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| **Minutes – National Refugee Protection Working Group Meeting (Online)** | |
| **Date** | 02 March, 2021 |
| **Chair** | Margaret Atieno (UNHCR), OPM absent with apology |
|  | **UNHCR update** |
| **UNHCR** | * This was the the second NRPWG online meeting in 2021, the current total population stands at 1, 450, 317 (total refugees 1, 424, 325 and total asylum seekers). The backlog of asylum seekers recorded in the refugee database is 25,000 asylum seekers, more analysis is required to understand at what stage the asylum seekers are in the asylum process i.e first instance, apply or rejected. * OPM and UNHCR conducted a border monitoring mission to Kisoro and Kanungu border points to understand the dynamics at the entry points. The issues of spontaneous/pendular movements and how to manage them was also monitored. * There was a mission by the UNHCR Country representatives to Uganda and South Sudan at Elegu border point to also understand the dynamic of spontaneous returns from South Sudan, Adjumani SO also participated in the border discussions. All discussions are still at brainstorming level, so far, nothing has been concluded however the conversations with OPM will continue in a planned OPM/UNHCR retreat in March 2021to assess the recommendation for establishing a refuge desk at major border points * 602 Congolese new arrivals were received in Arua over a period of 3 months and 01 Ethiopian was also received through Entebbe under special considerations. * Refugee Status Determination: RAB adjudicated 10 appeal applications concerning Eritrean, Congolese and Ethiopian asylum seekers; confirmed 03 decisions of the REC; set aside 06 applications and 01 application was deferred for additional clarification. REC session held in Kyangwali, OPM to provide more details in the next meeting. * Voluntary repatriation to Burundi: 1,120 individual Burundians have expressed interest to return home, a tripartite technical meeting was held with the Rwandan and Burundian counterparts to prepare for the returnees to return home by road through Rwanda, bi- weekly convoys likely to take place in March and April 2021. * Statelessness: Virtual meeting held on improving stateless statistics in East and Horn of Africa. The stateless partners should be included among the NRPWG members mailing list. * The Game Connect youth project was launched by the Minister of Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, Minister of Education and Sports, Italian Ambassador, UNHCR Country Representative and other consortium partner heads. The project was appreciated as a protection tool to protect the young people from all forms of abuse in the covid-19 period. * The Bomb explosion in Adjumani that killed 6 and injured 5 refugee children, this requires continuous sensitization and awareness by partners for children not to play with such suspicious metals, such as basic messaging on landmines. |
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|  | **Sub Sector working group/task teams’ updates** |
|  | **Community Based Protection/Peaceful Co-existence/PSN/MHPSS** |
|  | * The AAP task team was formed, and co-chairs rotate on a quarterly basis, currently, IRC will co-chair in the first quarter and all priority areas will be captured in the 2021 workplan. * The Peaceful co-existence task team reviewed the BCP and considered it relevant for implementation in 2021, mapping of the peaceful building activities is ongoing, and the task team is reaching out to more partners to expand the partnership. Action points on strategies and conflict analysis will also be shared with the partners. |
|  | **Sexual and Gender Based Violence Sub Sector Working Group (SGBVWG)update** |
|  | * The GBV work plan outlines the strategic direction and guides the colleagues to enable them to develop their plans per field location, some locations have already submitted while other locations are yet to submit to the SGBVWG for compilation of the final sector plan. * International Women’s day celebration which is coming up on 8 March 2021: The International Women’s Day 2021 theme – “Women in leadership; Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world” while the National theme – Building on women’s’ strength for a better future in a Covid 19 world. Key activities in the settlements and urban program will aim to demonstrate the dipropionate burden that women have faced in the covid-19 period, the adaptions the women were engaged in for example face mask production, involvement in women community structures, SGBV prevention, mitigation and response activities and where they have taken lead besides the partners were noted.   A comprehensive list of activities will be sent out by Thursday 04/03/2021.   * Protection risk assessment will be expanded to the whole operation, this was triggered by the increase in SGBV cases associated to cash distribution in Kyangwali. Protection partners have been engaged and additional partners are encouraged to participate in the actual protection assessment. |
|  | **Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)** |
|  | * The PSEA Global and national 5-year plans have been shared with UN partners, the risks assessments for partners have also been shared however to avoid duplication of the risk assessments UN agencies that have completed the risk assessments with partner should share. * A mission was conducted by the Uganda PSEA focal person to South West and the North, it was realized that especially in the North local district officials are not aware of PSEA and the safety measures against PSEA, although they are aware of their CoC, it was realized that it is limited to sexual harassment, there is need to integrate PSEA. * Beneficiaries of PSEA knowledge and information in Palabek expressed that they are not aware of where to report PSEA cases, they assumed that the FRRM is used for food related issues however this was clarified as majority of the PSEA cases are received through FRRM. Other PSEA reporting channels include protection desks and phone contacts although there is need for improvement on PSEA knowledge and translating of the PSEA IEC materials including referral pathways. * Also, during discussions it was noted that there has been sluggish poor uptake of the FRRM tool in West Nile compared to South West, partners are encouraged to play a greater responsibility on the FRRM tool uptake. * There is no timeline for the PSEA risk assessment of partners however UN agencies have been requested to share the list of the partners that have completed the risk assessment, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNHCR have shared some lists of partners so far. |
|  | **Child Protection** |
|  | * A smaller CP taskforce has been formed to draft the strategic child protection frame work to cover the period 2021 to 2023, it will cover critical child protection activities which are still in draft form although consultations are ongoing with the CP partners at field and national level including with the Ministry of Gender. The TOR of the CP taskforce have been finalized. * The National child protection referral pathway has been shared with the commissioner in Ministry of Gender and will be circulated widely with the partners * The Country wide Child Protection assessment will be conducted in Q2. * During the discussions it was suggested to conduct more joint assessments and consolidate any planned assessments to avoid duplication, in coordination with the assessment working group, all assessments conducted in 2021 should be compiled to provide an overview in coordination with the information management team. link <https://microdata.unhcr.org/> |
|  | **CARE Presentation on Summary recommendations from the Advocacy workshop on DVA 2010** |
|  | * **Background:** The Domestic Violence Act (DVA) was enacted in 2010 in fulfilment of the state’s constitutional obligations to enhance protection and safety of domestic violence victims/survivors, majority of whom are women and girls. The Act not only criminalizes domestic violence but also prescribes roles for local council courts, police, medical practitioners, probation and social welfare officers and magistrate’s courts, to ensure that perpetrators of domestic violence are held accountable and victims/survivors are supported, and protected from further harm. * In an advocacy workshop held in Fort Portal with various partners including the police, RWCs and medical practitioners, the DVA was reviewed inline with secondary data including the AGD policy with a focus on duty bearers in the refugee settlements and host communities. * Some of the outcomes include that some of the local authorities, medical practitioners, police and RWCs are not aware of or do not have adequate knowledge of the DVA 2010 and its application to address SGBV prevention, mitigation and response interventions and yet in very limited ways they have been involved in local mediations and referrals. Local authorities, medical practitioners, police and RWCs have to be empowered to deal with SGBV cases as part of their day to day duties. * In addition, it was further recommended to enhance close coordination among partners, bridge the individual case management gap, translate the DVA 2010 into simplified versions, invest in local courts and equip them with information, provide more resources to the RWCs, police and community development offices, support advocacy and resource mobilization among relevant actors, ensure that the PFIII is are used for legal purposes and health workers are trained accordingly, the DVA 2010 needs to be modified/update provisions to effectively prosecute SGBV cases which are in most cases are charged under the penal code Act and enhance medical referrals and promote protection to address SGBV. * One of the major gaps identified is the limited knowledge and information on the AGD policy among GBV case workers, there is an urgent need to ensure the knowledge and information trickles down to the refugee settlements and urban areas. |
|  | **AOB** |
|  | * Monitoring the Social and economic impact of COVID-19 on refugees in Uganda: Results from the high frequency phone survey second round has been shared by World Bank, UBOS and UNHCR and is available. |
|  | **ACTION POINTS** |
|  | * Circulate the Uganda Refugee Statistics for January 2021. * OPM to provide the breakdown of the REC session held in Kyangwali last week. * Circulate the Monitoring the Social and economic impact of COVID-19 on refugees in Uganda * Subsectors to develop workplans detailing concrete activities for the year. * Peaceful co-existence task force to develop mechanisms/strategies to mitigate perceptions that refugees are favoured. * Inclusion of partners working on statelessness to the National Refugee protection Working Group (NRPWG) * The concept note and tools to be finalized to also include PSEA information and shared with all the relevant protection partners. * The GBV Sub-working group to further discuss the Monitoring the Social and economic impact of COVID-19 on refugees in Uganda. * UN agencies to share the list of the partners that have completed the PSEA risk assessments * Circulate the National child protection referral pathway. |
| **NEXT MEETING: 06 April 2021** | |