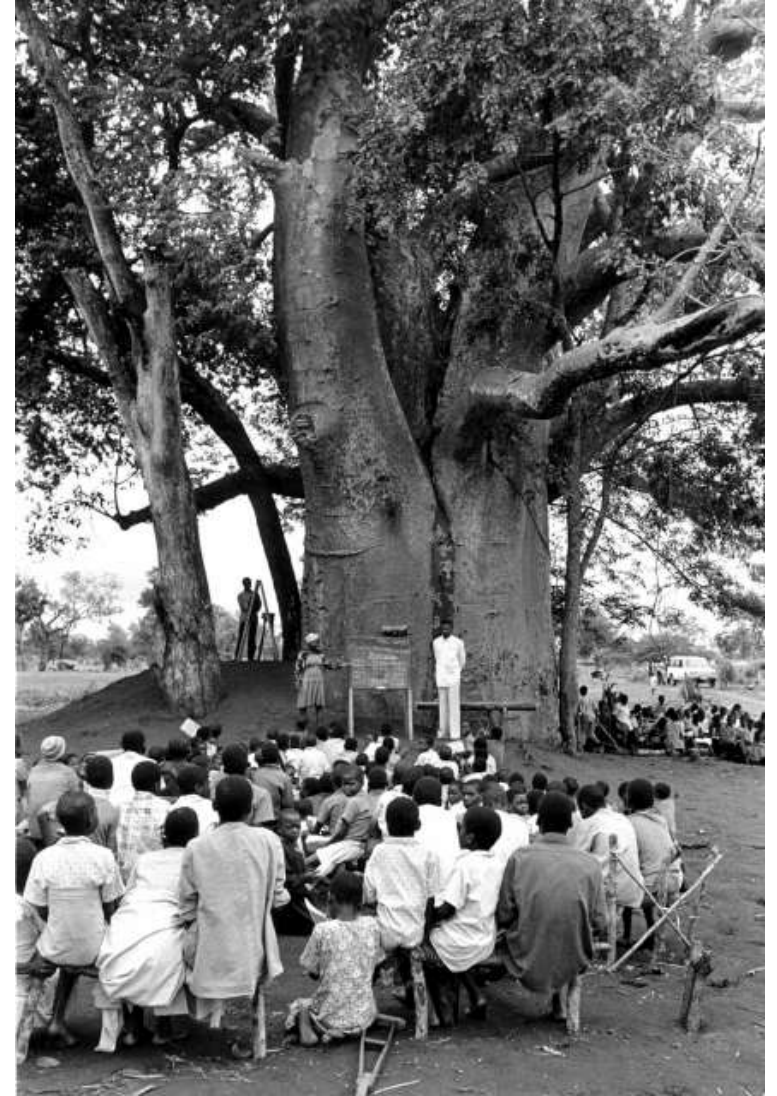
# Who is a refugee?

A refugee is a person who:

*“owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons **of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion**, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country”.*

# Key concept: non-refoulement

- Non-refoulement asserts that a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom.
- Now considered a rule of customary international law.



# Who else is of concern to UNHCR?

In addition to refugees, UNHCR also assists:

- returnees
- stateless people
- internally displaced persons
- asylum-seekers.





# UNHCR Italy

## Main activities:

- works with other partners to provide information to new arrivals in southern Italy;
- monitors reception conditions;
- participates in the national refugee status determination procedure;
- works to raise awareness of asylum and refugee issues
- coordinates with institutions, other UN agencies, universities, associations and other relevant actors.

# Facts and figures



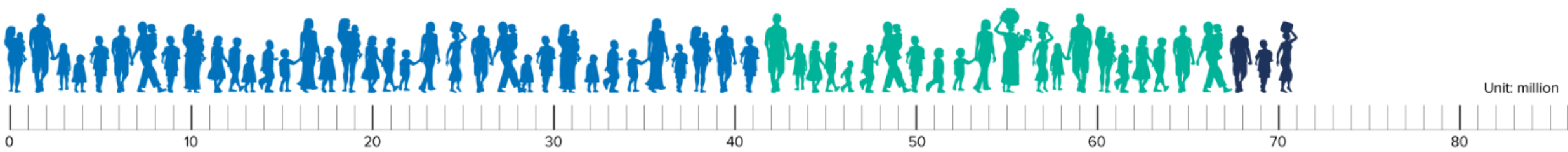
# Keeping track

- Every year, UNHCR tracks the number of people forced to flee
- These figures are published in the annual Global Trends and Global Appeals reports
  - how many people need help
  - how much help they need
  - how many staff we must deploy



# Global trends for 2018

**70.8 million** forcibly displaced people worldwide



Internally Displaced People  
**41.3 million**

Refugees  
**25.9 million**  
20.4 million under UNHCR's mandate  
5.5 million Palestinian refugees under UNRWA's mandate

Asylum-seekers  
**3.5 million**

# Global trends for 2018

Where the world's displaced people are being hosted

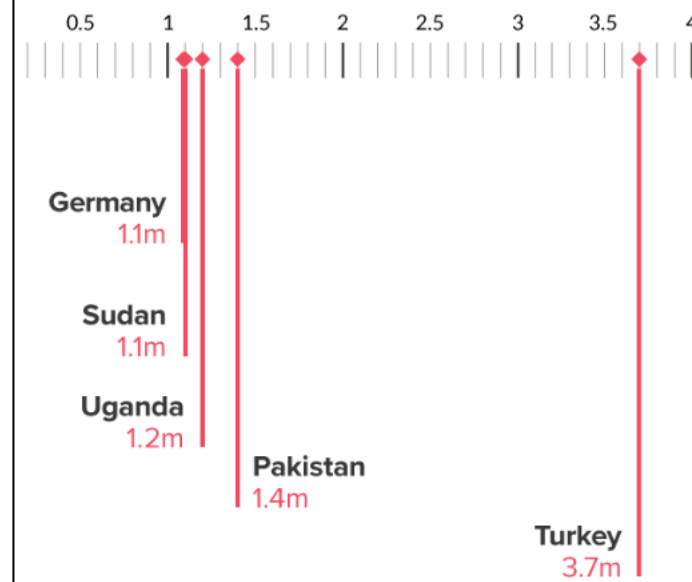


About 80 per cent of refugees live in countries neighbouring their countries of origin

**57%** of UNHCR refugees came from three countries



**Top refugee-hosting countries**



**341,800**  
new asylum seekers

The greatest number of new asylum applications in 2018 was from Venezuelans



UNHCR has data on

**3.9 million**  
stateless people

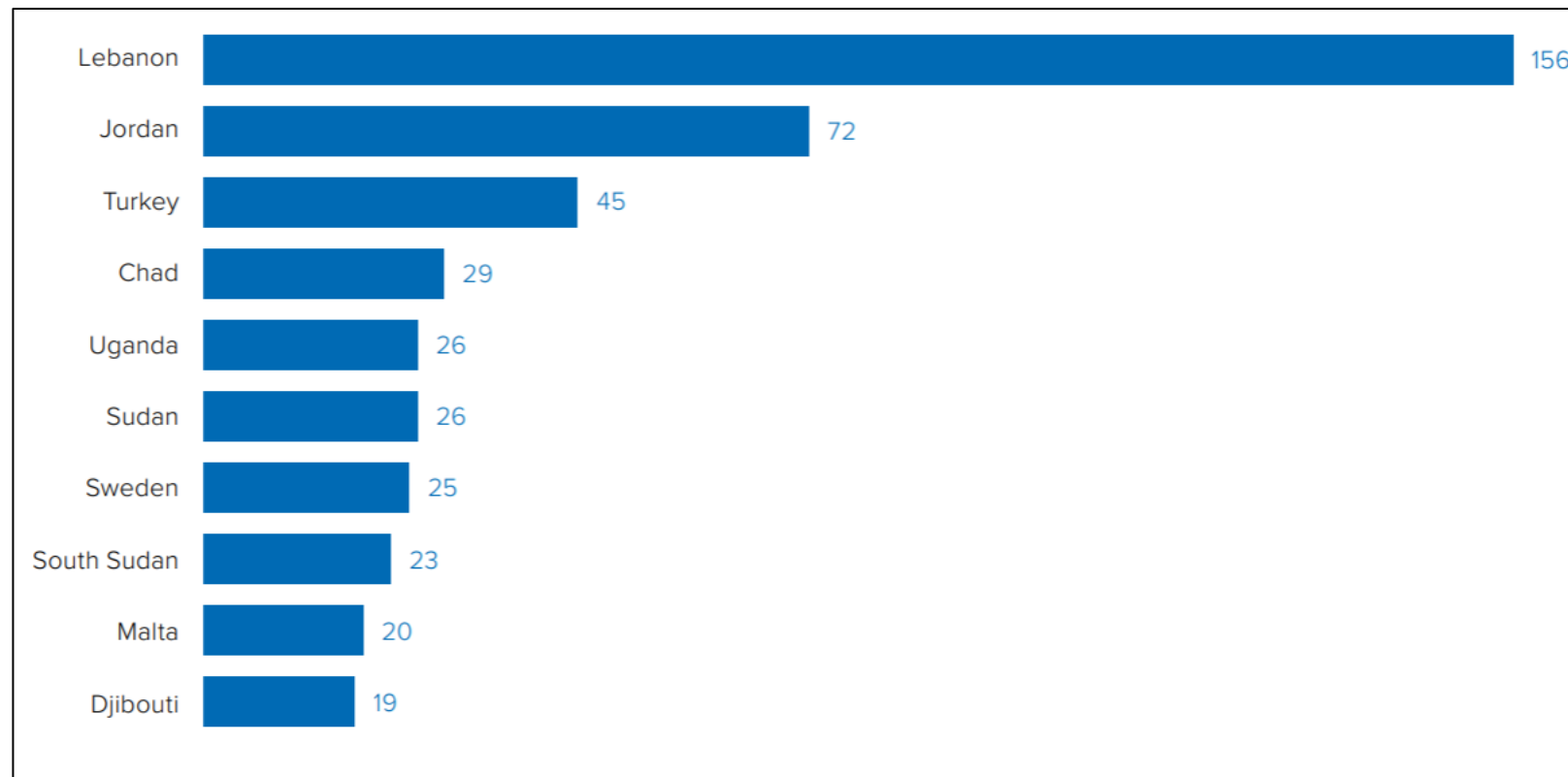
but there are thought to be millions more



# Global trends for 2018

Three countries in the Middle East, five in sub-Saharan Africa and two in Europe hosted the **highest refugee population relative to national population**

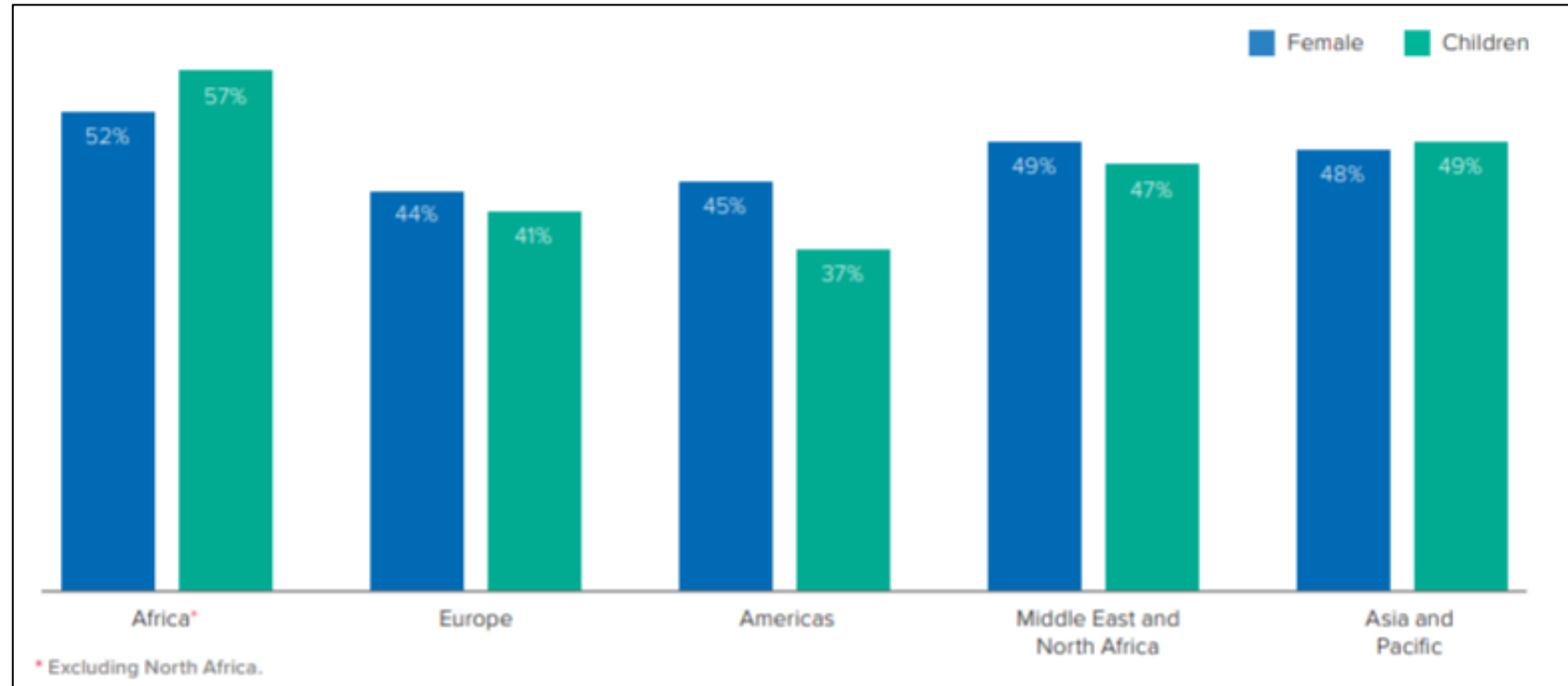
Number of refugees per 1,000 inhabitants | end-2018



# Global trends for 2018

Similar to past years, children represented about half of the refugee population

Demographic characteristics of refugee population by UNHCR regions | end-2018



# Common misconceptions

Refugees always live in camps

In 2018, over 60% lived in urban areas

Refugees are poor and from poor countries

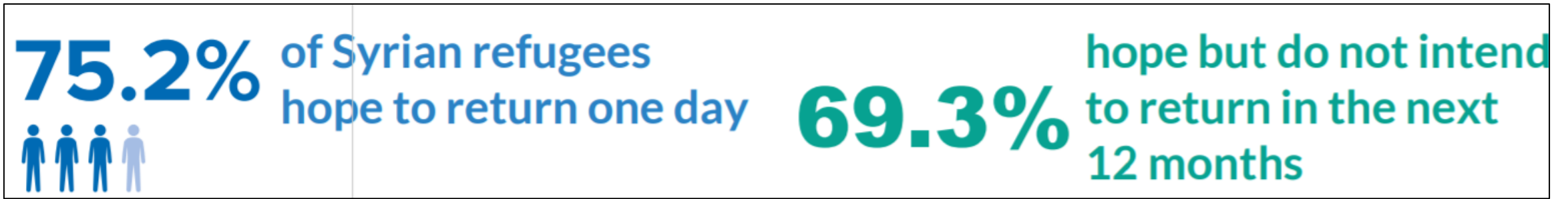
This is not always the case; e.g. Syria was a middle income country before the war

Refugees don't want to go back home

Many do, but this can take years, sometimes decades



# Returns



**Even when conflict ends, people can't return home immediately.** In Syria, for example, since the conflict:

- unemployment rate went up even though number of workers went down
- Number of doctors was reduced by half, from 11,305 in 2010 to 5,889 in 2018.
- About 150,000 teachers left the formal education system, or more than 1/3 of pre-war education employees
- About 40% of education facilities have been damaged, destroyed, occupied or are otherwise being used (such as shelter for IDPs).

# How does UNHCR work?

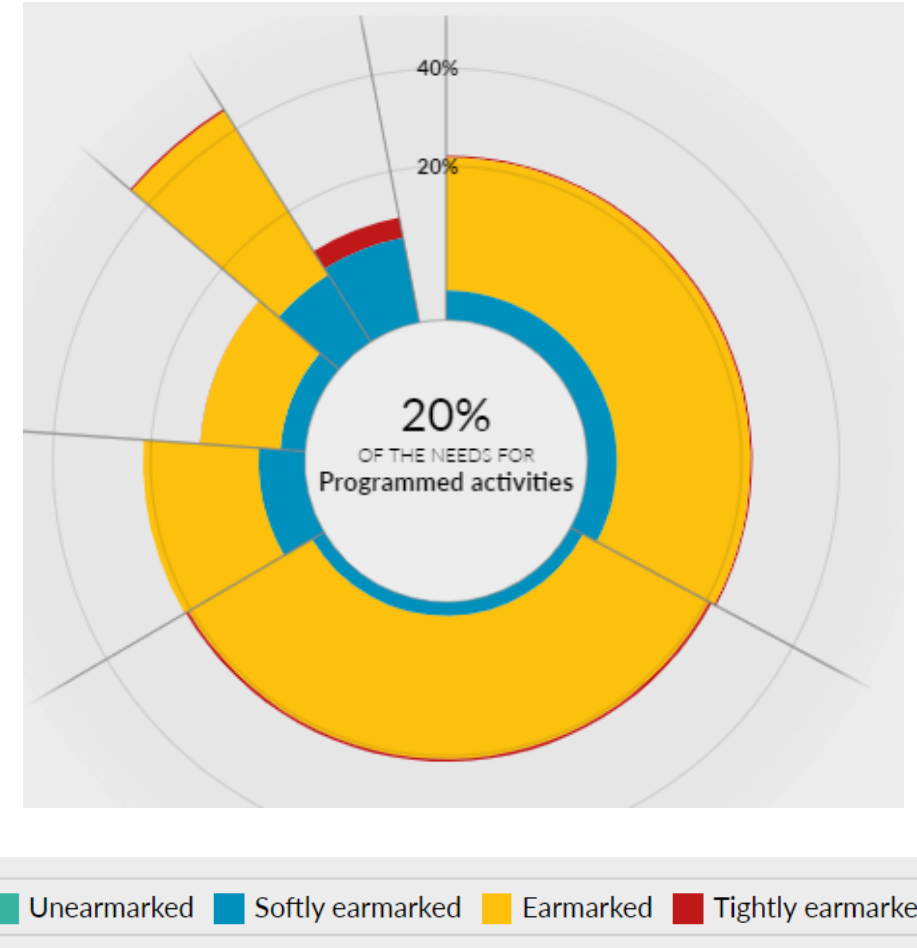
# How is UNHCR funded?

- UNHCR relies almost entirely on voluntary contributions from governments
- UN and pooled funding mechanisms
- Also inter-governmental institutions (for example, EU), private sector and private donors

<b>Contributions to UNHCR - 2019</b> (as at 30 September 2019, in United States dollars)		
	<b>Donor</b>	<b>Contributions</b>
1	United States of America	1,668,082,053
2	European Union	478,034,742
3	Germany	198,656,892
4	Sweden	137,855,916
5	Japan	124,116,003
6	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	100,211,521
7	Denmark	86,502,448
8	Norway	71,564,251
9	Private donors in Spain	63,741,114
10	Canada	59,194,791

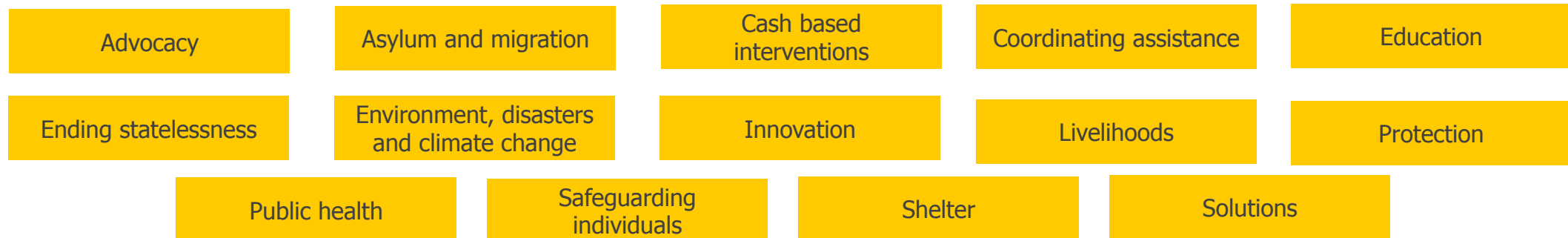
# Type of funding

- Unearmarked funds allow UNHCR to allow us to direct funds where they are most needed;
- Most funding, however, is earmarked for specific programmes and/or situations
- For example, US funding so far in 2019



# What does UNHCR do?

- Provides assistance – either emergency, or longer term
- Promotes refugee protection and access to basic human rights
- When asked by the government, registers persons of concern and conducts Refugee Status Determination (RSD)
- Researches and advises on new laws and regulations affecting people of concern
- Coordinates major appeals and responses



# Durable solutions

Finding solutions that enable refugees to live their lives in dignity and peace is a core part of UNHCR's work. They can include **voluntary repatriation, resettlement and integration.**

Examples:

- In 2012, over 3,000 refugees in Angola registered with UNHCR for assistance to return to Namibia
- In 2014, 162,000 Burundian refugees were granted citizenship in Tanzania
- Less than 1% of refugees were resettled in 2018



# Implementation

UNHCR carries out its global work in different ways:

- Through implementing partners;
- With operational partners;
- Hand-in-hand with governments, either supporting them directly or indirectly;
- Direct implementation.



# Recent developments

# Humanitarian or development?

In the past, there was a clear distinction between humanitarian and development assistance

HUMANITARIAN	DEVELOPMENT
Short-term	Long-term
Delivered in disaster and conflict zones	Delivered in developing countries
Responds to an incident or event	Responds to systematic problems
Focused on saving lives	Focused on economic, social and political development

# Humanitarian-development nexus

- Displacement contexts are usually viewed as humanitarian crises
- However, more and more, such contexts go on for longer = Protracted crises (5 years or more)
- Humanitarian and development actors now work more closely together to coordinate efforts





# How refugees can shape assistance

- Zaatari refugee camp in northern Jordan opened in July 2012
- Around 78,000 people live there – Jordan's fourth largest "city"
- Market with estimated 3,000 shops
- Electricity network (solar power) and piped water



# Grand Bargain

- officially launched during the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016.
- **the only agreement that has brought together donors and aid organizations** (currently 61 in total)
- aims to get more into the hands of people in need, by improving the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action.



# Global Compact for Refugees

- signed on 17 December 2018;
- basis for predictable and **equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing** amongst multiple stakeholders
- represents the political will and ambition of the **international community as a whole** for strengthened cooperation and solidarity with refugees and affected host countries

# Cash assistance and livelihoods

# Grand Bargain and cash assistance

- “increase the use and coordination of cash-based programming”;
- most refugees live in environments where they have access to markets and services in the same way that local communities do;
- cash enables them to fulfil their needs in a dignified manner and contributes to the local economy.



# UNHCR and cash assistance

- UNHCR uses cash-based interventions (CBIs) to provide protection, assistance and services to the most vulnerable.
- 2016–2018: US\$ 1.8 billion in cash to over 16 million people, in over 100 countries
- 95% is in the form of multi-purpose grants (MPGs)



# Multi-purpose cash grants

- MPGs are meant to cover refugees' basic needs such as rent and other expenses
- Reduce protection risks
- Allow refugees dignified choice of how to spend the money



# Social protection

- Cash assistance is usually meant to be temporary
- What about those who will never be able to work and sustain themselves?
- UNHCR has been working even more closely with national authorities to advocate for the inclusion of refugees into national social safety net programmes.



# Livelihoods

UNHCR activities:

- advocating for the right to work;
- training and building skills;
- helping people find a market for their skills and goods.



*Through safe work, people forced to flee can provide for their families' basic needs, maintain their dignity and contribute to society, which is what they want. They often enrich their communities with their experience and skills, while preparing for a better future.*



# Q & A