

ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NGOs
1 – 3 JULY 2015 - International Conference Center Geneva

THEMATIC SESSION

BACKGROUND PAPER

Session Title: NGO Engagement around Resettlement Identification: Present and Future

Date: 3 July 2015

Time/Room: 9:00 – 10:45 – Room 4

With more than 13 million refugees of concern to UNHCR around the globe, the need to find durable solutions and expand solutions programming is constantly growing. Even as the concept of solutions evolves and expands, resettlement, although benefiting only a relatively small proportion of refugees, is often the only viable durable solution available in many situations and will continue to play a critical role.

To ensure that resettlement is used as effectively as possible requires proper identification of refugees for resettlement consideration. Given their strong presence in refugee communities, NGOs are well-situated to help to identify the most vulnerable refugees. Since resettlement is a partnership activity, it requires effective collaboration between UNHCR and partners (including NGOs). Thus, NGO involvement in the identification of vulnerable refugees for resettlement consideration is vital to the resettlement process.

Collaboration between UNHCR and NGOs results in a more robust and equitable resettlement system, which benefits refugees, NGOs and UNHCR. UNHCR benefits from a more expansive resettlement structure, capable of extending resettlement opportunities to vulnerable refugees who may not otherwise have been able to access the resettlement system. NGOs benefit by being able to link some of their most vulnerable clients with a durable solution. And, as noted above, refugees benefit by having a more equitable opportunity to be considered for resettlement. Yet, despite these acknowledged benefits, little has been done to measure actual contributions of NGOs in this process or to promote increased involvement of NGOs going forward.

To better understand the landscape of UNHCR-NGO collaboration around identification of refugees for resettlement consideration, a global mapping exercise was carried out with numerous UNHCR operations and NGOs early this year. Through this exercise, best practices and challenges were identified from different regions around the globe.

Unlike previous discussions on this topic, the mapping provides a concrete, data-driven starting point from which to promote and encourage further collaboration and thereby continue to increase access to resettlement for the world's most vulnerable refugees.

The session will begin by laying out the current landscape of UNHCR-NGO collaboration around the identification of refugees in need of resettlement, based on responses from the 2015 global survey and mapping exercise. Moving from the general to the specific, the session will highlight the programs and best practices of three NGOs that, alongside providing assistance to refugees, actively seek to refer some of their clients to UNHCR for resettlement consideration. The NGO panelists will also share challenges they have faced in this process and how they have addressed these challenges. UNHCR will then give a global perspective about the value and importance of NGOs in the identification of refugees in need of resettlement.

The objectives of the session are to:

- Provide a global overview of the existing engagement between UNHCR offices and NGOs around the identification of refugees for resettlement;
- Hear from specific NGOs that are already engaging with UNHCR in the identification of refugees for resettlement, including noting best practices and challenges;
- Encourage NGOs to become more engaged with UNHCR around the identification of refugees for resettlement as well as provide some necessary tools that will assist NGOs to do so.