OIOS
Office of Internal Oversight Services

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2023/059

Audit of UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa

The Regional Bureau needed to strengthen its strategic planning to deliver services to displaced persons in the Southern Africa Region within the available resource envelope

16 November 2023
Assignment No. AR2022-113-02

Audit of UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the Regional Bureau of Southern Africa of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The audit objective was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the Bureau in fulfilling its mandate and managing its programme of work in accordance with UNHCR's policy requirements. The audit covered the period from January 2021 to June 2022 and included a review of the following areas: (a) mandate implementation; (b) strategic planning and allocation; (c) resource mobilization; (d) coordination with key stakeholders involved in and/or supporting the delivery of services to displaced persons; (e) oversight and support of country operations; and (f) structure and staffing.

The Bureau was established in 2020 following UNHCR's decentralization and regionalization (D&R) to improve the speed and responsiveness of service delivery to forcibly displaced persons (displaced persons). The Bureau's operationalization was initially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequently affected by inadequate resourcing and the fact that the core UNHCR transformation processes meant to underpin the D&R, such as the Business Transformation Programme and the Headquarters reform, were not yet finalized. This affected the Bureau's execution of its second line core roles of strategic planning, coordination with key stakeholders involved in and/or supporting the delivery of services to displaced persons, resource mobilization and allocation within the region's operations, and oversight and support of country operations. The Bureau needed to use its experience of operations facing challenges in managing programmes with very limited resources to shape the ongoing transformation of UNHCR systems, policies and tools.

OIOS made seven recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, the Regional Bureau needed to:

- Strengthen the implementation of the Roles, Accountabilities and Authorities frameworks by contextualizing it for the region;
- Review country operations' capacity to comply with UNHCR procedures in due consideration of their operational context and where necessary, seek justifiable adjustment from UNHCR's regulatory framework;
- Strengthen its strategic planning through more equitable resource allocation, effective risk management and collection of quality data;
- Evaluate the performance of last resource mobilization strategy and use the results to strengthen the effectiveness of related processes going forward;
- Reinforce its role and capacity in coordination and follow up of the fulfilment of the Global Compact on Refugees pledges;
- Develop a risk-based oversight plan to better support the country operations and strengthen its second line responsibilities; and
- Conduct a staffing analysis and develop strategy to align its structure, capacity and competence.

UNHCR accepted all recommendations and has initiated action to implement them. Actions required to close the recommendations are indicated in Annex I.

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Audit of UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa

I.   BACKGROUND

1.   The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa.

2.   The Regional Bureau for Southern Africa (hereinafter referred to as the Bureau) was one of the seven Regional Bureaux established in 2020 under UNHCR's decentralization and regionalization (D&R) process. As reflected in Map 1, the Bureau covers 16 countries in the region: the eight Representations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mozambique, Angola, Malawi, the Republic of Congo (ROC), Zambia, Zimbabwe, and the South Africa Multi-Country Office (MCO) that itself covers nine countries, namely Botswana, Comoros, the Kingdoms of eSwatini and Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles and South Africa.

Map 1: Number of refugees, asylum seekers and others of concern in country operations in the Southern Africa region
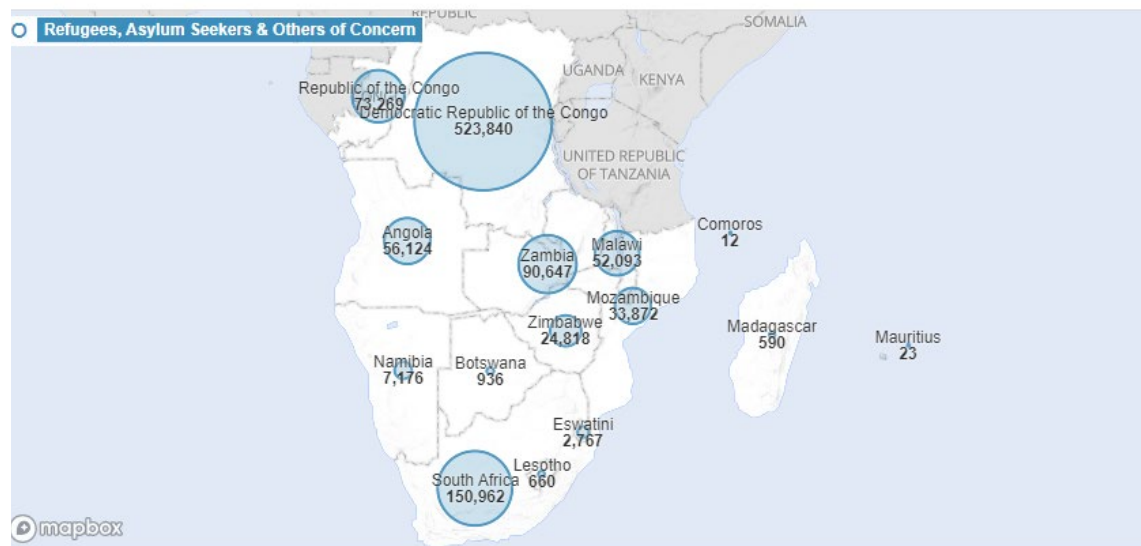
3.   By 30 September 2022, the Bureau had 8.6 million forcibly displaced and stateless persons (displaced persons), who represented 8.3 per cent of the UNHCR global population. This population comprised of 1.1 million refugees and asylum seekers and others of concern (up by 60 per cent in the last three years), 7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 0.5 million IDP returnees. The DRC hosted 93 per cent of all IDPs and 48 per cent of all refugees and asylum seekers in the region.

4.   The Bureau was headed by a Director at the D-2 level who reported to the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations. As of July 2022, the Bureau had 78 regular staff posts and two temporary posts (58 professional and 22 general service positions), three of which were vacant. The Bureau's expenditure for 2021 and 2022 was $11.0 and $11.8 million, respectively. It oversaw a regional expenditure of $211 and 213 million in 2021 and 2022, respectively.

5.   Comments provided by UNHCR are incorporated in italics.

II.   AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

6.   The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the Bureau in implementing its mandate and programme of work in accordance with UNHCR's policy requirements.

7.   The audit was included in the 2022 risk-based work plan because of its strategic importance in delivering UNHCR's mandate in the Southern Africa region.

8.   OIOS conducted this audit from August to November 2022. The audit covered the period from January 2021 to June 2022. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher risk areas in the Bureau, which included assessing the adequacy and effectiveness of the Bureau in executing its role regarding its: (a) mandate implementation; (b) strategic planning and allocation; (c) resource mobilization; (d) coordination with key stakeholders involved in and/or supporting the delivery of services to forcibly displaced persons; (e) oversight and support of country operations; and (f) structure and staffing.

9.   The audit methodology included: (a) interviews of key personnel; (b) review of relevant documentation; (c) analytical review of data, including financial data from Managing for Systems, Resources and People (MSRP), the UNHCR enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, and performance data from FOCUS, the UNHCR results-based management system; and (d) sample testing of controls. OIOS also conducted a survey with senior management of the eight representations and benchmarked the Bureau structure, staffing and processes against three United Nations agencies in the region.

10.   The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

III.   AUDIT RESULTS

A.   Mandate implementation

The Bureau was constrained in executing its mandate

11.   UNHCR's intention of moving Bureaux from Geneva to regions under D&R was to improve the speed and responsiveness of service delivery by shifting personnel and decision-making authorities closer to the field. However, the Bureau was constrained in meeting this core objective by amongst other things: (i) the COVID-19 pandemic affecting its establishment and operationalization in 2020 and 2021; and (ii) limited available resources for the effective discharge of its second-line duties, including supporting country operations with limited capacity in the execution of their first-line roles. Regarding the latter constraint, OIOS noted that the funding and resources for another region in Africa were 10 times that of the Southern Africa region although its number of displaced persons was only twice that of the Southern Africa region.

12.   Further, key organizational changes to structures, systems, processes and tools under UNHCR's transformation, which underpinned the effective execution of the Bureau's mandate, were not yet finalized:

- The Headquarters reform under D&R that should have moved resources within the second line (between Divisions and Bureaux) and/or between the first and second line was yet to be completed.

- Only two of six Business Transformation Programme (BTP) [1] systems meant to improve the speed and responsiveness with which services were delivered had been implemented at the time of the present report.
- Country operations stated that they were yet to see the simplification of processes that was anticipated from the BTP. Instead, operations felt that their limited country resources and capacity were overly stretched as they responded to multiple changes from the different transformations (including the IT systems).

13.   Additionally, UNHCR had over 500 mandatory policies and non-mandatory operational guidelines that were equally applicable to all country operations. UNHCR had not differentiated its requirements among country operations with varying sizes, contexts, risk profiles, capacities and mandates. As noted in several field audits, the lack of capacity contributed to instances of noncompliance with UNHCR rules and weakened the control environment. The Bureau had a role in providing input and feedback to UNHCR on the adequacy and effectiveness of policies, especially as they affected operations within the region.

14.   As funding reduced over the years, smaller operations in the region increasingly faced challenges in delivering their mandate within UNHCR's control framework and available resources. However, per the Bureau, the UNHCR's regulatory framework did not provide for requesting and granting motivated exemptions to rules. The Bureau documented such instances in a note to file as opposed to escalating them to headquarters for exemption. The Bureau needed to assess country operations' ability to deliver their mandate within defined frameworks and available resources and where necessary seek justifiable exemptions.

15.   Country operations were aware of the broad division of roles and responsibilities between Bureaux and Divisions and primarily addressed their queries to the Bureau. However, they also consulted Headquarters directly in instances where the Bureau lacked technical capacity and/or competencies to offer effective support. The continued absence of a solution to resource gaps at Bureau level may indicate the need for the recalibration of roles and responsibilities across the second-line entities. Additionally, the absence of a functional reporting line between experts at Division, Bureau and country levels raised concern on ensuring minimum qualitative standards in providing support and guidance. impacted the execution of their respective roles in ensuring compliance with service quality standards and established internal controls.

16.   The Bureau's execution of its mandate was supported by UNHCR's Roles, Accountabilities, and Authorities [2] complemented by specific delegation frameworks, including the Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) [3]. The Bureau operationalized these frameworks through their inclusion in strategic, pillar and sector work plans. However, UNHCR adopted globally standardized job descriptions, which remained generic at headquarters, bureau and country levels and were not contextualized to reflect individual accountabilities. In the case of the Bureau and other country operations, due to limited resources, staff took on multiple roles which were not reflected in the standard job descriptions. OIOS noted that other United Nations agencies had job and location-specific descriptions that clearly articulated reporting lines, stakeholders to engage with, and relationships with Bureaux and Headquarters divisions. The Bureau noted that, going forward, descriptions would be contextualized through the recently deployed Workday system, thereby providing clarity on who is responsible for what and thus reinforce individual accountability.

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[1] BTP is the programme initiated by UNHCR in 2019 aimed at implementing new ways of working and leveraging modern tools and cloud-based technologies to support back-office processes.

[2] Disseminated in October 2019, and updated in November 2022

[3] RAF delegated authorities to bureau directors and country representatives and was issued in August 2019 and revised in June 2020, October 2022 and again in September 2023

> **(1)** **To reinforce individual accountability, the UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should strengthen the implementation of the Roles, Accountabilities and Authorities framework by contextualizing it for the region, including through clarification of staff roles, reporting lines, stakeholders, and relationships with Bureau and Headquarters divisions.**
>
> *UNHCR accepted recommendation 1 and stated that UNHCR's accountability framework is made up of standard components that are mainstreamed at all levels of the organization through its policy framework, guidance, organization-wide business processes and values. Currently, UNHCR captures individual accountabilities through standard job descriptions to promote coherence and enable strategic workforce planning and career development in a decentralized context. Job descriptions also capture unique operational contexts and specific requirements, and they are further complemented by evaluations that set out specific objectives for staff members considering their context/ priorities.*
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> **(2)** **The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should review country operations' capacity to comply with UNHCR procedures in view of their operational contexts, risks and resource levels and, where necessary, seek justifiable exemption from the regulatory framework.**
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> *UNHCR accepted recommendation 2 and stated that UNHCR does not have processes for seeking exemptions from the regulatory framework. The Bureau has kept constant engagement with HQ Division/ Sections and provided extensive feedback with the anticipation that there will be clarity in the revised policies and procedures for specific country contexts.*

B.   Strategic planning and resource allocation

<u>Need to strengthen strategic planning, resource allocation and risk management processes</u>

17.   UNHCR requires that Bureaux: (a) set regional strategies and priorities that are aligned to the organization's strategic direction and guide country operations to achieve their strategic goals; (b) establish agreement around intended outcomes/results; and (c) identify and address key risks that impede the achievement of its objectives. The Bureau should assess and adjust its direction in response to changes in the operating environment through collection and analysis of data to support decision making.

18.   The audit noted that pillar workplans and country operations programmes were not always aligned with Bureau strategic priorities. However, considering the limited available resources and varying country contexts, it may be impractical to implement the priorities equivalently across all the countries. For instance, while the Bureau prioritized increasing the implementation through cash assistance in line with global strategic direction, several country operations, e.g., Angola, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, had infrastructural, economic and political barriers respectively to its implementation.
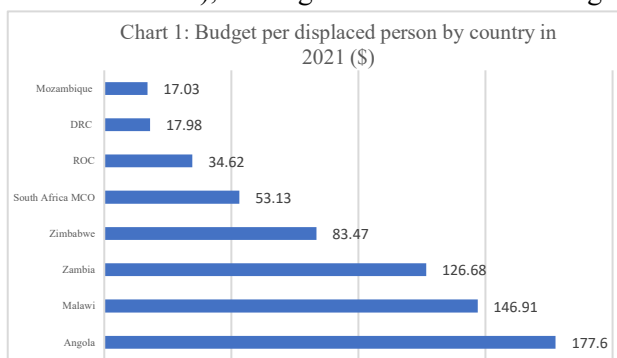
19.   Although the Bureau initiated activities to improve population data across the region, it did not have reliable data, especially on IDPs, to inform its strategic planning. For instance, the collection of IDP data who constituted 81 per cent of the displaced persons in the region as of September 2022 was driven by countries and considered unreliable. Further, as of September 2022, nine and three country operations in the region had initiated qualitative and quantitative (respectively) data collection activities on statelessness. This impacted the Bureau's development of a regional strategy on the global action plan to end statelessness by 2024.

20. UNHCR was still developing systems for measuring Bureau performance metrics in COMPASS at the time of the audit. The Bureau reviewed pillar, unit and country operation performance during its strategic management meetings, but it primarily discussed operational matters and not the progress in achieving its strategic objectives. In accordance with the RAAs, the Bureau needed to analyze results from the implementation of country strategies and use documented lessons learned to inform regional and global strategic planning and ensure continuous improvement of policies and procedures.

Allocation of resources

21. There was an inequitable allocation of resources in the region among countries due to, amongst other things, earmarking of funds by donors to be used in specific countries and/or programmes. For example, the DRC accounted for 57 per cent of the regional budget, while Zimbabwe accounted for less than 3 per cent. While this may be reasonable considering the overall number of displaced persons, it may not be so when considering the different protection needs and mandated responsibilities of UNHCR as well as the greater ability of larger countries to attract funding compared with the smaller ones. Considering the resource constraints, country offices in the region were unable to serve all displaced persons as expected. They thus opted to spread their limited resources across as many interventions and displacements as possible, and this reduced operations' impact in areas of highest priority. The Bureau needed to support operations to identify and focus programmes to areas of highest priority to create the greatest impact even if to a smaller group of people.

22. Further, the allocation of funds per capita, as reflected in Chart 1, was much higher in countries with refugees and asylum seekers only (Angola, Zambia and Malawi), leaving those with IDPs having a lower allocation, e.g., only $17 per capita in Mozambique. While countries with large IDP numbers should have received other funding under the cluster approach, prior OIOS audits noted that because this was not always the case, UNHCR had to step in to deliver services as an implementer of last resort. As required by the RAAs, the Bureau needed to prepare regional analyses and share with Headquarters the impact of resource limitations on the protection and wellbeing of the displaced persons.

Chart 1: Budget per displaced person by country in 2021 ($)

Country	Budget per displaced person ($)
Mozambique	17.03
DRC	17.98
ROC	34.62
South Africa MCO	53.13
Zimbabwe	83.47
Zambia	126.68
Malawi	146.91
Angola	177.6

23. The Bureau in mid-2021 moved from allocating funding to operations proportionally to considering programmatic priorities, absorption capacity and risk management when preparing budgets. Considering the increasing needs and limited resources, the Bureau needed to review the adequacy and effectiveness of its strategic plans and resource allocation to deliver its mandate. This may involve deprioritizing strategic areas that are less impactful to displaced persons and in accordance with the RAAs having to report the impact of the limited resources on programmes.

Managing regional and country operations risks

24. The Bureau's Risk Management and Compliance Unit (RMCU) oversaw the implementation of Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) within the region. The Bureau had a regional risk register in place, but it did not cover key ongoing risks, e.g., the inadequacy of the Bureau structure to deliver its mandate and the blurring of first- and second-line roles. Further, while all the operations had risk registers in place, their quality varied with the UNHCR ERM Service requesting the Bureau to provide support to some countries in this regard. Country audits showed that many proposed actions were inadequate in mitigating risks and others remained outstanding past their due dates. The Bureau needed to follow up with country

operations on the timely implementation of mitigation actions as well as build the capacity of staff and partners to reinforce a culture of risk management.

25.   At the time of the audit, the region had 23 open recommendations, of which 15 or 65 per cent were past the agreed implementation date. Root causes analysis of recurring findings by the second line and third-line assurance providers did not feed directly into the risk registers to support the identification of risk matters for consideration in decision making, including resource allocation, or in planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

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(3)   The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should strengthen its strategic planning process by: (a) supporting country operations in their efforts to allocate resources to most impactful programmes and sharing with Headquarters the impact of resource limitations on the protection and wellbeing of the displaced persons in the region; (b) ensuring that country operations implement actions to mitigate key risks; and (c) supporting country operations in their efforts to collect quality population data for decision making.

UNHCR accepted recommendation 3 and stated that: (a) the Bureau is reviewing operations' strategies and providing objective feedback. (b) Risk monitoring and reporting is conducted on monthly basis and bi-annual risk reviews are conducted to check pending treatments. (c) The Bureau has designed a regional data strategy in consultation with country operations to address data gaps and inconsistencies. Monthly data analyses and regional quarterly data reviews are now conducted to enhance the quality of data.

C.   Resource mobilization

<u>Systems, processes and tools needed to support the Bureau's resource mobilization mandate</u>

26.   The Bureau through its External Engagement Pillar (the Pillar) had a shared responsibility over resource mobilization with the Headquarters and country operations to: (a) secure sufficient funding for UNHCR operations; (b) sustain and safeguard available funding; (c) diversify the donor base; and (d) ensure transparency and accountability to donors and affected populations. The Bureau, through a team of six international and four national staff, conducted resource mobilization, communications, development partnerships, and inter-agency coordination activities. Even with the absence of a Private Sector Partnership officer, the Bureau with Headquarters' support was able to raise $5.5 million in 2022.

27.   The region's limited funding impacted country operations' capacity to deliver assistance and protection services to displaced persons in the region. The gap in the region's requirements and funding widened from 36 per cent in 2020 to 56 per cent in 2022. This was attributed to many countries in the region having protracted caseloads that were less attractive to donors than more recent crises, e.g., Ukraine. Also, many of them, as middle-income countries, were expected to meet the needs of displaced persons in their territories. Additionally, $143 of the $192 million (74 per cent) received in 2022 was earmarked funding (including tightly earmarked funds), which constrained allocation of available resources to priorities and needs of displaced persons.

28.   The ever-increasing needs in a resource constrained environment heightened the competition for available resources. There was need for a robust strategic planning to raise the Bureau's visibility and ability to mobilize funds. The Bureau's external engagement strategy (2021–2022) had 3 objectives, i.e., to: (i) raise the profile of UNHCR operations in the region; (ii) increase funding and diversify resource mobilization; and (iii) strengthen strategic partnerships to enhance protection and solutions for displaced

persons. The Bureau was updating its strategy at the time of the audit but needed to evaluate its success in meeting the three-resource mobilization strategic objectives to inform the next strategy.

29.   The strategy was complemented by annual workplans, which allocated activities to staff across the Pillar. However, the listed activities in the workplans were generic with: (i) deliverables not always clearly articulated; (ii) timelines not specific; (iii) no measures against which success would be assessed; (iv) risks not identified for mitigation; and (v) no linkages to supportive activities conducted by other pillars. For instance, except for the DRC, the workplans did not define who would be targeted during resource mobilization efforts. The Bureau's workplans needed to be updated to close the above gaps.

30.   The Bureau remained dependent on 10 donors providing 91 per cent of its funding. There was thus a need to widen the donor base by using analyses of donor trends, priorities and budget cycles to identify available opportunities and funders/partners to pursue at regional and country levels. These factors would support the development of effective plans for mobilizing resources within the overall Division of External Relations framework and its overall objectives.

31.   In line with the RAAs and as part of the Bureau's strategic planning, the Bureau's workplans included engagements with development actors and non-governmental organizations. However, that was not so much the case with other United Nations agencies because, according to the Bureau, these agencies provided limited transactional funding in the region. However, some OIOS audits in the region showed that the operationalization of signed memoranda of understanding with United Nations agencies at the global level would support delivery of basic services to displaced persons, e.g., food. The Bureau needed to seek, foster and nurture partnership opportunities early enough so that displaced persons are included in donor funding and national development plans.

32.   The Bureau provided support to country operations, particularly the DRC, in preparing concept notes. However, except for the DRC and Mozambique, there was no documentation to evidence that other countries had fundraising strategies. For effectiveness and considering its limited capacity, the Bureau needed to consider identifying which of the 16 countries it should prioritize for resource mobilization. The audit also did not see evidence of any oversight provided over the proper use of resources by country operations.

33.   The strategy identified indicators against which the Pillar would assess its performance. However, it had not set baselines and targets against which to measure the extent to which different objectives were achieved. Additionally, the indicators primarily focused on inputs and processes and not outputs from the resource mobilization activities. For example, it measured the number of initiatives as opposed to whether they were effective in raising resources. Additionally, the Pillar could not collect data for certain indicators, e.g., on the number of people reached through social media.

> **(4)   The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should reinforce its resource mobilization strategy and related workplans as informed by: (a) an evaluation of its performance in the last strategy (2021-22); and (b) an analysis of the external resource environment to support prioritization of opportunities. The Bureau should also revise the framework for measuring its performance regarding resource mobilization.**
>
> *UNHCR accepted recommendation 4 and stated that: (a) the Bureau updated its external engagement strategy in July 2023, and it provides direction on engagement with a broad range of stakeholders and partners and leverages their strategic positioning to support UNHCR's mandate. (b) Analysis is being done alongside the Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service on the external resource environment and country specific analyses. The strategy includes some indicators on how resource mobilization performance will be measured but this will be revisited in early 2024.*

D. Coordination with stakeholders involved in service delivery to forcibly displaced persons

<u>Need to strengthen coordination activities and follow up of Global Compact on Refugee pledges</u>

Coordination with key stakeholders

34. One of the strategic directions of the Bureau was to support governments in implementing the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework/ Global Compact on Refugees (CRRF/GCR) pledges as well as other international obligations that strengthen protection and enhance solutions for displaced persons. While there were opportunities to pursue effective coordination with entities at country and regional level, including with United Nations and non-governmental agencies, the Bureau lacked resources to pursue them all. Thus, the Bureau needed to map the different frameworks and support their prioritization for implementation according to relevance at country and regional levels.

35. UNHCR's assignment of geographical responsibilities to different Bureaux was sometimes misaligned to regional entities. For instance, the Bureau's memorandum of understanding with the South African Development Community included Tanzania and not the ROC. Additionally, the Bureau had to deal with displacements from other regions, e.g., those related to the Central African Republic. In such situations, the Bureau needed to ensure that country strategies were aligned to government, inter-agency and cooperation frameworks to mitigate against the risk of duplications and/or gaps and ensure sustainability of assistance to displaced persons.

36. Over 80 per cent of the displaced persons in the region were IDPs, to whom UNHCR did not have primary responsibility for assistance. Thus, operations worked in an underfunded environment that was often overcrowded with many agencies and organizations operating with different mandates, territorial competences and sometimes a competitive attitude. There was need for better coordination mechanisms, so country operations position themselves better with key interlocutors across the region. This included:

- Country operations fully operationalizing bilateral memoranda of understanding signed between the Bureau and other United Nations agencies on matters such as statelessness, food and cash assistance.
- The Bureau, through its oversight and support role, ensuring that country operations are adequately involved in inter-agency and UN country team meetings. OIOS in past reports[4] identified gaps in operations' coordination with other stakeholders at the country level.
- Ensuring through advocacy and targeted coordination, that governments included displaced persons in their national programmes. Three countries registered success in having displaced persons included in national programmes but the governments remained heavily dependent on UNHCR to fund programme activities.

GCR pledges

37. The strategic plans at bureau and country level took cognizance of GCR objectives. One of the GCR successes in the region was the South African Development Community adoption of the action plan on statelessness and asylum. The Bureau's pledge tracking sheet had 146 pledges (65 for statelessness and 81 for others) and 7 good practices as of June 2022. However, in the three-year period to June 2022, only 5 per cent of these pledges were fulfilled, with another 80 per cent at the planning stage. The Bureau

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[4] Zambia (AR 2022/082), Mozambique (AR 2020/030), Zimbabwe (AR2020-113-02)

attributed the limited progress in the three years to political, financial and technical issues at the country level. The Bureau needed to prioritize countries to support regarding the fulfillment of key GCR pledges.

38.   The Bureau originally estimated that the region would benefit from 57 pledges valued at $4.6 billion. This included 32 states pledges totaling more than $2 billion in humanitarian and development funding that were followed up by UNHCR headquarters. However, per the Bureau's latest Global Refugee Forum newsletter, most financial pledges had not yet materialized. The Bureau attributed this to the lack of private sector partnership staff in the region.

39.   Although a strategic priority, the Bureau did not have mechanisms for following-up and reporting progress of GCR pledges to its senior management team as well as to feed in periodic updates at Headquarters level. There were no dedicated staff to follow up GCR pledges in the region. This responsibility was left to staff in their substantive areas, with GCR focal points at bureau and country levels in place to coordinate related activities. The staff, however, did not have the technical competence to follow up on pledges and there were no mechanisms, e.g., monitoring meetings, to ensure this happened and in a timely and cost-effective manner. This was also attributed to limited clarity on who had responsibility for following up the pledges.

Emergency preparedness and response

40.   There were several Level 2 and 3 emergencies[5] declared in the region related to IDPs in the DRC and Mozambique, refugee influxes from CAR and impact of cyclones primarily in Mozambique. The Bureau developed Regional Refugee Response Plans and contingency plans to coordinate and direct inter-agency and country operations' responses. The region was heavily susceptible to climate factors that resulted in the displacement of persons for many years. The Bureau developed a related regional strategic framework (2023-2026) and action plan (2021-2023) on climate change related displacements. However, the framework lacked operational details, was not costed and resourced for implementation.

41.   The recurrence of conflict and natural disaster related displacement in the region meant that dedicated resources were needed in the region to coordinate emergency planning and response. However, the Bureau had two staff that coordinated emergency preparedness and response, and this was in addition to overseeing a portfolio of four countries each as well as thematic areas across the region. At country level, only the DRC had dedicated resources for emergency preparedness and response. Thus, the Bureau heavily relied on the Division of Emergency, Security and Supply for staff deployments.

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(5)   The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should strengthen its coordination role by: (a) reviewing and prioritizing the implementation of different United Nations frameworks according to their relevance at country and regional levels; (b) reinforcing the monitoring of GCR pledges at the country and regional levels; and (c) operationalizing the regional strategic framework and action plan on climate change related displacement.

UNHCR accepted recommendation 5 and stated that the Bureau had in place MOUs with other United Nations agencies on mixed migration and data management. These regional initiatives are being replicated at country level with the same agencies. Within the UNSDCF, UNHCR leverages other agencies on issues of importance to UNHCR. In 2022, the Bureau updated its regional climate change strategic plan and framework to include pertinent activities which countries should consider. The

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[5] Emergency declaration indicated the need for increased Bureau and UNHCR HQ support and resources respectively to ensure the country operation responded in an effective manner. In terms of response, the Bureau Director has the authority to allocate funds up to $5 million upon the declaration of an emergency while the AHC-Ops has the authority to approve up to an additional $5 million on top of that authorized by the Director.

> *strategic plan on climate change is already being used by country operations to inform their multi-year strategy planning and, to the extent possible, resources allocation.*

E.   Support and oversight of country operations

<u>Need to strengthen oversight and support of country operations in the region</u>

42.   As the primary second line of defense, the Bureau was responsible for: (i) facilitating quality assurance and risk management; (ii) monitoring the country operations' compliance with controls; (iii) providing technical support to country operations to improve impact, relevance and efficiency of programmes, and facilitating functional communities of practice; and (iv) addressing strategic, operational and managerial issues and concerns. The Bureau's dual oversight and support role was not unique to UNHCR, as the three benchmarked agencies in the region had similar structures.

43.   The Bureau's ability to conduct support and oversight missions to country operations in the period under audit was impacted by travel restrictions occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic and limited available resources. For instance, some Bureau units, like the protection unit, had a single staff, and thus lacked the capacity and/or the technical competencies to fully execute their programmes. Thus, in some instances, the Bureau had to refer country requests for support to Divisions. It also meant that the Bureau could not adequately firewall between the oversight and the support it provided to countries.

44.   The success of UNHCR's three-lines model at the regional level was dependent on the effectiveness of the first- and second-line functions operating effectively. The Bureau noted that the division of labor in the second line (between Bureaux and Divisions) did not come with a commensurate allocation of resources. The ongoing Division reforms were expected to move resources to regions. Furthermore, operations with limited capacity to execute their first line responsibilities relied on the already overstretched Bureau capacity for support. For instance, the ROC, Mozambique and Zimbabwe lacked technical staff and thus relied on the Bureau to deliver services related to cash assistance, statelessness, livelihoods, shelter, nutrition and food security. Country operations were satisfied with the support they received from the Bureau, but this came at the cost of Bureau's ability to execute its oversight role.

45.   UNHCR's original Bureau structure was also skewed more towards oversight than support although the reverse was true in the Southern Africa region. Consequently, the Bureau had at the time of the audit centralized certain functions at Bureau or country level and instituted contextualized positions to address staff shortages. For instance, the regional Water, Sanitation and Hygiene officer was placed in Zimbabwe to cover Zambia, Malawi and emergencies. However, their support to countries affected their availability to conduct oversight across the region. Additionally, unlike those of the three United Nations agencies benchmarked against, Bureau staff job descriptions were not tailored to reflect staff dual oversight and support responsibilities.

46.   Considering its limited resources and the varied country sizes, capacities and risk profiles in the region, the Bureau needed but did not have a risk-based plan nor criteria against which to prioritize the support and/or oversight provided to country operations. The Bureau's work was thus reactive and ad hoc as it was primarily driven by country requests and on a first come first served basis. While the Bureau planned to have lesser involvement in countries that were better resourced, in practice this was not the case. For instance, although the DRC received much of the Bureau's funding, it still needed support because of its size and complexities.

47.   Furthermore, the Bureau had limited systems, tools and processes to support its monitoring of the first line's compliance with UNHCR guidance. UNHCR's legacy IT systems lacked automated compliance

checks and did not provide the Bureau with visibility on what was happening in country offices. Thus, the Bureau used ad hoc tools to discharge its oversight and support responsibilities. For instance, it used Power BI to review the utilization of funds and implementation rates and had no system to support the monitoring of programme performance (results). The BTP was expected to provide greater visibility and opportunities for automating compliance checks.

48. The Bureau followed a multi-functional team approach in providing oversight and support, and this bridged silos in the work done by different Units. It also maintained a tracking sheet detailing the various missions it had undertaken. However, the Bureau did not monitor the implementation of recommendations issued after missions. It also did not have mechanisms to measure the timeliness and quality of oversight and support provided to country operations.

> **(6)** **The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should: (a) develop risk-based plans to support the prioritization of oversight and support activities to country operations; and (b) in coordination with the Director of Change clarify between the second line roles and responsibilities undertaken by the Bureau and Divisions taking into consideration the limited resources and available staff capacity.**
>
> *UNHCR accepted recommendation 6 and stated that most sections of the Bureau had plans and procedures for prioritizing support and oversight over field operations. The ERM Service will develop an overall tool and methodology for risk-based monitoring. The clarifying of roles among second line entities should be done in coordination with the Director of Change.*

F. Structure and staffing

<u>Need to align structure, capacity and competence to deliver Bureau's mandate</u>

49. The Bureau's strategic priorities related to human resources were to: (i) conduct staff reviews at Bureau and country levels; (ii) contribute to the development/update of human resources policies; (iii) facilitate implementation of the new human resources management system 'Workday'; (iv) foster an inclusive and diversified workspace; and (v) support related operations in the region.

50. The Southern Africa region had 853 staff and 181 affiliated work force, and it accounted for 6 per cent of UNHCR global workforce. This made it the smallest Bureau staff-wise, which was attributed to limited resources available to the region. At the time of the audit, 393 staff (46 per cent of the regional workforce) were allocated to the DRC. The staff/operating level budget for the region was 39 per cent against a global ratio of 22 per cent for UNHCR. The high staff/operating level ratio was caused by most Southern Africa region operations having small budgets but requiring staff to deliver their mandate within UNHCR's control frameworks.

51. The Bureau conducted regional staff analyses from 2020 and they resulted in a 12 per cent increase in numbers by 2022. Despite this increase, major resource gaps remained at country level in areas like data identity management analysis, protection, operations and administration roles. The Bureau also conducted staff reviews in Angola, the DRC and Mozambique, with the DRC recommendations not implemented due to lack of funding. The Bureau needed to maintain staffing structure and capacity (skills and numbers) in line with prioritized services to displaced persons. As part of its strategic planning, the Bureau would need to reprioritize its service delivery based on available resources and as required in the RAAs escalate to UNHCR the impact of gaps in the fulfillment of its mandate.

52.   Seventeen percent of the staff resources in the region were affiliated workforce who filled staffing gaps on a temporary basis. The large, affiliated workforce percentage masked staff shortages in critical roles, with affiliates appointed to core functions which may have resulted in contravening UNHCR rules. The inadequate staffing structure reinforced the need for an assessment of staffing requirements of critical functions in the region and monitoring of supervisory arrangements of affiliate workforce.

53.   The Bureau did not have statistics on vacancies at the time of the audit. It, however, attributed its inability to fill positions in the region to inadequate funding and duty stations being considered unattractive. This was attributed to: (i) security and standards of living; (ii) short standard assignment lengths (24 months) and emergency assignments (12 months) which increased transactional costs and handover risks; (iii) preference of duty stations with higher post adjustments; (iv) limited accessibility to countries in the region; and (v) language barriers in countries like the DRC, the ROC and Mozambique. The Bureau strategy was to invest in local capacity to ensure continuity, but the skills set was not always available. Also, for general staff, salaries were not deemed to be competitive and/or, because jobs were temporary, selected candidates declined the offer.

54.   While recognizing the operational context and the Bureau adaptive and flexible approach in trying to fill in for the shorter term critical operational gaps as and where needed, OIOS was of the view that strategic long-term challenges that resulted in an imbalance between the mandate of the Bureau and its actual delivery needed to be addressed. Within existing institutional regulatory and funding constraints, the Bureau needed to reassess its priorities and align staffing and budgets in the region to deliver on its mandate selectively and proactively, rather than continue to reactively fill in overwhelming gaps in country operations.

(7)	**The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should: (a) align the limited staff (numbers and skills) at country and bureau levels to its strategic priorities; (b) inform Headquarters of the impact of identified gaps on its service delivery; and (c) with support from the Division of Human Resources develop strategies to address regional challenges so it can acquire and retain staff.**

UNHCR accepted recommendation 7 and stated that the Bureau conducted comprehensive staffing analysis as part of its annual exercise since 2020, and aligned the number, skills and expertise of staff to the strategic priorities of country operations. The Bureau also informed Headquarters, through strategy notes identified gaps and resource requirements for essential protection and assistance delivery. While the strategy to acquire and retain staff should be developed and put in practice by the Division of Human Resources, the Regional Bureau has promoted some regional initiative for retention, including promoting a respectful work environment, strengthening leadership skills, teams' cohesion and increase staff involvement.

IV.   ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

55.   OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of UNHCR for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[6]/ Important[7]	C/ O[8]	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date[9]
1	To reinforce individual accountability, the UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should strengthen the implementation of the Roles, Accountabilities and Authorities framework by contextualizing it for the region, including through clarification of staff roles, reporting lines, stakeholders, and relationships with Bureau and Headquarters divisions.	Important	O	Receipt of documentary evidence that the Bureau has: (i) mapped its resourcing against designated Roles, Accountabilities and Authorities (RAAs); (ii) identified RAAs which may be impacted due to inadequate capacity; and (iii) identified remedial actions that will be taken and any resultant gaps in controls that may arise.	31 December 2024
2	The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should review country operations' capacity to comply with UNHCR procedures in view of their operational contexts, risks, and resource levels and where necessary, raise headquarters' attention on the need to build an exemption regime in future policies for critically under-resourced operations.	Important	O	Receipt of documentary evidence that the Bureau has: (i) reviewed the capacity of the countries in the region that are critically under-resourced to comply with key control frameworks; and (ii) escalated to the relevant divisions requests for exemption where necessary.	30 June 2024
3	The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should strengthen its strategic planning process by: (a) supporting country operations in their efforts to allocate resources to most impactful programmes and sharing with Headquarters the impact of resource limitations on the protection and wellbeing of the displaced persons in the region; (b) ensuring that country operations implement actions to mitigate key risks; and (c) supporting country operations in their efforts to collect quality population data for decision making.	Important	O	Receipt of documentary evidence that the Bureau: (a) in supporting countries to prioritize allotted resources among critical strategic aspects. Where key strategic areas cannot be implemented due to inadequate resources, flagging these to HQ; and (c) has developed a workplan to improve quality of population data.

Rec 3b has been recorded as implemented | 31 October 2024 |

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[6] Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

[7] Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

[8] Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

[9] Date provided by UNHCR in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[6]/ Important[7]	C/ O[8]	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date[9]
4	The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should reinforce its resource mobilization strategy and related workplans as informed by: (a) an evaluation of its performance in the last strategy (2021-22); and (b) an analysis of the external resource environment to support prioritization of opportunities. The Bureau should also revise the framework for measuring its performance regarding resource mobilization.	Important	O	Receipt of documentary evidence that: (a) an evaluation of past resource mobilization strategies to support improvements of strategies and workplans has been conducted; (b) a systematic analysis of the external resource environment has been performed and a performance framework for resource mobilization developed.	31 December 2024
5	The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should strengthen its coordination role by: (a) reviewing and prioritizing the implementation of different United Nations frameworks according to their relevance at country and regional levels; (b) reinforcing the monitoring of GCR pledges at the country and regional levels; and (c) operationalizing the regional strategic framework and action plan on climate change related displacement.	Important	O	Receipt of documentary evidence that: (a) key UN cooperation frameworks have been mapped to support their streamlining into regional and country strategies; (b) GCR pledge implementation is being monitored; and (c) the regional strategic framework and climate action plan has been operationalized.	31 December 2024
6	The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should: (i) develop risk-based plans to support the prioritization of oversight and support activities to country operations; and (ii) in coordination with the Director of Change obtain clarification from headquarters on the second line roles and responsibilities undertaken by the Bureau and Divisions taking into consideration the limited resources and available staff capacity.	Important	O	Receipt of documentary evidence that: (a) a risk-based plan to support prioritization of oversight and support activities to country operations is in place; and (b) roles with headquarters on the second line are clarified considering its limited resources.	31 December 2024
7	The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should: (a) align the limited staff (numbers and skills) at country and bureau level to its strategic priorities; (b) inform Headquarters of the impact of identified gaps on its service delivery; and (c) with support from Division of Human Resources develop strategies to address regional challenges so it can acquire and retain staff.	Important	O	Receipt of documentary evidence that: (a) a comprehensive review of the country operations needs against the available staff has been conducted; (b) formal communication to HQ on gaps in human resources and how this will impact service delivery; and (c) that a contextualized attraction and retention strategy on how staff can be acquired and retained.	31 October 2024

APPENDIX I

Management Response

Management Response

Audit of UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[10]/ Important[11]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	UNHCR comments
1	To reinforce individual accountability, the UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should strengthen the implementation of the Roles, Accountabilities and Authorities framework by contextualizing it for the region, including through clarification of staff roles, reporting lines, stakeholders, and relationships with Bureau and Headquarters divisions.	Important	Yes	Head of Strategic Planning & Management Services	31 December 2024	UNHCR released a new Policy on Resource Allocation and Management (UNHCR/HCP/2023/06). This Policy sets out overall principles and processes for resource planning, allocation and management in UNHCR. It reflects the relevant authorities for situating resource management closer to the point of delivery in line with UNHCR's decentralization and regionalization objectives. Fundamental premise of this framework is the delegation of decision-making to the appropriate level within the organization – in the context of this audit to a country office or a regional bureau. The authority to take a decision should be de-linked from the ability to record/process the decision (e.g., revise a budget, revise a PPA, change a position, etc.). The head of Sub-Office can decide on structural changes or make budget revisions within her/his authority, but relevant analysis and actual processing can be done at country or central level (this is system-dependent unless it is

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[10] Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

[11] Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[10]/ Important[11]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	UNHCR comments
						revised as part of the ongoing Business Transformation Programme).
						The revised version of UNHCR Financial Rules effective as of 1 January 2023 (A/AC.96/503/Rev.12) provides a clearer interpretation and application of the financial framework of governing UN financial regulations and UNHCR's financial rules and an improved basis for accountability specifically within this remit. However, our Financial Rules do not lay out an organization wide framework for management reporting lines (including that of green/blue reporting lines). The document only touches on the issue of personal accountability (Rule 104.4) and sets out high level principles for internal controls.
						UNHCR's accountability framework is made up of standard components that are mainstreamed at all levels of the organization through our policy framework, guidance, organization-wide business processes and values. See attached (Annex 1a) Q&A detailing key elements and future development of UNHCR's accountability framework. Currently, UNHCR captures individual accountabilities using standard job descriptions organized by its Functional Group structure. This promotes coherence across the

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[10]/ Important[11]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	UNHCR comments
						organization and enables strategic workforce planning and career development in a decentralized context. The duties are broadly aligned to the RAAs. A unique operational context supports each Job Description and captures the specific requirements and accountabilities of a position, enabling contextualized performance management. The job description is further complemented by the ePAD/EVOLVE which sets specific objectives for the staff member based on the required context/ priorities against which their performance would be measured as well as captured as part of the Section/ Pillar workplan in terms of priorities and through the focal point system. For example, the two Senior Operations Officers in the Bureau have specific focal areas they are responsible for.
2	The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should review country operations' capacity to comply with UNHCR procedures in view of their operational contexts, risks, and resource levels and where necessary, seek justifiable exemption from the regulatory framework	Important	Yes	Head of Strategic Planning & Management Services & Regional Controller	30 June 2024	The Bureau undertakes regular staff reviews across all sections to rationalize UNHCR presence and determine operations' capacity to deliver assistance and protection services. This is guided by the strategic direction and determined by the availability of resources. The organization's' specific operational contexts, risk profiles and complexities are considered while undertaking staffing and structure review.

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[10]/ Important[11]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	UNHCR comments
						There is no process in UNHCR to seek exemption from the regulatory framework unless provided for in the policy or Administrative Instructions (AI) and as such not implementable in its current format. However, UNHCR issued a new Administrative Instruction on Procedures on Partnership Management (UNHCR/AI/2023/05) as part of its Business Transformation Programme (BTP) introducing increased coherence, linking resources to results including flexibilities introduced in relation to the application of the instruction to smaller operations. For instance, smaller operations are exempted from establishing Implementing Partnership Management Committee (IPMC). The Southern Africa Bureau has kept constant engagement with HQ Division/ Sections and provided extensive feedback with the anticipation that there will be clarity in the revised policies and procedures for specific country context and applicability of policies.
3	The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should strengthen its strategic planning process by: (a) supporting country operations in their efforts to allocate resources to most impactful programmes and sharing with Headquarters the impact of resource limitations on the protection and wellbeing of the displaced persons in the	Important	Yes	Head of Strategic Planning & Management Services & Senior Risk & Compliance Advisor	31 October 2024	The strategic planning process in the Bureau and in the region is undertaken as per the existing procedures and guidelines for RBM (COMPASS). RBSA developed an Interim Strategy in 2022 and a two-year multi-year strategy for 2023 and 2024. Although the MYMPPSS remains central to the development of the Bureau Multi Year

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[10]/ Important[11]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	UNHCR comments
	region; (b) ensuring that country operations implement actions to mitigate key risks; and (c) supporting country operations in their efforts to collect quality population data for decision making.					Strategy document, the Bureau's priorities derive from the overall Strategic document. In 2020, the first year of D&R exercise, joint assessments of the regional protection risks and concerns were conducted which resulted in the development of a four-year Protection and Solutions Strategy (2021-2024). The strategy is guiding the implementation of protection work. For 2023, a mid-year review of the multi-year strategy was conducted in March 2023 to take stock, measure progress, and update the plan. Part 1 (a): Systems for measuring results are embedded in the Monitoring and Evaluation part of the Multi Year Strategy, which includes a Means of Verification (MoV) table. This MoV table includes relevant information to facilitate measuring results. In addition, there is a corporate timeline for reporting results in COMPASS; the reporting of 2022 results was completed end of February 2023 in line with this corporate timeline. Moreover, the Bureau is systematically reviewing Operations strategies and provide objective feedback. Part 2 (b): Risk monitoring is conducted on monthly basis and reports produced. Additionally, bi-annual risk review report is produced

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[10]/ Important[11]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	UNHCR comments
						reviewing risks with pending treatments. The Regional Bureau Risk Register identifies trends and patterns of risks at the country and based on that, informs from a bottom-up approach at least partially the risk lens with which we review the regional bureau risk level. The risk register document and the risk review at the Bureau is systematically aligned with those at the country operation level for better analysis and reporting. Furthermore, each year official feedback on the quality of the risk register is provided to the Representative of the operation
						Part 3 (c): The Bureau consulted with country operations and designed a regional data strategy to alleviate data gaps and inconsistencies and reinforce partnership with other UN agencies such as IOM and UNFPA to work jointly on data. Thematic protection issues have been identified and relate to each population groups, i.e., asylum seekers and RSD backlogs; detention and expulsion data collection and analysis; mixed and secondary movements; data gaps and inconsistencies; improved data information on stateless persons and inclusion in national population census; development and cooperation with focus on protection dividends, etc. A monthly data analysis is conducted, as well as a regional

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[10]/ Important[11]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	UNHCR comments
						quarterly data review, and the outcome of the exercise is shared with operations to continuously enhance the quality data. Also, support provided through planned verification exercises.
4	The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should reinforce its resource mobilization strategy and related workplans as informed by: (a) an evaluation of its performance in the last strategy (2021-22); and (b) an analysis of the external resource environment to support prioritization of opportunities. The Bureau should also revise the framework for measuring its performance regarding resource mobilization.	Important	Yes	Senior External Engagement Coordinator	31 December 2024	The Bureau provides support and oversight to all countries in the region on the effective implementation of the funds received from donors. The documentation on the details of the monitoring of earmarked contributions is attached to this report as evidence of continuous monitoring and support to country Operations. This is done throughout the course of the year with each country operation and a more detailed and extensive exercise in October/November in coordination with SPM Pillar. The Bureau also provides support to all country operations on project proposals and donor reporting including reviewing the proposals.

Part 1 (a): The Bureau has updated its external engagement strategy which seeks to enhance the Bureau's engagement with a broad range of stakeholders and partners including donors, host governments, development actors, private sector, civil society, media, philanthropic and faith-based entities and leverage their added value and strategic positioning to support UNHCR's mandate. Resource mobilization is one component of the strategy and each |

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						area collectively aims to assist UNHCR in leading the protection narrative, generating empathy towards displaced communities, mobilizing action and funds, and increasing UNHCR's external visibility. The overall strategy draws inspiration from the UNHCR Global Directions – protect, respond, include, empower, and solve – as well as the principles of the GCR and CRRF. The Strategy is also guided by the RBSA Strategic directions and the RBSA Protection and Solutions Strategy. Additionally, RBSA 2023/2024 Multi-Yes Strategy Document also contains, in its page 15 & 16 a full chapter guidance on resource mobilization for the Bureau and the wider region.

Part 2 (b): Analysis of the external resource environment is already being done with the DRRM through the existing PowerBI platform. The analysis gives comprehensive information on the external resource environment and mobilization. See (Annex 4d) Income Management & Funding Analysis documents providing country specific analysis. The EE strategy includes some indicators to measure the resource mobilization performance which will be revisited during the review process in early 2024. |

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[10]/ Important[11]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	UNHCR comments
5	The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should strengthen its coordination role by: (a) reviewing and prioritizing the implementation of different United Nations frameworks according to their relevance at country and regional levels; (b) reinforcing the monitoring of GCR pledges at the country and regional levels; and (c) operationalizing the regional strategic framework and action plan on climate change related displacement.	Important	Yes	Snr. Operations Coordinator	31 December 2024	The Bureau has reinforced its collaboration with the UN agencies particularly IOM and UNFPA on mixed migration and data management. MoU was signed with UNFPA in 2022 on the inclusion of UNHCR dataset in national populations census. Another data-sharing protocol signed with IOM on mixed and onward movements. These regional initiatives are being replicated at country level with the same agencies. The country UN framework is the UNSDCF which all UNHCR offices are part of. This is the mechanism to leverage other UN agencies on issues of importance to UNHCR. All UN global frameworks are reviewed for relevance and incorporated/ aligned to UNSDCF at the country level via the UNSDCF. Additionally, UNHCR country operations in the Southern African region attend UNCT, SMT and other UN Coordination meetings by the Representative/Deputy Representative or most senior staff/OIC on regularly bases. By effective participation in inter-agency meetings, UNHCR in the region ensures synergy and enabled efficiencies in coordination among UN country team members and the host government. All UNCT meetings are documented by maintaining records in the form of meeting lessons learned are also documented in some instances. In some Operations UNCT

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						organize dedicated annual retreats such as the one organized in Mozambique. In this regular annual exercise members meet and discuss the progress made in the previous year, lessons learned and discuss the priorities for the year and agree on a work plan which will inform the work of the inter-agency group. Regular attendance and UN coordination is documented/ consolidated in a matrix which explains the spirit and attention by field operations in Southern Africa for strengthening the coordination role to advance the organization's agendas and priority at regional level. The Bureau has a regional climate change strategic plan and framework which was updated in 2022 to include pertinent activities which countries should consider. The regional framework was designed after due consultation with all country operations and other stockholders. The strategic plan on climate change is already being used by country operations to inform their multi-year strategy planning and resources allocation. Please note that the climate crisis is a cross-cutting issue impacting all entities and UNHCR alone is not able to allocate resources to operationalize the strategy. However, the strategy is used by Operations to embed climate crises into their stagey

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[10]/ Important[11]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	UNHCR comments
						plan and their programme implementation.
6	The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should: (i) develop risk-based plans to support the prioritization of oversight and support activities to country operations; and (ii) in coordination with the Director of Change obtain clarification from headquarters on second line roles and responsibilities undertaken by the Bureau and Divisions taking into consideration the limited resources and available staff capacity.	Important	Yes	Head of Strategic Planning & Management Services in the Bureau & Division of Change Management & Department of Human Resources in HQ	31 December 2024	Most sections of the Bureau have plans and procedures in place to prioritize areas of support and oversight for field operations linked to the risk areas. Regular meetings are held to collect updates and identify areas where support should be provided, and capacity building needs addressed. The ERM Service will develop an overall tool and methodology for Risk Based Monitoring which will be provided to the Regional Bureaus with some flexibility to customize and tailor to their context, however anchored on a standard approach. Part 2 of the recommendation may also be addressed to the Division of Change Management & Department of Human Resources in HQ as the two have related functions. When it comes to the Bureau the second line roles and responsibilities are guided by the Roles, Accountabilities and Authorities (RAA) document for Regional Bureau.
7	The UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa should: (a) align the limited staff (numbers and skills) at country and bureau level to its strategic priorities; (b) inform Headquarters of the impact of identified gaps on its service delivery; and (c) with support from Division of Human Resources develop	Important	Yes	Snr. Human Resources Partner with the support from Department of Human Resource in HQ	31 October 2024	Part a & b: The Bureau conducted comprehensive staffing analysis as part of its annual exercise, that has been done since 2020, each year for the OP and OL determination. This is an annual exercise which is done with full participation of the country operations. The aim of the exercise, among other things, is to align the

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical[10]/ Important[11]	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	UNHCR comments
	strategies to address regional challenges so it can acquire and retain staff.					number, skills and expertise to the strategic priorities of country operations and Bureau and also inform the HQ, through the strategy notes on the identified gaps and resource requirements for essential protection and assistance delivery. The staffing reviews for Mozambique, Angola and DRC, had several scenarios - an ideal situation where the operation would have the staff needed to deliver its objectives and a prioritized one, where given limited resources, the operation had a staffing plan B. Part c: While the strategy to acquire and retain staff should be developed and put in practice by DHR in HQ, the Regional Bureau also, at regional level, promoted some regional initiatives. One of the retention tools is the ability to offer positive and respectful work environment. The year 2021 and 2022 saw the development of the regional initiative to strengthen leadership skills, teams cohesion and increase staff involvement - the Team Time initiative, done with GLDC in Malawi, Zimb, Angola, Zambia in an example that we can showcase that help a positive environment towards retention of workforce.