

## **2010 UNHCR Annual Consultations with NGOs**

### **Results of the survey conducted with national organizations participating in the Consultations**

As part of the preparation for the partnerships session of the 2010 UNHCR-NGO Consultations (29 June 14:00 – 18:00), a questionnaire was designed by the Inter-agency Unit to identify the challenges, barriers and the expectations of the national organizations working with UNHCR and other international organizations.

This questionnaire was sent to 39 national organizations working in 29 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, MENA and South America which are funded to participate in the annual consultations. Out of the 39 questionnaires that were sent out, we have received 30 replies representing 77 % of the participants. All in all, 98 national organizations were involved in the answers since other national organizations working in the same area were consulted to come up with a collective answer.

#### **Questions and Answers**

##### **Question 1**

What are the challenges of working in environments where there is little UN presence, lack of rule of law and security? In the absence of UN presence, what type of essential support is required to continue operating in complex and insecure environments?

The main challenges faced by the national organizations are, human rights abuses, the ignored rights of the most vulnerable groups such as elderly, women and children and the reluctance by the local governments and traditional authorities to cooperate with the national organizations.

Most of the participants stated that lack of UN presence paralyzes the ability of local organizations to implement their project and that they regard the presence of UN in complex and insecure environments as an assuring element.

In the absence of UN presence most of the national organizations claimed that they needed training, logistics support and support in staff capacity to ensure they continue reaching the groups in the most affected areas. A significant number of participants also emphasized the fact that more attention needs to be given to their security and that incentives (such as higher salaries) should be introduced to organizations working in difficult environments. Many of the national organizations emphasized the fact that UNHCR should be more present in a facilitator role between national organizations and governments to ensure that humanitarian actors are neutral and provide services without discrimination.

##### **Question 2**

How can UN agencies simplify the way they operate with local and national organizations? Please offer 3 simple suggestions which will make a difference vis-à-vis the performance of the local organizations in your area.

The following were the main parts included in the replies;

a) Simplifying paperwork:

Most of the national organizations who participated in the survey regard UN bureaucracy to be complex and want the UN agencies to simplify and harmonize their bureaucracy.

b) Improving communication with national organizations and recognizing local competence:

A significant number of organizations complained about having limited access to the UN agencies and proposed that UN agencies should designate a focal point whom can facilitate better access for the national organizations which are working with the UN agencies. In this regard, many national organizations also pointed out that UN agencies should be more culturally sensitive when interacting with them and recognize the local expertise of the national organizations. Some organizations emphasized that they wanted more monitoring and less supervision.

With reference to communication, a number of organizations wanted the UN agencies to be more proactive in creation of local communication platforms which will enable local, national and international organizations to interact in a more harmonious manner.

### **Question 3**

Are there any specific capacity needs organizations have in terms of implementing UNHCR activities? What are self initiatives taken by organizations to strengthen their capacity in the identified areas?

The main capacity needs identified by the organizations were the following:

a) Financial and logistical constraints:

A number of organizations stated that a lack of financial capacity was a constraint in their implementation of programmes and in their partnership with UNHCR. In this regard, few organizations expressed that the sustainability of UNHCR's local implementing partners was negatively affected due to different standards of funding existing for national and international NGOs. (i.e. overhead costs)

Few organizations identified lack of financial resources as limiting their delivery capacities and complained about not meeting all the needs of persons of concern.

Concerns were also raised by some participants on having limited logistical capacity and lack of equipment and vehicles.

b) Training:

A significant amount of the responders emphasized the need for training relevant to the area of their operations and programme. In particular, supporting to build their capacities in a range of areas such as, financial management, proposal writing, reporting and carrying out awareness campaigns were specifically and frequently mentioned.

In this regard, a number of organizations emphasized the need to receive support and training in organizational strengthening and local fundraising.

A limited number of participants reported that initiatives were taken on their own to further develop the capacity of their staff vis-à-vis various types of training and network building.

**Question 4**

Is your agency an implementing partner of an INGO or part of a joint programme? If yes, which ones? Describe any capacity development activities that resulted from this relationship. If not, what are your organizations expectations from an INGO in terms of support to your organization's capacity development? Provide 3 most vital areas where INGOs can be of help?

Half of the of the organizations said that they were part of a joint programme with an INGO and had been involved in skill building activities which were initiated by international organizations.

The 3 identified areas where INGOS can be of help are as follows;

- a) Technical and logistical support on issues such as risk and disaster management, water and health
- b) Skills developing training on project management
- c) Capacitating national organizations in local fund raising