

ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NGOs
28 – 30 JUNE 2011, International Conference Center Geneva

Background Paper
Overcoming barriers: Strategies for the robust and effective use of resettlement
as a protection tool

Wednesday 29 June 2011, 09:00 - 10:45, Room 4
(also available are Rooms 15 & 18 for breakout discussions)

Brief Description of the Issue

There are currently an estimated 10.4 million refugees in the world. UNHCR has found that of that number, 800,000 are in need of resettlement and 172,300 need to be resettled in 2011 alone. As many longstanding refugee situations continue to linger without real options for local integration in countries of first asylum or safe, voluntary returns to home countries; and , as new refugee crises unfold before our eyes in North Africa and the Middle East, the need for the strategic use of resettlement only continues to grow, while the opportunities for resettlement largely remain stagnant. It is important to note that at the current rate of resettlement, on an annual basis, less than one half of 1% of the world's refugees will be resettled.

This year marks a particularly important time to engage in a reexamination of how resettlement can be better utilized as a lifesaving protection tool for refugees who simply have no other options available to them, as well as provide important protection dividends for refugees who will not benefit from resettlement. As the global community celebrates the 60th anniversary of the fundamental legal instrument that frames the international protection regime for refugees, the 1951 *Convention on the Status of Refugees*, we are all provided with a unique opportunity to recommit to the protection of refugees and continue to work together to ensure that durable solutions, including resettlement, are found and utilized. Although the numbers and need are certainly daunting, refugee resettlement remains the durable solution that can help to expand protection space in countries of first asylum, unlock protracted refugee situations, and enrich resettlement countries through the economic, social, and cultural contributions of the refugees they welcome.

The implementation of a robust global refugee resettlement program would not be possible without the involvement of NGOs acting in partnership with UNHCR and States. NGOs are engaged from the very start of the refugee resettlement process, including identifying and referring refugees for resettlement, all the way to helping refugees start their lives anew and integrate in their new homes. This session's discussions will focus on the use of resettlement as a key refugee protection tool and will provide opportunities for NGOs from traditional and emerging resettlement countries to examine different ways to overcome the barriers to the most effective use of resettlement as a durable solution.

Format of the Discussions

The session will consist of a 25 minute plenary session during which the major themes of the session will be introduced. The first topic that will be covered is exploring steps that NGOs can take at the field level to help bridge humanitarian gaps through resettlement, including how to increase resettlement expertise

and capacity within UNHCR and NGOs; techniques to buffer NGOs core activities and program integrity from resettlement activities; and, discussion of concerns around the “magnet effect” of resettlement and some methods to minimize it. The second issue that will be addressed in the session is how to increase reception capacities and best practices in integration at the resettlement country level. The third topic that will be discussed is what NGOs can do to advocate for the resettlement of specific populations, increase resettlement quotas, and improve service provision for refugees, pre-and-post departure.

The plenary session will be followed by three 45 minute break-out sessions that will focus on the key themes outline above. These discussions will allow participants to exchange best practices and discuss steps for moving forward. Following the break-out sessions, all of the participants will reconvene for 25 minutes during which the findings and recommendations from the break-out sessions will be shared.

Sample Key Questions for Breakout Discussions

What steps could be taken to increase the capacity of NGOs to further engage in resettlement related activities?

Have concepts of “integration potential” inhibited resettlement and undermined its use as a protection tool?

Can you provide examples of advocacy partnerships that have resulted in increased resettlement places, the resettlement of specific refugee populations or improved service provision for resettled refugees?

Expected Outcomes

The overall goal of the session, including all of the break-out discussions, is to increase the capacity of NGOs through the identification of best practices and models that can be shared and replicated by NGOs working on refugee protection and resettlement. In addition, in an effort to better connect the NGO Consultations with the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR), the summarized recommendations from this session will be included in the NGO Statement that the ATCR NGO Focal Point will share at the start of the 2011 ATCR.

Suggested Reading (2011 goals, ECRE document, toolkit)

European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), *NGO Involvement in Resettlement: Good Practices*, September 2010

http://www.ecre.org/files/ECRE_NGO_involvement_in_resettlement_September_2010.pdf

UNHCR, *UNHCR Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2011*, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendocPDFViewer.html?docid=4c31e3716&query=resettlement>

UNHCR, *UNHCR-NGO Toolkit for Practical Cooperation on Resettlement*, <http://www.unhcr.org/ngotoolkit>

ICMC, *Paving the Way*, <http://www.icmc.net/pubs/paving-the-way>