

# Annual Results Report

**2023**

**South Africa Multi Country**

## Acknowledgements

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# Section 1: Context and Overview

## 1.1 Changes to the Operational Context

In 2023, UNHCR South Africa Multi-Country Office experienced operational challenges due to funding and staffing cuts. These cuts reflected on a majority of programs implemented by partners. The Cape Town Field Office was closed in December 2023, leaving UNHCR in South Africa with only the Representation Office in Pretoria. UNHCR worked effectively to sustain its relationships with the partners and refugee communities impacted. In Namibia and Botswana, UNHCR reduced its monthly food distribution activities to every other month, resulting in serious protection and nutritional concerns. Throughout the year, UNHCR consistently engaged refugee-led networks, pursued active engagement with communities and facilitated two-way feedback throughout the program cycle.

Asylum remains low on the political agendas and budgets of most of the governments of the nine countries covered by the South Africa MCO, with socio-economic fragility further deteriorating across these countries. UNHCR is concerned about the increasing restrictions placed on refugee rights in South Africa, especially following the publication of the ‘White Paper on Citizenship, Immigration and Refugee Protection’ in November 2023. UNHCR submitted its public comments and continues to engage the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) and various stakeholders on this concerning legal reform development.

Mixed movements continue to increase, and borders continue to tighten, particularly along the West Indian Ocean route, with more coast guard restrictions around Mayotte, in Comoros, and at ports of entry in South Africa.

Elections were held in Lesotho, Madagascar, and Eswatini in 2023. In South Africa and Namibia, the pre-electoral environment has affected social cohesion, with anti-foreigner sentiments growing, particularly in South Africa.

In December 2023, UNHCR signed an agreement with the EU Delegation for a EUR 2.5 million Appeal Asylum Backlog project for South Africa, comprising legal assistance, the three legal partners’ programs, and judicial engagement during 2024-2026. This likely represents the final opportunity for UNHCR to address the backlog with significant financial and human resources.

During the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in December 2023, countries covered by the South Africa MCO made 59 pledges in several areas including economic inclusion, statelessness, legal assistance, child protection and social cohesion.

## 1.2. Progress Against the Desired Impact

### 1. Impact Area: Attaining Favorable Protection Environments

**About 280 000 refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons in South Africa and the 8 multi-countries access international protection in an inclusive and favourable protection environment by 2024.**

Country	Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Actual (2023)
Botswana	1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Comoros	1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.00%	0.00%
Eswatini	1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Lesotho	1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Madagascar	1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.00%	100.00%
Mauritius	1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.00%	100.00%
Namibia	1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
South Africa	1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	80.00%	100.00%
South Africa	1.2 Proportion of people who are able to move freely within the country of habitual residence	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Unknown	100.00%

UNHCR continues to provide remote technical support, data-quality monitoring and capacity-building training to governments and partners facilitating registration of asylum-seekers outside South Africa. In South Africa, UNHCR continued both registration and mandate refugee status determination only for the purposes of durable solutions. UNHCR has been pursuing more robust data-sharing with the South African Government, and positive steps have been taken in this direction. At year-end, data-sharing agreements were underway in Madagascar and Botswana. Advocacy to build asylum systems continues in earnest, especially in the Indian Ocean Islands where no formal systems exist. UNHCR deployed two senior staff members to Comoros and Madagascar to advance advocacy discussions with the respective governments.

In South Africa, high rates of rejections at first-instance refugee status determination continue, while little progress was made with the targets agreed on in the appeal backlog project. UNHCR successfully obtained funding from the European Union Delegation in December 2023 to operationalize a shift in the implementation modality for the backlog project which will span for the next three years and expand its advocacy efforts in law and policy and judicial engagement.

UNHCR continued its strong advocacy and joined other UN agencies to promote the inclusion of refugees in national systems, particularly health, education, gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection systems. UNHCR also continued its leadership role within the Protection Working Group (PWG) - alongside Government and CSOs - and led the response of the PWG to many outbreaks of targeted violence against foreigners in South Africa in 2023.

UNHCR continued its advocacy around access to birth registration in South Africa to prevent statelessness. UNHCR and the Government of Eswatini successfully completed a statelessness study in Eswatini, and a media campaign on nationality equity was conducted in Madagascar.

### 3. Impact Area: Empowering Communities and Achieving Gender Equality

**Persons of concern meet their basic needs and their resilience capacities are fostered to help face the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change**

Country	Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Actual (2023)
Botswana	3.2a Proportion of children and young people enrolled in primary education	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	90.36%	100.00%
Botswana	3.2b Proportion of children and young people enrolled in secondary education	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	40.99%	100.00%
South Africa	3.1 Proportion of people who have the right to decent work	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Unknown	100.00%

Refugees in Namibia, Botswana and the Indian Ocean Islands have no access to formal employment nor economic inclusion. Additionally, refugees in the Indian Ocean Islands are excluded from accessing all public sector services including health and education. Throughout the year, UNHCR engaged in advocacy towards the building of asylum systems in the Indian Ocean to help foster dialogues on documentation and access to socio-economic rights.

Documentation challenges relating to new registrations and document renewals continue to hinder economic inclusion, access to livelihood and education for refugees in South Africa. Disparities exist among provinces regarding healthcare access. In 2023, a court ruling in Gauteng Province granted asylum-seekers equal access to public healthcare alongside nationals. However, the consistent implementation of this ruling at service points remains a challenge. UNHCR engaged with partners to organize “Know Your Rights” campaigns in South Africa on access to health and education.

Health Programmes in Lesotho and Eswatini are inclusive although with low service quality. As a result, individuals with the financial capacity and valid travel documents seek medical treatment in South Africa. Although strides were made to expand the DAFI scholarship to Botswana and Lesotho, as well as open new scholarship pathways for refugees in South Africa, access to tertiary education still remains a challenge across the nine countries covered by the MCO. In Eswatini, UNHCR adopted a whole-of-society approach to support the operationalization of the Government’s 2019 Global Refugee Forum pledge on the allocation of arable land to refugees and the host community.

A very small allocation for cash support was provided to vulnerable households and individuals in South Africa, Madagascar, Eswatini, Mauritius and Botswana. Two refugee-led organizations (RLOs) received funding to undertake self-reliance activities in Gauteng and Western Cape, South Africa. UNHCR continues to engage regularly with refugees and RLOs across its operations to provide support as well as engage communities on how to enhance the effectiveness of interventions.

### 4. Impact Area: Securing Solutions

**By the end of 2024, persons of concern are granted opportunities to access sustainable and durable solutions facilitated by UNHCR, through local government, humanitarian development and peace actors.**

Country	Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Actual (2023)
Botswana	4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	161	1
Botswana	4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	22	0
Botswana	4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	3
Comoros	4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0

Comoros	4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
Comoros	4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	1
Eswatini	4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	16
Eswatini	4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
Eswatini	4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
Eswatini	4.3a Number of stateless people for whom nationality is granted or confirmed	Stateless Persons	0	0
Eswatini	4.3b Number of refugees for whom residency status is granted or confirmed	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
Lesotho	4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	2
Lesotho	4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
Lesotho	4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
Lesotho	4.3b Number of refugees for whom residency status is granted or confirmed	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	2	0
Madagascar	4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	1
Madagascar	4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	14	60
Madagascar	4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
Mauritius	4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	183
Mauritius	4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
Mauritius	4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
Namibia	4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	50	183
Namibia	4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	12	136
Namibia	4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
Namibia	4.3b Number of refugees for whom residency status is granted or confirmed	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
Seychelles	4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
Seychelles	4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0
Seychelles	4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0

South Africa	4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	495	347
South Africa	4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	38	892
South Africa	4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	6
South Africa	4.3a Number of stateless people for whom nationality is granted or confirmed	Stateless Persons		0

UNHCR facilitated the resettlement of 1,676 persons and the voluntary repatriation for 550 persons. Over 16,000 refugees in South Africa accessed social grants issued by the Government. Advocacy outside South Africa to expand social and legal protection space continued, especially in countries without functioning asylum systems, including the Indian Ocean Islands.

On 14 June 2023, UNHCR organized a meeting at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre in South Africa to garner support for new pledges at the 2023 GRF. This “GRF Indaba” allowed countries to reflect on the progress made since the 2019 GRF. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Governments of Botswana, Comoros, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Namibia and South Africa, as well as RLOs, NGOs and the private sector. Participating organizations discussed potential unilateral and multi-stakeholder pledges for livelihoods, local integration, socio-economic inclusion and other core areas. As of 31 December 2023, 59 pledges were successfully submitted to the GRF database.

UNHCR continues to develop partnerships on the local level. Based on the MOU with Islamic Relief South Africa (IRSA), IRSA has established its own refugee assistance and education programme, which continue into 2024. UNHCR continues to engage with faith-based groups and civil society to promote refugee inclusion. This advocacy has attracted a new international NGO (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) to commence operations in South Africa.

UNHCR continues to advocate for economic inclusion of refugees in the Indian Ocean Islands, as well as alternatives to detention in Botswana. Discussions with the governments of Namibia and Botswana on out-of-camp possibilities have been undertaken and will continue in 2024, though progress is slow.

## Other Core Impact Indicators

Country	Indicator	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Actual (2023)
Botswana	2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Botswana	2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Eswatini	2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Eswatini	2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Lesotho	2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Lesotho	2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%



Namibia	2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities	Stateless Persons	Unknown	0.00%
Namibia	2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
Namibia	2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
South Africa	2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	65.88%	100.00%

## 1.3 Challenges to Achieving Impacts

In South Africa, the White Paper on the Citizenship, Immigration and Refugee Protection proposed by the government, outlines a plan to withdraw from the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, with the intention to reaccede with reservations, specifically on education and access to employment. If successful, it will have a negative effects on the protection space, with regional repercussions. In addition to the backlog on asylum appeals of over 130,000 individuals comprising both active and inactive cases, there is a significant number of undocumented asylum-seekers, including children, new arrivals and those seeking renewal of their asylum status.

Restrictions on freedom of movement in Botswana and Namibia, including continued detention of the ex-Tongogara caseload hampered the overall protection space in these two countries. In Eswatini, there is a growing backlog in refugee status determination of over 1,550 asylum-seekers, and the appeal decision-making body is yet to be operationalized. Meanwhile, in Lesotho, there is a need to amend its outdated 1983 Refugees Act in order to reform the asylum system, address the growing asylum backlog and improve the provision of documentation for refugees and asylum-seekers.

Additionally, the lack of asylum systems in the Indian Ocean Islands presents an overarching challenge for UNHCR. While there is some degree of interest for policy engagement in Madagascar and Mauritius, the progress has however been slow. The protection space is shrinking in Comoros and Seychelles, with little political will to develop asylum systems.

Data on stateless populations remains a challenge, especially in South Africa and the Indian Ocean Islands. In Madagascar, issues around access to citizenship for the Karanas remain a highly politicized subject.

Reduction in food distribution assistance in Namibia and Botswana resulted in further deterioration to an already poor protection space in the two refugee settlements. An increase in the sale and exchange of sex among women and girls due to food shortages was observed. The long-term effects of this year-long nutritional deficit remain unknown. Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), shelter and unstable electricity remained a huge concern in the settlements. The MCO has limited funding and no expertise in livelihoods despite huge opportunities following arable land pledges in Eswatini, Lesotho and Namibia. Documentation challenges in South Africa and lack of systems in the Indian Oceans Islands left many refugees unable to integrate socio-economically, resulting in refugees working in informal sectors and more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Anti-foreigner sentiment and vigilante movements targeting foreign-owned businesses in South Africa further complicated integration efforts. Cash assistance for protection interventions, transitional support and reintegration for GBV survivors or victims of violence was limited to a few of the highest-risk cases. UNHCR is unable to respond to medical needs especially for refugees needing critical, expensive and tertiary level medical interventions. This posed a challenge for medical cases in Botswana, Madagascar and South Africa. Resettlement spaces for medical slots are shrinking, leaving UNHCR with few solutions for these high-risk individuals.

Resettlement quotas, while generous for South Africa and Namibia, only target a limited fraction of the highest-risk cases. While some 900 refugees were planned for repatriation to their countries of origin in 2023, only 550 returned due to budgetary and staffing constraints.

South Africa is the only country out of the nine countries which offers social grants to recognized refugees.

Social integration of refugees in South Africa is hindered by a rise in anti-foreigner rhetoric and acts of targeted violence against foreigners. In the settlements and Indian Ocean Islands there are very limited

integration opportunities beyond resettlement and voluntary repatriation.

## 1.4 Collaboration and Partnerships

UNHCR entered into 17 partnership agreements with various organizations in seven of the nine MCO countries, all of which were bipartite agreements. Projects implemented included social assistance and basic support to refugees and asylum-seekers in South Africa, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mauritius, Comoros and Madagascar, as well as in the Osire Settlement in Namibia and the Dukwi Camp in Botswana; legal assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers in South Africa, Namibia and Madagascar (statelessness specific); livelihood support to refugees in Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho and Namibia; DAFI Scholarship programs in South Africa and Namibia.

Four partnership agreements were discontinued in 2023 due to funding constraints, while existing partnership agreements had very limited budgets, most of which were reduced by 50 per cent. This resulted in reduced capacity to provide protection assistance. These organizations were required to downsize staffing levels and, in some cases, even close some of their offices such as Musina, located in South Africa's Limpopo Province. This had a major impact on UNHCR's relations with partners and refugees. In line with the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), return of refugees to their countries of origin (mainly the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Burundi) were conducted in through direct implementation, while expansion of access to third-country solutions through resettlement activities was also implemented.

UNHCR continued to mainstream age, gender and diversity principles in our work, as anchored in the GCR and SDGs, while advancement of GCR objectives involving partners remains ongoing.

Regarding GRF pledges, legal networking is ongoing, including establishing an agreement with pro bono legal firms in South Africa, as well as identifying stateless persons and those at risk in Namibia. The GRF land pledges aimed at enhancing agriculture and livelihood prospects in Namibia, Eswatini and Lesotho for agricultural and livelihood activities are being pursued. UNHCR developed a joint proposal with FAO, World Vision International and the Government Eswatini on the operationalization of the land pledge in Eswatini and engaged possible donors including embassies, development actors and private donors. A similar proposal is in the process of being drafted for Lesotho, while for Namibia, efforts are ongoing to put in place irrigation systems to support farming by refugees in Osire, funded by UNHCR Innovation Fund for solar powered irrigation. In Madagascar, the Government's GRF pledge to set up an asylum and statelessness office is being supported by UNHCR.

## Section 2: Results

### 2.1. Outcomes and Achievements

#### 1. Outcome Area: Access to Territory, Reg. and Documentation

**Government in Botswana, South Africa, Namibia have adopted functional and inclusive documentation procedures and systems by 2024**

Plan	Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
South Africa	1.2 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	84.66%	85.00%	84.66%
South Africa	1.3 Proportion of people with legally recognized identity documents or credentials	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	94.08%	94.00%	100.00%

#### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

At year-end, the total refugee and asylum-seekers population in all nine countries under the MCO comprised 154,124 people. According to the DHA's annual statistical report, South Africa hosted 86,971 asylum-seekers and 67,153 refugees as of 31 December. A total of 20,546 individuals were newly registered by the DHA in 2023 in South Africa. UNHCR continues registering asylum-seekers and refugees for case management e.g., durable solutions, protection and assistance. The total of 1,604 individuals were newly registered by UNHCR in 2023. UNHCR conducted missions to Durban, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth to ensure biometric enrollment for cases in the voluntary repatriation and resettlement pipeline, resulting in the biometric registration of a total of 1,463 individuals across these three areas.

UNHCR continued to utilize registration as a relevant protection tool, providing remote technical support, data-quality monitoring and capacity-building to governments and partners on registration, documentation, data protection and PRIMES tools. In the period of February to March 2023, a verification and protection profile exercise was carried out in Madagascar, profiling 255 individuals. This verification also served as practical training for the UNHCR's registration partner.

During the reporting period, the Government of Namibia registered 628 newly-arrived individuals, increasing the country's asylum-seeker and refugee population to 7,223. Most of the new arrivals (568) were from the DRC. The Government manages the reception and continuous registration of new arrivals and newborns. In February 2023, UNHCR supported the registration team in the settlement to update the data of individuals and enroll their biometrics.

As of 31 December 2023, the total refugees and asylum-seekers population in Lesotho was 520 individuals. A two-day training was facilitated by UNHCR registration and protection staff for six Government personnels to improve their capacity in the areas of registration and case management.

In 2023, 835 new individuals were registered in Eswatini, increasing the total population to 3,004, while 31 new arrivals were registered in Botswana, bringing the total population to 854. Remote registration was conducted for 23 individuals in Mauritius, bringing the total population to 32. One individual was registered in Seychelles before being deported by Immigration in February 2023. The total number of newly registered individuals in Comoros were 89 individuals, 68 of which were remotely registered while 30 were registered during a UNHCR mission to Moheli Island.

All individuals newly registered by UNHCR outside South Africa were issued with UNHCR issued certificates.

## 2. Outcome Area: Status Determination

**By 2024, about 260 000 asylum-seekers can access RSD procedures in South Africa and Non SA countries that are accessible, fair, efficient, adaptable and which have integrity.**

Plan	Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
South Africa	2.1 Average processing time (in days) from registration to first instance asylum decision	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	13	13	30
South Africa	2.2 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to legal representation	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	35.00%	35.00%	100.00%
South Africa	2.3 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to an effective appeal mechanism after first instance rejection of their claim	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	60.00%	60.00%	100.00%

### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Despite UNHCR's commitment to provide consistent financial and technical support to the Refugee Appeals Authority of South Africa (RAASA) through the Asylum Appeal Backlog Project, very limited progress has been achieved in enhancing the quality of refugee status determination decisions or reducing the backlog. In 2023, RAASA reported the finalization of 4,985 cases, including 2,215 administrative closures, representing only a small fraction of the 20,000 target. Due to RAASA's unsatisfactory results, UNHCR raised its concerns relating to the slow pace of implementation and advocated at ministerial level for the introduction of an adjudicative strategy and strengthening of the governance structure. In light of the project's low performance, UNHCR has decided to change the implementation approach for 2024. The Task Force mandated to evaluate the capacity of first instance refusal in South Africa and create an action plan to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the asylum-seeker management system, was only convened twice in 2023.

In Botswana, the Refugee Advisory Committee (RAC) remained inactive throughout the entire year. Despite UNHCR's advocacy and offers of support, the Government made no progress in finalizing the long-overdue amendment of the Refugee Act.

In 2023, UNHCR committed to the Malagasy authorities to support the development of a legislative framework on asylum and capacity-building in the field of international protection. In July 2023, UNHCR conducted a workshop in Madagascar, familiarizing authorities with refugee protection policies, specifically emphasizing the elements of a robust legal framework on asylum. In October 2023, a government official was nominated to lead the Office for Refugees and Stateless People. This office is still not operational despite UNHCR's offer to support.

Three strategic missions were conducted in Lesotho, Eswatini and Namibia. In Namibia, an in-depth assessment of the Government's refugee status determination process and capacity was conducted. Meanwhile in Lesotho and Eswatini - where processing had been suspended - a capacity training initiative successfully reactivated the respective asylum decision-making bodies. Additionally, advocacy efforts in Lesotho led to a commitment to review and amend the Refugee Act, which will promote a more efficient individual decision-making model. Through UNHCR's advocacy efforts in Eswatini, the government made substantial commitments related to asylum at the GRF. These commitments include putting into action the appeal process and formulating the required regulations for asylum.

With regards to mandate refugee status determination, a total of 113 individuals were referred for resettlement, while an audit resulted in specific recommendations to enhance procedural standards which will be implemented gradually.

## 4. Outcome Area: Gender-based Violence

**GBV survivors have access to a holistic response and prevention plan by 2024**

Plan	Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
South Africa	4.2 Proportion of people who do not accept violence against women	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	88.94%	95.00%	88.94%

### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

A total of 37 GBV community engagement sessions took place in South Africa, while one session was delivered in Botswana. Overall, over 1,400 refugees and asylum-seekers were reached through these sessions. In South Africa, 93 survivors benefitted from group therapy or other therapeutic interventions; including 07 individuals participating in baking therapy- a successful pilot that will be expanded in 2024. Outreach materials and peer-to-peer empowerment on GBV reached 7,435 persons from both the refugee and host community in South Africa. A total of 31 GBV survivors were assisted in Namibia (23), Eswatini (5) and Botswana (3) with comprehensive case management including medical care and access to justice; an additional 63 survivors in South Africa received cash support to help them rebuild their lives. In Lesotho, 06 members of the Refugee Welfare Committee received training on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and conflict resolution.

In Western Cape, South Africa, 50 refugee women, frontline and clinical staff completed a GBV First Responder training was facilitated by Rape Crisis Centre, an esteemed NGO in GBV prevention and response. These refugee women further hosted 10 workshops in their own communities. These activities were funded by UNHCR's Safe from the Start envelope and has proven very successful in empowering the female community focal points to develop leadership roles.

UNHCR celebrated the 16 Days of Activism in South Africa, Namibia and Botswana, directly funding or contributing to government-led efforts to champion women and raise awareness about the fight against GBV.

Throughout 2023, UNHCR in South Africa, Namibia and Botswana participated in a joint sub-regional GBV initiative with other UN agencies aimed at raising funds from donors and generating awareness on GBV issues. The initiative culminated in a high-level donor and government roundtable in October 2023. UNHCR is committed to ensure better inclusion of forcibly displaced women in GBV services in the target countries through this initiative.

## 5. Outcome Area: Child Protection

**Children of concern under our mandate are protected from violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination and have access to child friendly procedures and services**

Plan	Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
South Africa	5.2 Proportion of children who participate in community-based child protection programmes	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	52.95%	53%	26.16%

### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Under the EU-funded Global Promotion of Best Practices for Children on the Move (comprising funding provided to UNICEF in South Africa only with UNHCR as a contributing partner), UNHCR and UNICEF jointly ensured that national referral mechanisms for children on the move were improved throughout 2023. The operation participated in the review of the Inter-Departmental Protocol for Unaccompanied Migrant

Children which clearly outlined the roles and responsibilities of various Government departments vis-à-vis direct assistance to unaccompanied and separated children comprising both migrants and those seeking international protection. As of 31 December, the Protocol was awaiting final endorsement from the Department of Social Development. Through the co-chaired UNHCR/UNICEF Task Force on Birth Registration, around 40 participating agencies (CSOs and UN agencies) met three times in 2023 to share updates on birth registration advocacy and strategic litigation; one separate engagement session was organized between the DHA and CSOs/UN on birth registration.

A total of 40 Best Interest Determinations (BIDs) were deliberated at the UNHCR-chaired BID panel including 26 in South Africa, 11 in Namibia and 03 in Botswana. An additional 105 Best Interest Assessments (BIAs) were initiated for high-risk cases in South Africa (98), Botswana (5) and Eswatini (2). UNHCR worked closely with its partner in Eswatini to strengthen their capacity to undertake BIAs and refer children at-risk to national structures.

27 information sessions on children's rights and/or direct engagement sessions were held in South Africa (23), Eswatini (3) and Botswana (1). Botswana continued to support an active Children's Council in the Dukwi Settlement. A total of 75 children at-risk received cash assistance in South Africa, most of whom were unaccompanied and separated children hosted in foster or kinship care, as well as children living with disabilities and chronic illness cared for by one or more biological parents. Specialized mental health support for refugee children was provided to 58 children in Namibia (36), Eswatini (15) and Botswana (7). UNHCR supported the reunification of two refugee children in South Africa with their mothers in third countries (Belgium and DRC).

In 2023, South Africa was designated a UNHCR sports priority country, offering colleagues support to develop concept notes and budgets for fundraising. Strategic partnerships were strengthened with key entities such as the South African Olympics Committee and South African Rugby Union. Additionally, UNHCR partnered with UNICEF to fund one basketball RLO and two local NGOs to implement Sports-for-Protection programs for young women and girls.

UNHCR submitted confidential comments on the Convention on the Rights of the Child for South Africa during the reporting period.

## 6. Outcome Area: Safety and Access to Justice

**Access to protection services for refugees and asylum seekers, forcibly displaced and stateless people is facilitated by 2024**

### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Following South Africa's stated intention to withdraw from the 1951 Refugee Convention and its Protocol and re-accede with reservations, UNHCR intensified its advocacy efforts with DHA. UNHCR additionally secured funding from the European Union Delegation to not only continue its financial and technical support towards the Backlog Project, but also to intensify its efforts on legislative reform and its engagement with the judiciary. In this context, UNHCR engaged with the President of the Gauteng Division of the High Court and obtained his commitment to support the organization of a stakeholder engagement meeting with civil society, the judiciary and government officials. The preliminary work for this meeting was done in 2023. UNHCR continued to maintain constructive relations with the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee of Home Affairs throughout to flag protection developments of interest.

In October 2023, UNHCR conducted a mission to Mauritius, engaging refugees, partners, and Government stakeholders. Discussions with senior officials, including the Prime Minister's Office and IOM, focused on establishing a "refugee mechanism," advocating for Mauritius' convention ascension and enhancing socio-economic rights for refugees and asylum-seekers. UNHCR submitted its Universal Periodic Review submissions for Mauritius highlighting the need to accede to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its Protocol, establishing a fair and efficient asylum system that facilitates Government-issued documentation and the prevention and reduction of statelessness.

There have been positive legislative reform developments in many countries covered by the MCO following

continued advocacy by UNHCR for the alignment of domestic legislation with international law and the Statelessness Conventions, which both Botswana and Namibia have committed to ratify. Reforms have been passed in Eswatini and bills addressing statelessness are in progress in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Madagascar. Civil and birth registration (CRVS) access has improved through a nationwide accessibility project in Eswatini which will continue into 2024. Improvement to CRVS frameworks and stateless status determination was advocated through a joint technical workshop provided to the Lesotho and Eswatini Home Affairs Ministries.

UNHCR secured 59 GRF pledges by States, civil society, and UNCTs. Commitments on legal assistance (30 per cent), education (17 per cent), and statelessness (11 per cent) featured most prominently, underlining improved access to legal assistance to obtain civil registration and citizenship.

## 8. Outcome Area: Well-Being and Basic Needs

**Forcibly displaced people have access to basic needs to ensure their well-being and dignity by 2024**

### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Social cohesion remained a top priority for the operation in 2023. In South Africa, UNHCR continued to co-chair the Protection Working Group (PWG) alongside the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD). The PWG met quarterly in 2023 and added a fifth ad-hoc meeting in December to develop a contingency plan for the 2024 South African elections. The contingency plan outlines escalation criteria as well as the roles and responsibilities of focal agencies per province in the event of a massive outbreak of violence against foreigners. UNHCR and PWG members responded collectively to incidents of violence against foreigners throughout 2023 including an outbreak of violence/looting in Soweto (July), Zeerust (November), Delmas (February and November) and the mass arrest of asylum-seekers outside Refugee Reception Offices in Musina and Durban (December). UNHCR built good working relations with the Police Ombudsman in Western Cape as well as with the African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF) to support social cohesion activities.

Alongside a few other UN Agencies, UNHCR continued to play an active role in the National Task Team against Xenophobia in South Africa, led by the Department of Social Development (DSD) and DoJ&CD. The National Task Team has reached out to the three biggest metropolitans in South Africa with a view to bring together host and refugee/migrant communities to strengthen social cohesion.

In May 2023, UNHCR partnered with OHCHR and GALA Queer Archive to host “Rainbows over borders”, a creative arts-based workshop for migrant-led LGBTQI+ groups and civil society groups working on LGBTQI+ advocacy and rights. A total of 46 participants from CSOs, RLOs, migrant-led organizations and UN agencies participated. The event helped to bridge the divide between migrant/refugee LGBTQI+ organizations and South African LGBTQI+ organizations.

A total of 16,333 refugees accessed social security grants in South Africa, many through their own initiative. The most-accessed grant was the Child Support Grant (78 per cent) followed by the Old Age Grant (17 per cent). A total of 319 high-risk cases were profiled by UNHCR and deliberated at the Protection Case Conference where they were considered for a potential durable solution or local intervention; partners in South Africa assessed 2,030 persons through their offices and home visits. Out of 10,642 calls answered through UNHCR’s Helpline, a total of 748 refugees and asylum-seekers were identified as high-risk for durable solutions and/or referred to partners or local structures for support. A total of 204 refugees and asylum-seekers with specific needs received cash assistance in South Africa (157), Botswana (14), Mauritius (24), and Madagascar (9), many of whom are living with a disability or chronic illnesses. Other recipients include elderly refugees or victims of violence who required transitional support. In South Africa, 265,916 people accessed the help.org website to obtain information on the asylum system/registration or referrals. UNHCR and partners conducted protection counselling in-person for 255 refugees and asylum-seekers in Madagascar and 24 in Mauritius. Two missions were undertaken during the reporting period to assess the needs of new 88 arrivals in Comoros and conduct joint screening with

IOM.

World Refugee Day celebrations were done in South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Madagascar which brought together the host and refugee communities.

UNHCR submitted confidential comments for the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination for South Africa, which was up for review during the reporting period.

## 10. Outcome Area: Healthy Lives

**Refugees and asylum seekers have access to public health services (including primary, secondary, and tertiary care; HIV and reproductive health; and mental health) by 2024**

Plan	Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
South Africa	10.1 Proportion of children aged 9 months to five years who have received measles vaccination	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	89.55%	100.00%	89.55%

### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2023, food distribution reached 6,260 refugees and asylum-seekers in Namibia (5,530), Botswana (707) and Lesotho (23 people in the reception centre). The same settlement-based populations in Namibia and Botswana also received fuel for cooking throughout the year. Food distribution moved from monthly to every other month in Namibia and Botswana due budget reductions. UNHCR in Namibia and Botswana engaged in heavy community engagement to prepare for this reduction and consistently monitored the well-being of the community throughout the year. An additional six refugees in Botswana received supplemental feeding due to chronic conditions such as diabetes, chronic constipation and other health issues.

Earmarked HIV/AIDS funding targeted refugees and asylum-seekers in South Africa who are living with or at-risk of contracting HIV/AIDS; two provinces (Gauteng and Western Cape) were funded in 2023.

Populations targeted include GBV survivors, persons engaged in the commercial sex work and same sex male sexual partners. Achievements in 2023 included: 58 community leaders trained as peer educators on HIV and other communicable diseases, 117 persons at-risk or living with HIV attended therapeutic groups; 1,687 persons reached through information sessions and 576 persons reached in six clinics on HIV testing and awareness. In Eswatini, four health outreach sessions were conducted to sensitize refugees and asylum-seekers on health access rights.

UNHCR referred 34 high-risk medical cases to a Medical Assessment Form (MAF) from South Africa (15), Lesotho (8), Eswatini (8) and Madagascar (3). Botswana submitted seven cases to the Regional Exceptional Medical Referral Committee with the intention of funding some interventions. Also, in Botswana, progress was made with WHO towards the establishment of an MoU for possible financial contributions towards serious medical cases with treatment options in-country. A total of 1,050 refugees and asylum-seekers were assisted to access health care in South Africa (778), Madagascar (174), Botswana (66), Mauritius (24), Eswatini (4) and Lesotho (4). This mostly consisted of referrals at the secondary and tertiary level except in Madagascar and Mauritius, where UNHCR's partner is assisting refugees with access to primary level care, including preventative medicine and routine vaccinations.

## 11. Outcome Area: Education

**All refugees and asylum seekers have access to primary, secondary, and tertiary education through national legal framework or complementary pathways by 2024**



## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

UNHCR supported a tertiary education mission by its HQ to South Africa in December 2023. The mission provided support to partners with the implementation of the new DAFI online platform, identified partners and sites for the expansion of connected higher education, engaged with universities in advance of the GRF, and explored the potentials for new higher education opportunities.

The DAFI scholarship for tertiary education continued to support refugees in three countries. DAFI supported 64 new and continuing learners in South Africa, 04 in Eswatini and 14 in Namibia to access higher education. Furthermore, a concept note was drafted and shared with UNHCR's HQ to advocate for DAFI expansion to Botswana and Lesotho.

UNHCR supported a mission by the Mastercard Foundation to South Africa in July 2023. Mastercard has since reserved 25 per cent of their scholarship slots for refugees studying at the University of Western Cape. The foundation is a welcome enhancement to refugee tertiary education support in South Africa as it is making similar inroads in other universities. Operational partners such as Islamic Relief South Africa offer bursary support to refugees and asylum-seekers, while the Scalabrini centre runs a program that facilitates higher education access through online and in person learning with the Southern New Hampshire University.

In Eswatini, UNHCR assisted 38 children aged 3 -5 enrolled in early childhood education. Additionally, 169 refugees received monetary or in-kind support for education-related costs., 85 refugees were enrolled in language classes: 19 attend in person classes, 59 attend online classes and seven young children attended languages preparation for primary school admission next year. UNHCR supported its partner in Eswatini to submit a successful proposal to Eswatini Electricity Company which helped to mobilize additional resources to support in education. UNHCR also supported its partner's successful funding proposal for the Julia Taft fund; these funds were allocated towards settling student debt as well as the purchase of uniforms at the secondary education level.

In Botswana, 277 children were registered for primary education and 73 were enrolled in secondary education with the assistance of UNHCR's implementing partner. Additionally, 229 refugees and asylum-seekers received monetary or in-kind support for education-related costs. In Madagascar, 30 children were assisted to enroll in primary education and six young adults accessed language classes. In both Mauritius and Madagascar, UNHCR made strides through advocacy to encourage the respective governments to allow refugee children to access to public education while the building of their asylum-system, which may take several years, is underway.

## 12. Outcome Area: Clean Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

**Access to safe Shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene facilities is granted to refugees and asylum seekers in Botswana, Namibia and any other country with Settlement**

### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Sanitary materials reached 1755 refugee women of reproductive age in Namibia (1246), Eswatini (304) and Botswana (205). Special accommodations were made to ensure girls who menstruate early and women who go into menopause late could still benefit from sanitary materials. In Eswatini, 520 refugees living in the UNHCR-supported reception center received hygiene materials to maintain the premises; this includes their participation in cleaning campaigns and litter collection. The center is almost fully community-led on WASH activities.

A total of 6241 refugees and asylum seekers received soap in Namibia (5530) and Botswana (711) during the food distribution cycles.

The operation submitted two successful fundraising proposals to the Environmental Innovation Fund. The accepted projects will solarize parts of both settlements and have a positive impact on shelter and WASH (as well as livelihoods). Implementation should begin in early 2024.

### 13. Outcome Area: Self Reliance, Economic Inclusion and Livelihoods

**Government procedures and systems to fulfill their GRF commitment on Refugees Self Reliance and Livelihood are established and functional**

Plan	Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
South Africa	13.1. Proportion of people with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	46.13%	50.00%	46.13%
South Africa	13.2. Proportion of people who self-report positive changes in their income compared to previous year	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	5.09%	5.00%	5.09%
South Africa	13.3 Proportion of people (working age) who are unemployed	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	48.89%	60.00%	48.89%

#### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2023, UNHCR supported a small number of livelihood activities in Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho and Eswatini. A total of 96 refugees and asylum-seekers received entrepreneurial and money management training in Namibia (51), Lesotho (27) and Eswatini (18). Refugees and asylum-seekers with solid business plans vetted by the partner received business capital or start-up kits in Eswatini (118 persons) and Botswana (10 persons). In both locations the businesses focused on crop production to enable supplementary food production and income generation. In Namibia, 100 refugees and asylum-seekers have access to arable land and crop cultivation activities. The produce, (squash, cabbage, and other vegetables) are used as supplementary food and are also sold in markets to generate income. In Namibia, a total of 65 refugees received farming kits while in Lesotho, 20 refugees benefitted from farming support to cultivate a mushroom garden.

UNHCR mobilized a wide variety of actors in Eswatini to promote cultivation on the land allocated to refugees in Ndzevane by the Government through its 2019 GRF pledge. To operationalize this land pledge, UNHCR has engaged in a large-scale awareness-raising and fundraising campaign and adopted a whole-of-society approach to mobilize interest and resources. As part of this project the following actors were engaged: World Vision Eswatini, FAO, Eswatini Water & Agricultural Development Enterprise (EWADE), Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) and the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry of Agriculture has pledged two staff members who will be part of the project providing on the ground technical guidance. A round table with Latin American Embassies (MIKTA) was held, where they expressed interest to jointly support the project, while a task team inclusive of both the refugee and host community was established. Additionally, there is ongoing community sensitization around the project. At the end of the reporting period, a total of 90 refugees had agreed to relocate to Ndzevane once the land is habitable.

UNHCR conducted high-level engagements in Madagascar, Comoros and Mauritius throughout the reporting period to engage the respective governments on a lot of topics, including the importance of socio-economic inclusion for refugees on their territory.

### 14. Outcome Area: Voluntary Return and Sustainable Reintegration

**Identified candidates have the necessary information and resources to voluntarily return to their country of origin by 2024**

## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2023, UNHCR facilitated voluntary returns for 550 refugees and asylum-seekers, mainly to DRC and Burundi. Voluntary repatriation activities were implemented directly, with UNHCR undertaking all logistical and administrative departure formalities. UNHCR ensured the returns were voluntary through facilitation of counselling. Refugees were regularly provided with information through email campaigns and individual counselling. Each case was required to sign a voluntary repatriation form confirming the voluntary nature of the return.

UNHCR provided a return package, including a cash grant, to all returnees plus some in-kind assistance upon return. This return package ensured the refugees were able to restart their lives in safety and dignity. All returnees were advised about the support they would receive in the country of origin. All returnees were integrated by the receiving country operation upon arrival.

## 15. Outcome Area: Resettlement and Complementary Pathways

**By 2024 opportunities for third country solutions are increased in SAMCO**

### Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2023, UNHCR's allocated quota for resettlement submissions comprised 1,400 individuals. Quotas were allocated by Canada and the United States of America. The operation exceeded this quota by submitting 1,676 individuals by year-end. The submissions were from South Africa (608), Namibia (771), Madagascar (13), Botswana (7), Indian Ocean Islands (4) and Lesotho (5). A total of 1,087 refugees departed for resettlement. The departures were from South Africa (892 individuals), Madagascar (60) and Namibia (135). UNHCR also provided resettlement counselling to over 500 individuals in 2023 from all nine countries covered by the MCO.

In 2023, UNHCR continued to use resettlement as a protection tool, with the main criteria for resettlement consideration being heightened protection risks. This applies to refugees hosted in South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho and Madagascar. The main groups considered to be at heightened risk in South Africa and requiring resettlement intervention in 2023 were survivors of repeated xenophobic attacks; women and girls at risk; survivors of violence and torture; LGBTIQ+ persons at-risk, finally rejected refugees at risk of refoulement, and GBV survivors.

On case identification, UNHCR worked with various implementing and operational partners in all provinces of South Africa to help identify vulnerable refugees for resettlement assessment and submission when quota is available. Refugees and asylum-seekers referred to UNHCR were profiled and needs verified in a transparent manner. The Protection Case Conference considered and approved cases to refer to resettlement. In Namibia and Botswana, UNHCR prioritized high risk cases referred by the Protection Unit for resettlement interviews. Protracted cases living in Namibia where no other alternative durable solution was feasible were also systematically profiled and those found eligible were submitted for resettlement. Expectation management and anti-fraud messages were also shared with refugees throughout the nine countries covered by the MCO.

## 16. Outcome Area: Integration and other Local Solutions

**By 2024, the legal framework in all the 9 countries in SAMCO develop effective framework for local integration opportunities.**

Plan	Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
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South Africa	16.1 Proportion of people with secure tenure rights to housing and/or land	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Unknown	Unknown	3.26%
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## Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In South Africa, UNHCR partners with Lawyers for Human Rights and the law firm of Herbert Smith Freehills to assist young people who meet the requirements to naturalize under Section 4(3) of the Immigration Act to apply. The applicants represent refugees, asylum-seekers and migrant children who were born in South Africa and lived their entire lives in South Africa until the age of 18. A total of 116 persons were assisted with their applications in 2023.

In Botswana and Namibia, local integration is affected by the fact that the respective governments have entered a reservation to several articles to the 1951 Convention including freedom of movement and place of residence. Botswana also maintains a reservation to article 34 on naturalization. This means that in practice, there is very little local integration of refugees in these countries. At year-end, there were 32 individuals in the naturalization pipeline, which remains unchanged since 2022. The Government has not expressed any intention to adjudicate their cases favourably soon.

In Eswatini, the Citizenship Act of 1992 provides for naturalizing refugees once they have resided for five years in-country. In practice, refugees face barriers to citizenship, including a lack of legal resources to assist with the application. For those who have applied, they have reported to UNHCR that there is no response received by the Government. This remains unchanged from last year despite continued advocacy by UNHCR.

## 2.2. Age, Gender and Diversity

UNHCR conducted a two-way engagement sessions in person and virtually with 1,694 refugees and asylum-seekers, out of which 756 were women and 73 were children. The operation prioritizes engagement throughout the program cycle beginning in the first quarter of the year and lasting throughout. Engagement sessions are captured through an electronic tool for analysis and compilation. In 2023, these engagements took place in Comoros, Mauritius, Madagascar, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini and South Africa. No refugees nor asylum-seekers were present in Seychelles during the reporting period. UNHCR took advantage of engagement opportunities to raise awareness on the rights and responsibilities of refugees and asylum-seekers, while documenting the challenges raised by various communities. The top issues of concern for the population comprised food insecurity (Namibia and Botswana), documentation (South Africa, Mauritius, Madagascar and Comoros) and economic exclusion and/or movement restriction (Botswana, Namibia, Mauritius, Madagascar and Comoros). Engagement sessions were concluded and documented by November 2023 to allow for refugee feedback to be duly incorporated into 2024 planning.

Special groups engaged in 2023 include LGBTIQ+ (South Africa), persons living with disabilities (all countries), new arrivals (South Africa, Madagascar and Eswatini) and children (all countries covered by the MCO). Engagement sessions in Namibia were particularly sensitive and tense due to the food reductions which caused general discontent among the settlement population.

## Section 3: Resources

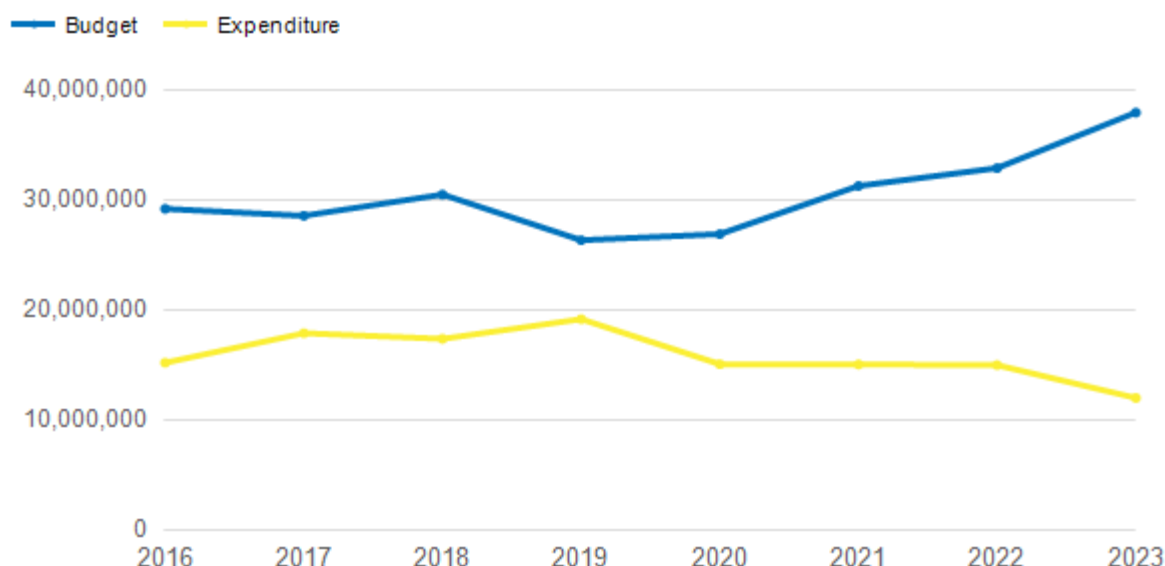
### 3.1 Financial Data

(Financial figures in USD)

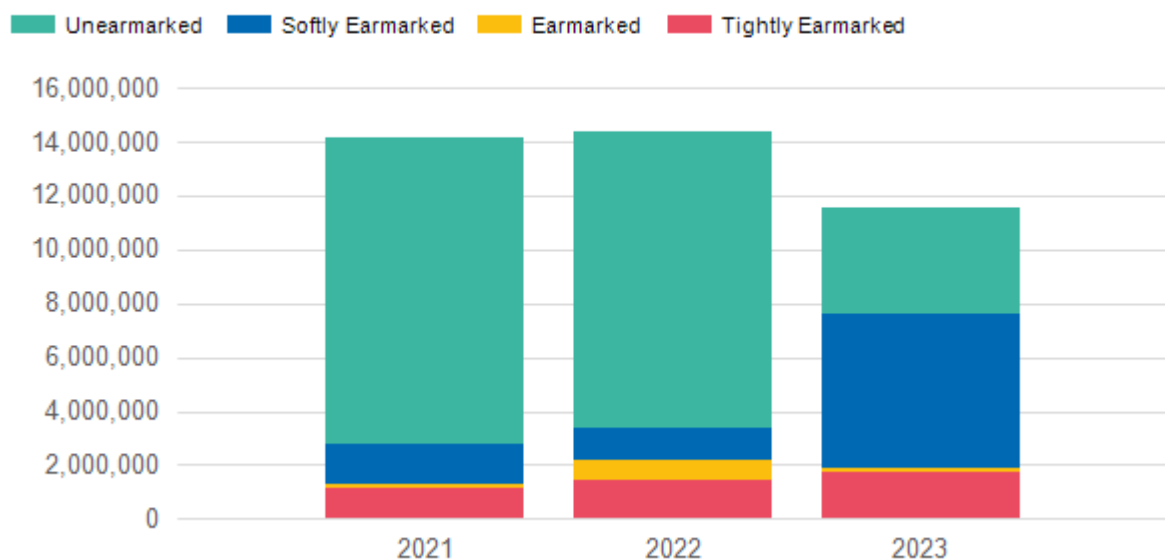
Impact Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
IA1: Protect	22,766,450	9,104,599	39.99%	9,104,599	100.00%
IA3: Empower	9,581,042	1,944,955	20.30%	1,944,955	100.00%
IA4: Solve	5,547,277	920,853	16.60%	920,853	100.00%
All Impact Areas		195,000			
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,894,769</b>	<b>12,165,406</b>	<b>32.10%</b>	<b>11,970,406</b>	<b>98.40%</b>

Outcome Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
OA1: Access/Doc	3,114,997	1,388,743	44.58%	1,388,743	100.00%
OA2: Status	5,478,891	3,216,780	58.71%	3,216,780	100.00%
OA4: GBV	1,792,506	877,369	48.95%	877,369	100.00%
OA5: Children	1,460,616	569,895	39.02%	569,895	100.00%
OA6: Justice	7,365,809	1,289,549	17.51%	1,289,549	100.00%
OA8: Well-being	3,553,630	1,762,263	49.59%	1,762,263	100.00%
OA10: Health	4,759,630	1,327,932	27.90%	1,327,932	100.00%
OA11: Education	860,353	153,883	17.89%	153,883	100.00%
OA12: WASH	1,080,588	248,880	23.03%	248,880	100.00%
OA13: Livelihood	2,880,471	214,260	7.44%	214,260	100.00%
OA14: Return	2,227,441	670,892	30.12%	670,892	100.00%
OA15: Resettle	1,971,981	184,972	9.38%	184,972	100.00%
OA16: Integrate	1,347,855	64,989	4.82%	64,989	100.00%
All Outcome Areas		195,000			
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,894,769</b>	<b>12,165,406</b>	<b>32.10%</b>	<b>11,970,406</b>	<b>98.40%</b>

### Budget and Expenditure Trend



### Contributions Trend by Type



## 3.2. Resources Overview

The 2023 allocation for budgeted needs represented a 48 percent decrease compared to the initial budgeted needs in 2022 and about a 52 percent decrease compared to the year-end budget. This left a significant shortfall in most of the areas covered by the MCO.

The limited budget allocation led to unprecedented changes in 2023. The provision of food items and non-food items in Namibia and Botswana were only budgeted for six months, representing 50 percent of food rations for forcibly displaced persons. This caused a lot of challenges including increasing negative coping mechanisms amongst forcibly displaced persons, such as survival sex, reputational risks to UNHCR with the respective state actors and poor nutrition amongst vulnerable populations including children, the extent of which is yet to be verified.

As the MCO had a pre-arranged agreement with DHA in South Africa on the backlog project, it was difficult

to scale down these activities, resulting in 35 percent of the funding going towards this project whilst key protection activities remained unfunded.

Implementation modalities were largely affected as it was necessary to reduce the number of partnerships from 21 to 17, while the funding allocations were drastically reduced thereby affecting partners' capacity to deliver quality protection interventions. Strategic interventions including livelihoods were completely cut in South Africa and drastically scaled down in other countries, thereby impacting the resilience of forcibly displaced persons.

Nevertheless, the MCO continued to cover the nine countries under its purview comprising Botswana, Comoros, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, and South Africa. The major areas of priority comprised the improvement of asylum by investing not only in the asylum appeals backlog project in South Africa but also by expanding collaborative (if not financial) engagement with the Government on first instance improvements. There was also focus on enhancing and building the capacity of governments on registration and documentation as well ensuring that data of the registered population is accurate and up to date. Other areas included delivery of basic services, particularly to address food needs in Namibia and Botswana, as well as WASH, voluntary return, provision of support to persons through counselling, protection information, legal advice and assistance, social assistance and self-reliance and livelihoods projects, child protection and GBV and the implementation of the Global Action Plan to end Statelessness.

## Section 4: Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

### 4.1 Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

It is acknowledged that documentation is key in many aspects including social cohesion, henceforth the need to strengthen capacity in this area.

Projects focusing on the empowerment of refugees produced successful results, especially in relation to GBV using with "Safe from the Start" funds received from the United States. Such projects should be supported across MCO countries.

Increased collaboration with other actors including state actors should be prioritized. Key examples include the Ndzevane Project in Eswatini with the involvement of key stakeholders including FAO, World Vision and Government; and the successful contingency planning workshop conducted in 2023 with partners, civil society and state actors which fed into the contingency plan for South Africa. More similar engagements should be done to strengthen collaboration on refugee matters.

Collaboration with UN sister agencies should also be prioritized following great results including collaboration with UNICEF on BID procedures. The 2.0 common pledges were observed to be a good practice and a great opportunity to strengthen UNHCR's collaboration with UN agencies. However, the challenge of adequate staffing capacity to enable effective participation across the nine countries remains.

Generally, improved donor engagement was observed which triggered EU funding. More engagements with development actors should be sought, however it's key that the external relations function is capacitated so its well-equipped.

In-person engagement with partners and governments by UNHCR has produced good results. Budget aspects should be also considered, especially in countries where UNHCR presence exists only through individual focal points.

There is a need to conduct more social cohesion activities given the rise of xenophobia in South Africa and the upcoming general elections. Involvement of host communities in UNHCR's projects is essential to help strengthen the social cohesion aspect. Consideration to invest more in the hardware, for instance rehabilitating local centres such as health facilities that can benefit both refugees and host communities, is key in attaining social cohesion.

Low quality of refugee status determination has been observed in all nine countries, and as such, capacity strengthening should be a priority. Identification methodology systems for resettlement are working well, including the use of the Refugee Helpline in South Africa, and these good practices should be strengthened. Despite low numbers on repatriation due to resource constraints and staff capacity issues, UNHCR has successfully taken over the implementation of voluntary repatriation activities from IOM, since 2022 resulting in a more cost-effective outcome. There is a need to seek support from the Regional Bureau on durable solutions, enabling people willing to return to be supported accordingly.





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