

Report on UNHCR's Annual Consultations with Non-Governmental Organizations

17 – 19 JUNE 2014 - GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

Abstract

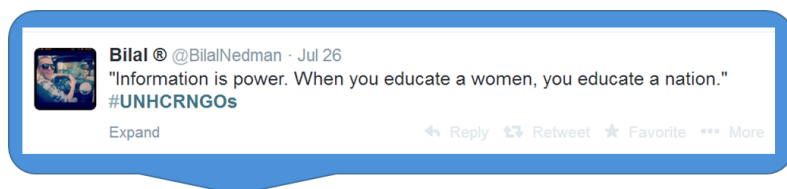
This report provides highlights of UNHCR's 2014 Annual Consultations with NGOs, which brought together some 482 representatives from around the world, representing 250 different NGOs, UN and international organizations from 82 different countries, of which 56.4% of these NGOs were national NGOs and 43.6% were international NGOs.

This year's main theme, *Women's Leadership and Participation*, guided much of the discussion, highlighting the persistent need to ensure that women and girls have an equal and meaningful voice in the context of forced migration. Participants recalled that women's empowerment is fundamental to real and meaningful change, emphasizing the critical role that men and boys have to play in achieving gender equality.



The Consultations included five regional sessions and eleven thematic sessions covering: partnership, self-reliance, youth, protection at sea, internal displacement, detention, mental health and psychosocial support, statelessness, community-based protection, advocating for protection, and resettlement. Additional side events organised by UNHCR focused on women's leadership, faith and protection, sexual and gender based violence, and alternative models for international protection of forced migrants. Informal meetings were held on refugee protection on the basis of sexual and gender non-conformity, civil society initiatives on regional protection, torture for profit, cash-based programming, girls' education, substance abuse, displaced women's Housing Land and Property (HLP), and the situation of the stateless Rohingya.

This report has been prepared with the information provided by those responsible for each session and input from UNHCR and NGO participants. The report contains information from all of the main sessions and some of the side meetings. It has been structured in the following way: (A) Introduction; (B) the Opening Session; (C) the five Regional Sessions; (D) the nineteen Thematic Sessions; (E) the three side events; and (F) the Closing Session.



A key message emerging from the Consultations was that partners are struggling to cope with the recent spike in emergencies coupled with the stubborn intractability of protracted displacement situations. Funding shortfalls were named as

the "mother of all questions" and it was agreed that partnership remains fundamental, including in all the areas discussed.

This year marks the first year in which social media tools have been used to enhance participation in the Consultations. The use of social media systems including Twitter and Tumblr gave an immediate voice not only to those attending the Consultations, but also to partners, people of concern, and colleagues who were not able to travel to Geneva. To view the daily summaries of social media highlights and to watch videos of the opening and closing remarks, see: <http://unhcrngos.tumblr.com/>

The full report may also be accessed at www.unhcr.org/ngo-consultations and www.icvanetwork.org.

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REPORT ON UNHCR'S ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

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A. INTRODUCTION

This year's theme, *Women's Leadership and Participation*, guided many of the discussions, with participants recalling that displacement all too often serves to exacerbate existing inequalities, amplifying the discrimination and hardship faced by women and girls. Throughout the Consultations, participants noted that women and girls continue to face significant obstacles in claiming and enjoying their rights, but cautioned against portraying women and girls solely as survivors or victims, recognizing that displaced women and girls are also leaders, advocates and allies in their communities. Women and girls themselves called for more meaningful participation and reiterated the critical role that they have to play in protecting, assisting and securing durable solutions for themselves and their communities. Participants recalled that women's empowerment is fundamental to real and meaningful change, emphasizing the critical role that men and boys have to play in achieving gender equality.

Joint action needs to be taken together in partnership. The High Commissioner called for "*a meaningful commitment from all of us to do everything possible to make women's empowerment happen*". Taking up this call to action, the Rapporteur recalled the 2001 "Five Commitments to Refugee Women", noting the need to update them and calling for time bound action plans and measurable goals to meet their full implementation within the next five years.

The year ahead presents opportunities to promote women's leadership and participation in the context of forced migration, including (1) the December 2014 High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection; (2) the Launch of the 10 year Campaign to End Statelessness and the International Campaign to End Gender Discrimination in Nationality Laws; and, (3) the upcoming Regional and Thematic Consultations for the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. In the context of these important international discussions, the full realization of the rights of women and girls should be pursued.

B. OPENING SESSION

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, welcomed the theme of the 2014 UNHCR-NGO Consultations, *Women's Leadership and Participation*. He underlined the vital leadership roles played by women in UNHCR and NGO operations and the need to look beyond discussing protection of women and girls. The empowerment of women is key to resolving the multitude of problems facing the world, including numerous conflicts and gross human rights abuses. He hoped the meeting would lead to "*a meaningful commitment from all of us to do everything possible to make this empowerment happen*."

The High Commissioner spoke of the continued challenges facing the humanitarian community and today's all-time high numbers of forcibly displaced. He outlined the difficulties in responding adequately as humanitarians in the context of multiple conflicts, including in South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Sudan and Iraq, as well as maintaining a response for the displaced from older conflicts that never seem to be resolved. The increase in natural disasters is also producing mass displacement. The continued growth in demand for humanitarian assistance and protection, coupled with the shrinking of humanitarian space, are highly challenging. This situation is exacerbated by an increase of xenophobia, islamophobia, and racism in many countries.



The High Commissioner emphasized that *"one of the problems of today's world, one of the reasons why we see this multiplication of conflicts, we see these dramatic violations of human rights everywhere, is indeed that we still live, especially from the political perspective, in*

a clearly male-dominated world. And it's still a clearly male-dominated culture that prevails in the way governments act, in the way that many international organizations act, and in which even in some societies, civil society is organized."

Luz Mery Mesa, from Asylum Access Ecuador, highlighted the need for refugee women to be guaranteed due process, with full respect for gender specific needs, and the need for systems to have processes that are clear and gender sensitive. Host countries need to have documents to protect refugee women. Finally she underlined the importance of refugee women being educated about their rights and the social security programs available to them.

ICVA Executive Director, Nan Buzard, welcomed the use of social media at the Consultations for the first time, emphasizing that the aim was to increase the remote participation of persons of concern, as well as local NGOs. She spoke of the vast capacities women possess and stressed the need for refugee women to be given the opportunity to articulate their experience and knowledge from their own survival strategies. Women's inputs are much needed in the design of effective responses.

C. REGIONAL SESSIONS

1. AFRICA

BACKGROUND

The Africa session focused on 3 themes:

- Major current emergencies, with a focus primarily on CAR and South Sudan;
- The Kenya Directive on Urban Refugees issued in March 2014 by the Kenyan government to relocate refugees in urban areas to camps;
- The main comprehensive solution strategies that have been implemented to bring closure to specific displacement situations, with a focus on the Zambian Initiative to achieve local integration for Angolan refugees in Zambia

MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

Emergencies (CAR, South Sudan & W. Africa)

- The Director of the Bureau described 'exodus spikes' in both the CAR and South Sudan Emergency Situations, with total displacements at 925,791 and 1,558,191 respectively (as of June 12, 2014) the majority of whom are women and children. In contrast to these dramatic increases in humanitarian needs, he noted that only 12% of the required funding has been received for these emergencies.
- Constraints in funding have meant that the regional focus has been very much about life-saving activities, with limited ability to shift to livelihoods/self-reliance initiatives.
- NGOs added that funding constraints mean poor quality implementation of programs on their part, putting their partnership with UNHCR at risk. A billion dollars is needed for the CAR and South Sudan situations, with only 12% funded to date. These funding gaps need to be of utmost priority to ensure quality of response can be improved.
- UNHCR noted that it is moving away from the camp model as default in refugee situations. In this context, information sharing and development of an out-of-camp policy as well as efforts to secure livelihood options for displaced persons will be essential. Freedom of movement is also critical to success in implementing this shift in policy.
- Participants felt that creative solutions were needed to address both growing emergency needs and increasingly protracted situations. For example, the possibilities for self-reliance are further limited by scarcity of land, especially for refugees in camps.
- UNHCR expressed concern about the risk of 'Third Country Nationals' becoming stateless, given the inadequate response and challenges of implementing a comprehensive approach for such movements of persons. For example, second and third generation Chadians who have been living in CAR for many generations may be at risk of statelessness upon their arrival to Chad as 'returnees'.
- A significant portion of UNHCR's already overstretched budget is going to logistics. Provision of non-food items was also of particular concern. As fewer items are available for distribution, the vulnerability of individuals trying to attain these items themselves is increased.
- NGO partners remarked that refugee situations in West Africa, particularly Mali, appear to be 'forgotten' by UNHCR.



Urban Refugees in Kenya

- In March 2014, the Kenyan Government issued a directive stating that all refugees in urban areas would be relocated to camps due to security concerns. Since this directive, there have been several cases of deportations, refoulement and refugees relocated to Kakuma and Dadaab. UNHCR continues to appeal to the Government of Kenya regarding the Directive and issued a non-return advisory for Somalia on June 16, 2014.
- UNHCR noted the following additional challenges:
 - Access to those in detention (with a disconnect between political discourse of guarantee and reality); and,
 - Strong advocacy needed for LGBTQI refugees in Kenya as well as with resettlement actors, as these are often critical protection cases.
- NGOs encouraged UNHCR to increase the dialogue with civil society on this issue, recognizing that there continues to be an internal debate about when to issue public outcry/condemnation and when to utilize confidential dialogue with state actors.
- Participants expressed concern that the situation in Kenya could have a 'spill-over effect' into neighbouring countries, particularly in terms of increasing securitization of refugee protection and fewer out-of-camp options. In the face of these pressures, it was felt that there is also a need to redouble efforts towards solutions for refugees, including with respect to resettlement.

Comprehensive Solutions Strategies for Refugees in Protracted Situations

- While refugee emergencies dominate the displacement landscape in Africa, UNHCR continues its push to resolve protracted refugee situations.
- With regard to the Angolan solutions strategy, challenges include timely issuance of Angolan National Passports, availability of sustained international (financial and political) support, partnerships and length of time to implement quality local integration.
- The strategy for Burundians in Tanzania was updated with a delay on the implementation of naturalization, with only 770 naturalization certificates issued. Ongoing challenges, including a lack of documentation for new-borns, were identified.
- In the context of Somali refugees in the Horn of Africa, UNHCR and NGOs agreed that the numbers of resettlement cases of Somali refugees was decreasing at precisely the moment when they should be increasing. Investment in returnee infrastructure was also noted as an important means to protect against re-displacement of Somali returnees.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- UNHCR and partners committed to working together on the issues raised during the session, with the greatest emphasis on shared advocacy initiatives to donors to increase funding commitments on the continent.
- In the face of 'layers of emergencies', there is a need for sustained resources and attention to ensure the implementation of solutions strategies with the view to bringing a number of protracted situations to a close.
- UNHCR was encouraged to share its policy on out-of-camp approaches and to continue advocacy with governments in the face of restrictive national encampment policies.
- UNHCR was also asked to increase transparency on the question of relocation of populations in CAR to safe areas within the country.
- Access to, and the release of urban refugees in detention remain essential, and national or international organizations (like ICRC) could monitor detention centres and identify protection concerns.
- Participants urged UNHCR to continue to strengthen solutions strategies and advocate for resettlement for urban refugees.
- UNHCR will continue to advocate for the naturalization of Burundians in Tanzania.

- Finally, the Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa recommended deepening and broadening collaboration and partner participation, especially in terms of technical responses, community outreach, peace and development, integrated programs, and advocacy.

2. AMERICAS

BACKGROUND

As statistics often report, women and girls are disproportionately affected by forced displacement and statelessness. The Americas is regrettably no exception to this trend. Women and girls of concern to UNHCR are subject to discrimination, violence and abuses before, during and after displacement. Gender persecution, domestic violence, survival sex, human trafficking, social isolation and harassment are only few in a hideous catalogue of individual or group violations that are born by displaced women. Nevertheless, trauma, mistreatment and other daily challenges women face do not fully undermine their own resilience and ability to address their own protection needs. To the contrary, they often prompt the development of impressive coping mechanisms and solutions.



The Americas session looked at the difficulties encountered by refugees, IDPs and stateless persons in the Americas, with a specific focus on women’s protection responses and remedies to forced displacement and statelessness. The importance was highlighted of addressing gender specific needs of displaced and stateless persons throughout the region.

MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

- The arrival of unaccompanied children to the US continues to be a serious concern, particularly in light of the lack of legal representation and adequate/tailored psychosocial support. Girls’ arrivals from Central America are on the rise, fleeing primarily due to violence, abuse and risks of forced recruitment. 60% of girls arriving are survivors of rape.
- Speakers indicated that the gender dimension of stateless in the region is also acute, particularly in the Dominican Republic where women bear the burden of having to register their children alone. Those who were arbitrarily deprived of their nationality have experienced limited access to education, healthcare and employment and got exposed to the hazards of the informal market. In the absence of legal protection, this can lead to survival sex, exploitation and abuse.
- On a more positive note, it was highlighted that the local integration of refugee women in the region is being supported by activities such as: vocational training, microcredit, psychosocial support, livelihoods, access to education and access to employment.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- More evaluations, analysis and project design should focus on the specific needs of girls.
- Women caseworkers should be essential actors in any migration and protection setting, whether hired by local authorities or by / in collaboration with NGOs.
- The creation of refugee women’s committees should also be strongly encouraged as a component of protection safety nets.

3. ASIA AND PACIFIC

BACKGROUND

The Asia-Pacific region is home to 8.4 million people of concern, including one third of the world's refugees – some 3.5 million people – and encompasses 45 countries and territories. While only 20 countries in the region have acceded to the *1951 Refugee Convention*, Asia has generously hosted millions of refugees and other persons of concern for decades.

The regional session for Asia and the Pacific began with introductory remarks by UNHCR's Director of the Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, highlighting the Bureau's priorities and the importance of women's leadership. The session looked at operations in the region through the lens of this year's theme: "Women's Leadership and Participation." The first part of the session was dedicated to sharing experiences of women's roles and contributions, while the second part of the session focused on other priority issues in the region.

MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

- Participants highlighted the need for all actors to increase the space and the opportunities for women to collaborate, form networks, make useful connections and succeed in business ventures. This requires that women are able to work legally.
- Women's empowerment requires a change in cultural perceptions, and men and boys should be engaged in the process. Support programmes need to be organised around social dynamics and power structures and community leaders should take on these issues, sometimes challenging cultural traditions.
- There is a need for continued dialogue with governments to uphold the principle of *non-refoulement*, to increase safe disembarkation sites, and to build strategic alliances to ensure access for refugees to local services.



RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- Resettled refugee leaders should exchange experience and ensure that women have access to all opportunities.
- It is important to respect and draw from the participation and leadership demonstrated by refugees, particularly women, in the context of assessments. Reporting back post assessment is also vital to ensure that those who contribute their views see the results and feel part of the process.

4. EUROPE

BACKGROUND

The session was organised in two parts. In the first, participants explored the concepts of participation, empowerment and leadership of women of concern to UNHCR, both conceptually and in practice. They also shared their experience, exchanged relevant good practices and explored areas for enhanced cooperation between NGOs, governments and UNHCR.

In the second part of the regional session, participants discussed measures developed by states to control irregular entry into their territories that are preventing people in need of international protection from requesting asylum and, in some cases, involving the forcible return of asylum seekers. They shared their research, experience, and monitoring practices, and explored areas for enhanced cooperation in advocacy with governments to put an end to ‘push-backs’ and ensure access to territory and to international protection in Europe. Panelists focused on the borders of Bulgaria and Turkey, Greece and Turkey and the two Spanish enclaves, Ceuta and Melilla, with Morocco.

Part 1: Empowerment and Leadership of Women of Concern to UNHCR

MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

- Participation of women is a first step to achieving gender equality and empowerment of women. Women’s engagement in leadership roles has had a significant impact on their own lives, but also in the lives of their families and their communities.



- UNHCR’s experience with the AGD Strategy was highlighted as a positive tool in promoting refugee women’s participation and a first step enabling to women’s leadership.
- Creating awareness of women’s issues can have an impact on broader policy. For example, addressing women’s difficulties in accessing services leads to a general improvement of access to services for asylum-seekers.
- Participatory Action Research (PAR) was highlighted as an innovative approach that can bring about positive and real change in conditions and practices affecting women through their involvement in the research process.
- The projects in Ireland and Bosnia-Herzegovina were presented as positive examples of achieving women’s participation, empowerment and leadership through the promotion of a holistic approach covering the provision of legal information, as well as access to services.
- Access to information and legal aid is crucial to help women enjoy their rights. In addition, accessing legal support may also facilitate access to other services such as psycho-social support.
- Collaboration of organizations assisting asylum-seekers and refugees with women’s organizations can contribute to identifying synergies and achieving better results with regards to gender equality.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- Understanding the diversity of persons’ and women’s identities and statuses is key to the development of programmes and policies.
- Capacity building can improve the engagement of women of concern and their integration within the wider community and, as a result, positively impact their health and well-being.
- The projects presented illustrated the importance of a holistic and intersectional approach covering refugee rights, legal aid and psycho-social support. Collaborative and complementary approaches should be developed across these fields.
- Advocacy and strategic litigation can have an impact on states’ laws and practices affecting women, but can also improve individual situations (for example in cases of violence against women).
- While all agreed that participation is only a first step towards empowerment, participants recommended further discussion on the true meaning of empowerment and the ways refugee women could be empowered.

Part 2: Access to protection in Europe: The challenges of “Pushbacks” at the border of the European Union and our responses

MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

- Push-backs’ happen routinely at the border of the European Union (EU), without any proper assessment of the individual circumstances of every case and without due process. Such practices impact individuals in needs of protection, particularly those with specific needs, such as unaccompanied children, survivors of torture and trauma, older persons or persons with disabilities, who are not identified because of the lack of screening.
- NGOs have had an important role in monitoring practices and bringing them to the attention of the authorities and media. Information is obtained through official statistics, if and when available, and through interviews and testimonies, usually conducted by NGOs in detention centres. State practice can be difficult to document. ‘Push-backs’ take place at the border, in areas which may not be open to NGOs and where independent monitoring is therefore not possible. It is also difficult to identify asylum-seekers who were ‘pushed-back’.
- Participants voiced their view that the Dublin Regulation indirectly contributes to the practice of ‘push-backs’ due to a perceived increased pressure on Member States at the external borders of the EU to maintain the EU’s borders and may, as a result, use ‘push-backs’ to prevent additional migrants and asylum-seekers from entering their territories.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- Mechanisms should be in place to ensure the respect for fundamental rights, including *non-refoulement*. Persons in need of international protection should be allowed to enter the EU and obtain swift access to fair and efficient asylum procedures.
- Authorities should inform people who arrive at the border at the earliest possibility of their right to claim asylum and application procedures for international protection.
- Detention following irregular entry should only be used as a last resort and for a minimum period of time.
- Special attention should also be paid to ensure adequate reception of asylum-seekers, particularly those with specific needs, such as unaccompanied children, survivors of torture and trauma, older persons and persons with disabilities.
- There is clearly a need to document state practice surrounding ‘push-backs’. NGOs and UNHCR should continue to work jointly to improve monitoring and documentation of such cases.
- Strategic partnerships between UNHCR and NGOs and between NGOs on either side of the border could help to address ‘push-backs’ more effectively.
- Thorough investigation of allegations of ‘push-backs’ and access to effective remedies, where state’s obligations have not been upheld, should be ensured. Litigation could also be used strategically to challenge the practice of ‘push-backs’ and bring about lasting change.

5. MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (MENA)

BACKGROUND

This year has proven to be extremely challenging for the MENA region. The severity of violence and loss of life within Syria and the magnitude of displacement is exceptional. At the same time, the generosity of host countries, communities and donors has been extraordinary in the face of massive humanitarian needs. Inside

Syria, it is estimated that 9 million people are in need of protection and assistance. UNHCR and partners, as part of their participation in the inter-agency humanitarian response, reached 3.4 million people within Syria and some 2.7 million refugees in neighbouring countries. Other parts of the region are also experiencing varying levels of crisis and displacement and are in need of greater international humanitarian support, such as Yemen, Libya and Iraq.

MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

- The situation of refugees in both urban and camp settings and the growing phenomena of mixed migration situations throughout the Middle East and North Africa require the adoption of different assistance strategies and methods on the part of the humanitarian community.
- In the mixed migration flows from Sub-Saharan Africa into Libya and other North African states, participants noted with particular concern the expanding networks promoting kidnapping and trafficking.
- Partnerships with local NGOs are important to ensure that the immediate protection and assistance needs of persons of concern are addressed, while durable solutions are pursued, recognizing the important role that local NGOs play in providing sustainability.
- Women's full and meaningful participation in decision-making processes across MENA was highlighted through various concrete examples provided by participants (eg in Jordan and Lebanon).
- Both women and men are adversely affected in displacement and migration situations, while refugee women and girls in the region, particularly female heads of households and children living without their traditional family and community support, are exposed to numerous protection risks, including early marriage, domestic violence, survival sex and sexual exploitation among other violations.
- Participants highlighted the urgent need for sustained financial support to the Syria refugee response and to refugee hosting communities, particularly around infrastructure (health, water, sanitation), and livelihoods. This support is fundamental to enable countries in the region to continue to manage large inflows, maintain open borders and avoid the creation of tensions between refugees and their host communities.
- Despite examples of progress, more needs to be done to ensure that women are able to meaningfully participate in leadership and management structures in their communities. Across the board, women's representation in refugee leadership structures in the MENA region is still low. Improving this situation can be particularly difficult in light of cultural considerations and limitations of movement, which can impede women's engagement with their communities, as well as in situations where representatives in leadership structures are appointed rather than elected by the community.
- Refugee education and child protection were highlighted by participants as great challenges faced by the MENA region. As activities aiming at reducing risks of SGBV are highly sensitive and require very specific staff, UNHCR works with a network of social workers to support traumatized children. Concerning the global challenge of refugee education, although the number of refugee children who attended school this year has increased compared to last year, many refugees still face difficulties in enrolling their children in the public school system.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- UNHCR should encourage international partners to work more closely with local NGOs and CBOs. The capacity of local NGOs should be strengthened to ensure that local actors have the ability to maintain a long-term response to the evolving protracted Syria crisis. UNHCR and its partners should work towards the goal of women's active leadership and participation in leadership and management structures, one of UNHCR's Global Strategic Priorities for 2014 and 2015, is achieved.
- UNHCR and its partners should engage with communities to promote women's leadership and meaningful participation despite these challenges.

- The NGOs in the MENA region should come together for a more practical exchange of experiences. For example, women-led NGOs like Women Cultural and Social Society in Kuwait have achieved significant success in assisting Syrian refugees and these good practices need to be shared more actively.
- UNHCR should continue working with UNICEF, one of the global Education Cluster leads, on the issue of education.

D. THEMATIC SESSIONS

1. UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY BASED PROTECTION

BACKGROUND

Effective Community-Based Protection (CBP) is not a one-off project, but an essential component for UNHCR to carry out its protection mandate, and a methodology for sustained protection work. It requires focused investment in building partnerships and trust with communities. National and international NGOs are often at the forefront of applying the CBP concepts on the ground.

Participants were able to discuss CBP at a critical time when UNHCR is moving to further reinforce CBP with policy papers, practical guidance and workforce adjustments. UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) Policy reflects a strong commitment and continued investment in ensuring an equal enjoyment of rights by all persons of concern. The fundamental tenet of AGD work is to adopt a community-based approach, effectively putting people of concern at the centre of all decisions that affect their lives, as well as those of their family members and communities.



MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

- There are important findings from a pre-session survey that documented a range of “understandings of CBP”. These include: (1) agency-led protection efforts that are informed by communities, (2) protective actions that are prompted by agencies but led by communities or done jointly, and (3) protective actions that originate within a community and are led by the community which external actors then try to support.
- Participants agreed that more emphasis needs to be placed on identifying and assessing community-based protection mechanisms at the earliest stages of an intervention to help better target support, develop untapped community potential, and minimise the risk of unintentionally undermining existing community structures.
- Participants recognised the crucial protection role that women play in their families and the wider community, noting that when women’s groups had organised to provide community-wide protection, they then had a recognised protection role and a platform through which to tackle issues like domestic violence in a way that was felt to be more effective.
- UNHCR and NGOs must improve their accessibility to all segments of the community by working as closely and directly as possible with communities from the outset.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

Recommendations to UNHCR and NGOs:

- UNHCR and NGOs should continue to reinforce the partnership and dialogue among the group of actors that led to the creation of this session and consider holding a more in-depth discussion at the 2015 Consultations.
- Further research should be supported to map and analyse how local communities protect themselves, particularly in non-camp contexts and in rapid onset complex emergencies.
- UNHCR and NGOs should capture and document operational examples of recent CBP learnings for the purposes of program development and CBP-specific technical support, including, support the development of more effective tools to identify, and assess, and support CBP mechanisms at the outset of a crisis in particular types of programming (e.g. cash programs, livelihoods, child protection, SGBV, etc.).



Recommendations to ExCom Members and Donors:

- Donors should prioritize community-based protection and ensure their funding modalities and reporting requirements provide the flexibility, timelines and indicators needed to enable community-led protection initiatives and make them accessible for smaller local organizations as well as NGOs and UNHCR.
- Donors should consider special funding allocations for the research, mapping, documentation, piloting and roll out of the CBP recommendations above.
- Emphasis should be placed on capacitating national social services systems, to better equip them to support host communities, refugees, and IDPs, through a community-based approach. This would help to build community resilience, decrease tensions within and between communities, reduce further displacement, and avoid costly parallel systems for displaced communities.

2. PROTECTION OF ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

BACKGROUND

Young people are at a critical juncture in their lives as they transition from childhood into adulthood. Whilst international definitions may categorise adolescents and youth through assigned age ranges, in many contexts movement from one stage to the next is facilitated by a change in circumstance, such as marriage or leaving the parental home. This means that for some young people this transition is delayed or completely halted by the experience of displacement.



Although young people can be perceived as a threat to stability and security (especially males) or as vulnerable victims (females), displacement often forces them to take on new roles and responsibilities to ensure their own, and their families' basic needs are met. These new roles may put them at risk, for example girls and young women are often at an increased risk of harmful coping strategies such as survival sex and early marriage, while boys and young men may face an increased risk of forced military recruitment and exploitation in the labour market. The reality is that these risks are not mutually exclusive, as girls and young women are often caught up with armed groups and equally exploited in the labour market. Despite this, and often against the odds, young people consistently demonstrate great resilience, adaptability and agency.

MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

- Refugee girls emphasized their right to equal opportunities with boys, and called on UNHCR and partners to let women and girls take the lead in finding new possibilities.
- Education for girls and addressing harmful cultural attitudes/practices is of primary importance for displaced youth to access future opportunities.
- There is a need to find more avenues for increased access to education, especially secondary education, for all refugees.
- There should be an increased focus on training and making youth, adolescent, and young refugees, partners in the response. They are not only recipients of assistance, their perspectives are important and they have a strong desire to participate.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- The humanitarian community should improve accountability to young people, ensuring there are mechanisms in place to give their contributions and opinions due weight and process.
- There needs to be greater focus on educational innovations and the establishment of youth mentorship programs for younger adolescents. This could take place through communication, resources and spaces managed by youths, wherein youths then become the trainers and leaders.
- Young people need to be given the opportunity to become leaders. Youth groups and youth fora create a safe space to exercise leadership and to identify issues of common concern. Social media can play a key role in facilitating those conversations.
- UNHCR and NGOs need to consider programmatic strategies to engage more systematically with youths and children. Youth engagement and participation should not be tokenistic.



3. ADVOCATING TOGETHER FOR PROTECTION

BACKGROUND

This session was organized to consolidate the theme of the 2013 Consultations and the ongoing initiatives of UNHCR and partners in advocating for protection, including the 2011 High Commissioner's Structured Dialogue with NGOs and IFRC. The focus on partnership in advocacy was intended to strengthen collaboration and the impact of advocacy efforts by UNHCR and partners at the field, regional, and global levels, spanning a wide range of protection issues so as to achieve positive protection outcomes for refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees and stateless people.

MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

- The Nairobi model of engagement, which focusses on partnerships among legal groups, civilian monitors, justice system, and others, was suggested to be a powerful one. Stakeholders would benefit from replicating the model in different contexts.
- Drawing from the experience in MENA, the importance of engaging with all stakeholders, including UN agencies, NGOs, CSOs and refugees, was deemed essential to protection advocacy. Partnership should be a priority at every level (from the global to the local) and work with displaced populations should not be compartmentalised.

- Working with local actors is particularly important in engaging with displaced women, as it helps to overcome a range of inherent challenges.
- To ensure that humanitarian assistance is more than just providing relief, it must address a range of issues, such as empowerment, capacity building, legal awareness and livelihoods. This is essential in helping the displaced to integrate into a local environment and to learn to cope with an often radically altered existence.
- Communication among diverse stakeholders should be strengthened, and all partners should evaluate the impact of their advocacy.
- Participants highlighted the need to engage refugee women in advocacy and targeted programs and services. Women's leadership is often undervalued, and an adequate representation of women is lacking across the board. There should be an effort to connect with national women's groups to open their doors to women if they have not already.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- Participants reaffirmed the Principles of Partnership. The joint UNHCR-NGO guidance note on advocating together for protection will be circulated broadly.
- Embracing and implementing multi-stakeholder approaches includes working with non-traditional partners, such as government officials, INGOs, and NNGOs, to support and build local capacity. Working with local NGOs, women's groups and CSOs will strengthen the long-term services needed for women in refugee communities.
- Women's leadership should be promoted by all actors, for example, by examining the representation of women at all levels in organization; considering women's representation not only on the level of service providers, but also managers and executives; meaningfully addressing barriers to women's leaders; drafting and enforcing non-discrimination policies; and utilizing media more effectively to shift public opinion with an emphasis on the sharing of the stories of the forcibly displaced themselves.

4. MONITORING PLACES OF IMMIGRATION DETENTION

BACKGROUND

The use of immigration detention by governments as a migration management tool is increasing steadily. The detention of refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons and migrants represents a growing human rights challenge worldwide, despite detention only being permitted by international law where it is 'necessary', 'reasonable', and 'proportionate' to the 'legitimate aim' to be achieved, and then only after less coercive alternatives have been found not to be suitable in each individual case. Recent research commissioned by UNHCR suggests that many asylum-seekers are unaware of the detention policies of their destination countries, or have little or no say about their journey and final destination. Conditions in detention are also often sub-standard and need constant review and inspection.

The session considered the activities of monitoring bodies, NGOs, and UNHCR staff to actively engage in monitoring and/or inspection of places of immigration detention. Additional topics of discussion included advocacy strategies around improving rights, conditions and regular monitoring of places of immigration detention, such as building partnerships and networks, information gathering and sharing, research dissemination, good practices promotion, campaigning, litigation, training and capacity-building.

MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

- In June 2014 a new joint resource between UNHCR, the Association for the Prevention of Torture and the International Detention Coalition, *Monitoring Places of Immigration Detention: A Practical Manual* was made available. This Manual seeks to provide a practical tool for building and strengthening monitoring and/or inspection capacities for places of immigration detention, with a particular focus on preventative monitoring.

- Strong partnership and linkages between stakeholders is essential to optimize access and monitoring of immigration detention centres. Creative measures can be taken when international and national actors work together to maximize access and share information.
- Without entry to detention centres, individuals cannot be identified. Monitoring has proved beneficial in the context of Israel for the purposes of: individual representation and referral; locating vulnerable people such as women, children and LGBTIQ individuals; detecting trafficking victim; informing detainees about their rights; improving conditions (through advocacy and legal tools); and exposing new phenomena.
- Effective monitoring strategies include:
 - Weekly or periodic visits, including personal private conversations with detainees and consistent presence.
 - Detainees serving as volunteers (collecting information for reports and advocacy purposes).
 - NGO service providers in detention facilities can operate as “eyes and ears” for warning about conditions.
 - Collecting information via legal tools (e.g. freedom of information, information received during legal procedures, monitoring, and Administrative Detention Tribunal protocols).
 - Close work with relevant human rights organizations and refugee communities who receive information from friends and relatives of detainees.
 - Promoting accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.
- While monitoring immigration detention centres, special attention needs to be paid to female inhabitants. Women need to be identified and interviewed with the understanding that trust may need to be built in order for them to feel comfortable enough to tell their stories.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- UNHCR, NGOs and other stakeholders should not only focus on monitoring, but make recommendations for changes to unlawful detention practices and challenging detention policies and practices themselves.
- UNHCR, NGOs and stakeholders should engage and coordinate with one another in all stages of the monitoring, requiring the following:
 - Ensuring that facilities are conforming to national, regional and international standards.
 - Establishing constructive dialogues with the local authorities and those in charge of the centres.
 - Ensuring monitoring bodies have physical access to the detention centres and to registers and other documentation.
 - Establishing and strengthening information sharing and strategic partnerships amongst UNHCR, NGOs and other stakeholders should be established and strengthened. Organizations working with the same communities, as well as on a national and international level, should work together to obtain common goals.

5. ACHIEVING SELF-RELIANCE: PAVING THE WAY FOR SAFE, LAWFUL AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

BACKGROUND

As the average time of displacement increases and people remain in protracted refugee situations, the need for the refugee-serving community to address the routine exclusion of displaced persons from safe and sustainable livelihoods is imperative. Without a legal right to work, access to formal markets, financial products and development opportunities, refugees and other persons of concern are unable to rebuild their lives in exile and develop skills that will assist them if they are able to return to their countries of origin. Despite the *1951 Refugee Convention* and other international legal instruments addressing employment rights and clearly articulating access to safe and lawful livelihood



opportunities for displaced persons, in practice these opportunities are either extremely limited or denied altogether. As a result, it becomes necessary for the forcibly displaced to find work in the unregulated informal sector, exposing them to a range of precarious positions, protection risks and rights violations.

Rights respecting livelihood-interventions provide the basis for self-reliance, durable solutions and the fulfilment of human rights. A truly comprehensive response to displacement will serve the livelihood needs and labour rights of the forcibly displaced.



Participants discussed enhancing understanding of the challenges preventing access to safe and sustainable livelihoods, with a special focus on the distinct barriers preventing women’s meaningful participation in livelihoods and self-reliance. Participants discussed best practices in advocacy and programming, exploring practical, market-oriented approaches that link livelihoods and self-reliance with the issues of rights and protection.

MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

1. The "relief to development gap" is beginning to narrow as new initiatives and stakeholders within refugee livelihoods/self-reliance programming are emerging – particularly within the private sector.
 - There is an increasing need to focus on “innovation” within the refugee context, particularly within the area of refugee livelihoods/self-reliance.
 - The innovative ideas of refugees themselves are increasingly being understood as key in identifying solutions to achieving self-reliance.
 - Presenters highlighted 5 myths relating to refugees’ self-reliance and livelihoods: 1) Refugees as economically isolated; 2) Refugees as burden; 3) Refugees as economically homogenous; 4) Refugees as technologically illiterate; and 5) Refugees as dependent.
 - Technology can be a powerful tool for change, notably within online learning and employment opportunities increasing.
 - Jobs and self-employment for refugees will inherently come from private sector activity. The humanitarian community must rethink the role of companies.
2. Work rights are pivotal not only for livelihoods/self-reliance, but also durable solutions.
 - Refugees report that what makes the difference for them is the ability to make a living on their own terms.
 - Refugees should be empowered as advocates for their work rights.
 - Refugees may have access to micro-tasking forms of employment, but they still face major legal, sociocultural, logistical and other obstacles, such as lack of freedom of movement and access to banking.
3. Resettlement does not solve the problems inherent to livelihoods/self-reliance.
 - Despite liberal laws in the US, many refugees still struggle to make a living after resettlement.
 - Stakeholders should work to promote entrepreneurship in the private sector that integrates refugees as workers and relies on their specific skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- UNHCR and NGOs should collect more data about refugees' existing livelihood approaches and skills in order to build livelihood strategies on this evidence, including through links to local lending groups.
- A cross-sector and multi-stakeholder approach including development, humanitarian and private sector actors is needed to promote livelihoods.
- Jobs and self-employment for refugees will inherently come from private sector activity. UNHCR, partners and stakeholders in the humanitarian community must rethink the role of companies in this context. Involving refugees in the value chains of companies, including multinationals, will provide both sustainability and scale to livelihoods interventions.
- UNHCR and NGOs should strategize to implement a plan to advocate for the work rights of refugees.
- Host countries need to be educated about the myths of refugee economic activities and the contributions refugees offer, not only as employees but also as employers of host nationals.



6. PROTECTION AT SEA – WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES

BACKGROUND

The protection of refugees, asylum seekers, stateless people and migrants travelling irregularly by sea is becoming increasingly complex. Unable to access protection through other channels, migrants and asylum seekers risk death by taking to the sea on dangerous journeys, often in unseaworthy vessels or as stowaways. Distress situations are a regular occurrence that has resulted in many casualties. Amongst the dangers of these journeys, the situation of refugee women is particularly precarious due to increasing exploitation, abuse and violence throughout their journeys.

This global phenomenon of mixed migratory movements by sea will continue as long as there are factors contributing to flight and the inability to access and obtain protection by alternative means. Addressing the

driving factors of irregular maritime movement is necessary and includes improving and harmonizing conditions for asylum-seekers at regional levels, strengthening access to family reunification, expanding pathways for legal migration and orderly entry,

enhancing efforts to find durable solutions to protracted refugee situations and combatting human trafficking and smuggling. Thus, this session centred on the topic of burden-sharing and the role of global actors in minimizing the necessity of dangerous journeys by sea.

MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

- The issue of irregular migration by sea is a global phenomenon, and loss of life is unacceptably high, with women and children being disproportionately affected.
- Increased securitization, as a result of increased border control, has pushed refugees and migrants to seek out more and more dangerous routes and to fall prey to the exploitative whims of traffickers and smugglers as they seek to reach new shores. In this sense, their vulnerabilities are exacerbated.



- Many of those fleeing are in need of international protection, so it is imperative that sea mobility is not treated simply as an immigration and migration issue, but also as an issue in which, by and large, the majority of people are in need of some form of international protection.
- There is also a need to shift the focus from preventing entry to ensuring access to protection and respect for human rights. Punitive and deterrence measures that punish the victims of traffickers and smugglers need to be avoided. More secure and regular channels for migration need to be promoted.
- Alternative pathways to safety for those who are compelled to leave must be identified. For example, a greater focus and emphasis should be placed on promoting movement by and through land borders by addressing the challenges existing for refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons and migrants and working to reform systemic issues creating these challenges.
- Strengthening Search-And-Rescue (SAR) arrangements and addressing the causes of irregular flight by sea require regional cooperation and burden-sharing by coastal as well as non-coastal States. Further, as those fleeing conflict or persecution by sea typically travel alongside people moving for other reasons, efforts to address irregular migration and limit loss of life must not jeopardize access to international protection for refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless people.
- Participants noted that one reason people are choosing sea journeys is due to land processing times taking too long. UNHCR should re-assess the role of processing times in the increasing trend of sea journeys being chosen.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- Ensuring that responses to people travelling by sea take into account the international protection needs of specific individuals and groups requires:
 - Access to safe territory and protection from the act of *refoulement*, so individuals are not disembarked or returned to a place where they may be at risk;
 - Humane treatment and attention to immediate needs, including medical treatment, shelter, food and water, contact with family members;
 - Early identification of those needing protection, including refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless people, as well as victims of trafficking, unaccompanied or separated children;
 - Access to fair and efficient asylum procedures and to solutions, or to other forms of international protection, for refugees and asylum-seekers;
 - Referral to appropriate processes and support for victims of trafficking, unaccompanied or separated children and others with specific needs;
 - Limiting and finding alternatives to deterrent, punitive and burden-shifting responses
- Collaboration between stakeholders: Measures should be taken by UNHCR, NGOs and stakeholders to promote effective regional cooperation and responsibility sharing.
- Monitoring of state activity: Transparency and accountability should be ensured through independent monitoring of, and regular reporting on, all interventions carried out at borders.
- Equitable regional burden-sharing between coastal and non-coastal states entails stable and predictable mechanisms for:
 - Supporting adequate reception arrangements in countries of disembarkation
 - Allocating responsibility for processing and providing durable solutions, including exploring opportunities for joint processing
 - Implementing temporary protection or stay arrangements at the regional level (where protection under the *1951 Refugee Convention* is not available or pending transition to other solutions)
 - Providing capacity-building and other support for States of disembarkation (for instance, through multidisciplinary, rapid-response mobile protection teams to assist with initial reception, protection profiling and referral of rescued people).

7. IDPs: ENSURING A MORE MEANINGFUL, PREDICTABLE AND COMPLEMENTARY ENGAGEMENT IN SITUATIONS OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

BACKGROUND

The High Commissioner's 2013 Dialogue on Protection Challenges was aimed at generating fresh thinking on how the international community could more effectively address the needs of the growing IDP population. One key outcome was the Office's commitment to update its IDP policy and develop guidelines to strengthen its operational delivery in situations of internal displacement.

In March 2014, UNHCR issued provisional guidance to NGO partners on its engagement in situations of internal displacement. This session was an opportunity for partners to provide feedback on the provisional guidance, including whether it adequately describes UNHCR's added value and contribution to the collective efforts in response to the needs of the internally displaced.

The discussion focused on two main themes:

1. Ensuring a more meaningful, predictable and complementary engagement by UNHCR and its partners in situations of internal displacement.
2. Promoting a gender-sensitive, community-based approach to humanitarian action in situations of displacement, with specific emphasis on women as leaders and agents of change.

MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

- There are 33.3 million conflict induced IDPs, and only 1 million have found durable solutions. UNHCR notes they are currently protecting 23.3 million IDPs worldwide.
- UNHCR is working to become more systematic and predictable in situations of internal displacement, particularly when clusters have been activated. By making UNHCR more predictable, other NGO and political actors can be encouraged to do the same.
- Guidance on UNHCR's engagement in situations of internal displacement – issued provisionally in March 2014 – has been so far received positively by NGOs; it represents an important step forward in relating UNHCR's commitments to IDPs with its results-framework. It is a programming tool designed to ensure a stronger operational delivery.
- The emphasis on a rights-based and community-based approach as well as a broader conceptualization of durable solutions was highlighted as some of the strengths of the provisional guidance. More could have been included on, for example, the current humanitarian architecture, the UN Guiding Principles on the human rights of Internally Displaced Persons, and the role and function of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs. It is anticipated that UNHCR will elaborate more specific guidance on out-of-camp IDP situations, as well as the process to follow when deciding when to engage in situations of internal displacement.
- The provisional guidance moves UNHCR in the right direction in terms of enhancing accountability with regard to the Office's commitment to IDPs. It is also an important effort to change the culture and mind-set to ensure a broader institutional commitment at the field level.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- Efforts are underway to fine-tune the provisional guidance before it is reissued officially for the 2016 planning exercise. In large part, consultations have been internal, to offer space for field operations to provide concrete feedback. NGOs, as operational and implementing partners, are also being approached for input at the global level (through this session of the NGO consultations), as well as at the country level.
- NGOs requested, for example, that UNHCR's operational guidance on IDPs elaborate in more detail: i) the organization's roles and responsibilities within the cluster system; ii) the overall humanitarian architecture emerging from the Transformative Agenda; iii) the UN Guiding Principles on the human rights of IDPs, and iv) the role of the Special Rapporteur for the human rights of IDPs.

- As a next step, UNHCR also intends to issue thematic guidance on, for example, out of camp IDP situations and durable solutions.
- Gaps should be addressed in implementing responses in areas like SGBV, including strengthening operational capacity of agencies responsible for helping victims of gender-based violence.

8. MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT: GUIDANCE AND CASE EXAMPLES OF INTEGRATED PROGRAMMING

BACKGROUND

This session provided an overview of global mental health and psychosocial support guidelines and outlined implementation examples from refugee settings in various countries from the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Discussion followed focusing on the development and implementation of mental health and psychosocial interventions for refugees, and the links with women's roles and women's leadership. Overall, the session noted the imperative that governments and multilateral agencies elevate the prioritization, quality, accessibility and availability of mental health services and activities by allocating appropriate resources specifically targeted for mental health. The session also highlighted needs and opportunities for research-driven advocacy and for integrating mental health and psychosocial support within other programs and services.

MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

- The field of refugee mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) is gaining momentum, particularly through strong interagency consensus building. MHPSS should be considered by all, whether you are an organization working with MHPSS specifically or not.
- Since appropriate MHPSS programming is based on participatory approaches involving refugees at all stages of the program, the following layers of support and services (outlined in IASC 2007 Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings) should be the focus of interventions:
 - Considering factors that can promote or undermine psychosocial well-being in all types of service delivery and support in refugee settings (e.g. general health, protection, camp management etc.);
 - Strengthening existing community and family support mechanisms;
 - Training of local non-specialized workers and refugees to provide basic psychosocial and mental health support; and
 - Providing specialized clinical services for those with severe or complex mental disorders.
- MHPSS assessments should not merely focus on problems, but also on existing strengths and resources. Assessments should resist the idea that all refugees are traumatized and defined by this trauma and consider a broad range of pre-existing and emergency-induced mental health and psychosocial problems.
- Capacity building for national staff should promote opportunities and leadership roles of women. When hiring and training refugees as psychosocial workers supervised by professionals for example, women can be a great resource using their existing social networks, skills, cultural knowledge and motivation to take on leadership roles in their communities.
- The speakers noted common challenges, including:
 - Outcome and impact indicators for MHPSS programs are often not used or reported;
 - Lack of guidance on MHPSS interventions for refugees in protracted emergencies or complex urban settings with ongoing stressful conditions;
 - Ensuring that men are involved and considered as they are also involved in promoting women's participation;
 - Avoiding 'medicalization' of refugees' problems as 'mental disorders' without socio-historical contextualization through locally relevant terminology and holistic interventions.

- Reducing stigma of mental disorders to ensure people can seek services and are supported and included in their communities. This can be done by integrating mental health services within the broader health care systems, strengthening referral pathways with other service providers and informal systems of care such as traditional healing practices and by establishing multi-service community centres with links to various other services and opportunities;
- Managing stresses faced by staff working in MHPSS programs through stress management, psycho-education and supportive supervision; and
- Ensuring staff members interviewing refugees for RSD have training in working with distressed individuals, such as workshops in Psychological First Aid (PFA), which can aid them in responding in supportive ways and making appropriate referrals to mental health services when needed.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- Refugees themselves, and especially women and girls (while not overlooking men and boys), are an often-untapped resource who can make important contributions to improving psychosocial well-being in their communities. UNHCR should support programs where refugees are actively involved in planning and implementing programs and supporting each other, and should protect women mental health workers who may be more at-risk for sexual harassment or threats.
- Mental health must be better integrated into programming, as basic needs such as safe community spaces and opportunities for recreation and social support are an important part of MHPSS.
- MHPSS in humanitarian settings is still a relatively new field and it is therefore important that NGOs and UN agencies involved in MHPSS should ensure awareness of interagency guidelines and tools, as well as linking with national level and global MHPSS coordination groups.
- Specific guidance/training for NGO staff, interpreters and RSD/RST officers on dealing with refugee mental health (and their own self-care) is needed.
- UNHCR should frame MHPSS activities as a core component of its protection mandate, ensuring women are included and in leadership positions (e.g. in Syria and Egypt female outreach workers have been found to be very effective in responding to community needs and building social cohesion).

9. STRUCTURED DIALOGUE TO STRUCTURED ACTION: THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S DIALOGUE ON UNHCR-IFRC-NGO PARTNERSHIP AT FIELD LEVEL

BACKGROUND

UNHCR collaborates closely with partners in delivering its mandate and continues efforts to strengthen partnerships with humanitarian and development actors. The 2012 High Commissioner's Structured Dialogue with the IFRC and NGOs was an opportunity to review good practice in the application of partnership principles, to review mutual expectations, identify challenges and recommend joint action to improve UNHCR-NGO partnerships. The Structured Dialogue homed in on ten areas for improved collaboration: information sharing, joint planning, problem resolution, consultation fora, advocacy, IDPs, urban settings, capacity strengthening, promoting the implementation of pledges made during the commemoration of the *1951 Refugee* and *1961 Statelessness Conventions*, and revisiting the state of partnership once a year at the UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations.

The session thus explored progress in implementing the recommendations two years later. A background paper for the session highlighted regional collaboration between UNHCR and NGOs in Latin America to prepare for the 30th anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration, advocacy campaigns in Europe, and the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees in Asia – a non-exclusive list of regional partnership initiatives. Similarly, there are many examples of country-level partnership where valuable complementarities between UNHCR and NGOs are being built on, in operational response, in training and capacity-building, in areas of protection, in advocacy for protection. These practices are not systematically catalogued.

MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

- Given the challenges facing the humanitarian community in the realm of refugees, IDPs and statelessness, the need to strengthen partnership between UNHCR, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, and the NGO community (both international and national NGOs) to effectively serve persons of concern is more important than ever.
- At the global level, information about the Dialogue has been disseminated among NGOs (as well as inside UNHCR) and guidance notes have been developed to support partnership dialogue at the field level, improve information sharing, strengthen joint and complementary advocacy strategies, and to point the way for problem resolution.
- At the regional level, in September 2013, ICVA organized consultations to expand on the Structured Dialogue in Bangkok. ICVA is exploring options to organize additional regional consultations or augment regional events that have already been planned, providing a space for NGOs and UNHCR to reflect on the quality of their partnership and to identify ways in which trust and transparency as well as joint assessment and planning can be enhanced.
- At the country level, ICVA, InterAction and UNHCR travelled together to DRC (January 2014) and Pakistan (February 2014) to facilitate field-level dialogue on partnership.
- An NGO speaker who had participated in the Pakistan workshop outlined some of the outcomes and noted challenges for UNHCR-NGO partnership relating to UNHCR's new process for selecting partners for implementation (aspects covered in the session on the Enhanced Framework for Implementing with Partners).

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- Participants were encouraged to propose ideas on how partnerships could be improved. Some recommended taking advantage of existing processes, like the Cartagena +30 process and the preparations for the World Humanitarian Summit, for engaging new actors in discussions on partnership.
- Others recommended strengthening partnerships not only between UNHCR and NGOs, but also between NGOs themselves, and with regional networks, women and refugees.

10. THE ENHANCED FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTING WITH PARTNERS

BACKGROUND

In 2013, the funds UNHCR allocated for assistance and protection through joint partnerships surpassed US\$ 1.15 billion (39% of UNHCR's total annual expenditure of US\$ 2.97 billion). The number of UNHCR partners has reached a record high of 944 across the globe, of these, 567 were national/local NGOs and 166 were international NGOs. UNHCR has been working with NGO partners to review and revise its Framework for Implementing with Partners, particularly in the areas of partner selection, project partnership agreements, and joint monitoring. This session provided participants with an update and an opportunity to put forward questions and recommendations.

MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

- HIAS presented a summary of the 2014 survey on UNHCR-NGO partnership in implementation. 76 per cent of NGO and UNHCR respondents reported good to excellent UNHCR/NGO partner relations. However, the results of the survey also suggested uneven implementation of the Enhanced Framework for Implementing with Partners, with the new guidelines not distributed to NGO partners in some locations and less than full application of the 'call for expressions of interest' element of the

Framework. There are positive trends in UNHCR partner relations, but some bumps along the road to implementation of the Framework.

- ICVA outlined a list of what NGOs should know about the new Framework. These included:
 - it is work-in-progress;
 - the partner selection procedure is focused on “best-fit”, not “lowest cost”;
 - the Project Partnership Agreement is more professional and refers right up front to the Principles of Partnership;
 - many policies and guidance notes are not yet finalized, including those related to data protection;
 - NGOs may need support to meet some of the new requirements, including those related to investigations;
 - “resource persons”—including women leaders—are being trained;
 - prompt feedback on draft documents associated with the Enhanced Framework is highly desired; and
 - ideas how to approach partner personnel costs are welcomed.
- UNHCR highlighted developments since the 2013 Consultations, including the Partnership Portal, which is now in the preliminary testing stage (to be released January 2015); the Project Partnership Agreement, including the obligations of UNHCR as well as the obligations of NGO partners; outstanding issues being worked on, such as the policy on UNHCR contributions to Project Personnel Costs, National NGO administrative requirements, and calls for capacity strengthening; and the roll out strategy. Fatima noted the challenges of getting 440 UNHCR offices and more than 900 NGO Partners fully on-board, as well as the challenge of simplifying what is actually a complex matter.
- UNHCR highlighted that UNHCR needs to improve information-sharing and resource mobilization, coordination, and confidence-building between UNHCR and NGOs. UNHCR also needs to be timelier in responding/signing agreements. He spoke of the specific challenges and need for partner engagement in ensuring urban and other non-camp situations where populations are dispersed as well as new models for promoting women’s leadership and participation. Underlining the need to effectively communicate the changes associated with the Framework, Steve Corliss hoped for improved partnership attitudes, and a shift from best practices in a few locations to common good practices everywhere.
- REDESOS introduced his National NGO based in a small rural town in Tanzania and a partner of UNHCR for nearly 20 years. He spoke of REDESOS’s involvement in the development of the Framework and the efforts of UNHCR in capacity-strengthening. Preliminary impact on his organization includes the greater participation and leadership of women at various levels. He hoped for more National NGOs engaged by UNHCR on the same level as INGOs.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- Both UNHCR and NGO partners should make every effort to effectively and more widely communicate developments related to the Enhanced Framework. UNHCR should make it clear when policies, guidance notes, etc. related to the Framework are in draft form necessitating partner feedback, and when they are finalized and no longer drafts.
- Dialogue about the Enhanced Framework should be promoted between UNHCR and NGO partners at the field level. NGOs with specific implementation-related questions welcome advice regarding how and with whom to communicate at UNHCR for a relatively prompt response.
- UNHCR and, where possible, NGO partners, should support capacity-strengthening with time and funding investments, particularly when required to carry out some of the new requirements such as joint monitoring and investigations into possible violations of codes of conduct, as well as efforts to help National NGOs move towards long-term organizational sustainability.
- NGOs were encouraged to provide feedback on the draft selection FAQs, draft project partnership agreement (PPA) Guidance Note, and draft Joint Monitoring Guidance Note (all available on the UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations website) by the end of July 2014 to epartner@unhcr.org.

11. REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AS AN INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION TOOL IN HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES: SYRIA AND BEYOND

BACKGROUND

In 2013 UNHCR referred some 93,000 refugees for resettlement out of the approximately 860,000 refugees which were estimated to be in need of resettlement in 2013 alone. Systematic and transparent identification systems are essential to prioritize processing according to specific needs and vulnerabilities. An effective and consistent identification system ensures fair access to resettlement consideration and ensures the integrity of the process. It requires close collaboration between UNHCR Protection, Community Services, and Durable Solutions staff and NGO partners in the field.

This session concentrated primarily on how international and local NGOs can partner effectively with UNHCR to ensure that the refugees in greatest need of resettlement have access to it.

MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

- As the number of refugees worldwide increased drastically in 2013, the number of resettlement places available has remained the same (80,000). UNHCR reported that there are limited places for resettlement in comparison to the many in need. Currently, 960,000 refugees have been identified as in need of resettlement for 2015, meaning that only a small amount can actually be resettled in a given year.
- Humanitarian crises are increasing at an unprecedented rate, and while resettlement cannot be the only response in a humanitarian emergency, available quotas must be utilized fully.
- UNHCR and NGOs can gain valuable lessons from the SHARE program in Europe, where cities are committed to playing an active role in resettlement.
- Resettlement should continue as a sustained programme, rather than an ad hoc system.
- Resettled refugees can potentially serve as advocates in resettlement countries to increase humanitarian protection space.
- The speakers noted common challenges, including:
 - The length of time required to complete the resettlement process;
 - The need to ensure refugees' expectations around resettlement are adequately managed;
 - The availability and dissemination of accurate information about resettlement.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- Continued partnership, clear communication channels, and established identification and referral systems between UNHCR and NGOs are essential and can widen opportunities for NGOs to provide solutions and strengthen interventions for some of the most vulnerable persons. NGOs could have a greater role in identifying cases for resettlement consideration in accordance with UNHCR existing resettlement categories, and to advocate with resettlement countries for increasing overall resettlement quotas.
- Family unity is an important coping mechanism in displacement and can play an essential role in the successful integration of refugees in resettlement countries. UNHCR should continue advocating for an inclusive definition of the principle of family unity in order to avoid separation of families as a result of resettlement countries' policies.
- Participants highlighted the need for continued improvements in efficiency of resettlement processes for those refugees with serious medical conditions, including engaging with organizations and professionals from other sectors (i.e. health) already working with refugees. Lengthy processing times and lack of transparency and information continue to create frustration for refugees seeking or undergoing resettlement.

- Continued sustained and shared advocacy by UNHCR and NGOs is needed to support political will to increase resettlement capacity, including availability of emergency slots. Regardless of the durable solution, access to protection space is critical. NGOs need to advocate for the political will of governments to recognize this, and for keeping access to resettlement flexible.
- Some resettlement countries have expressed an interest in receiving Palestinian refugees from Syria, and, where possible, UNHCR will continue to collaborate in this effort together with UNRWA.
- The SHARE project concluded that peer sharing and exchanges of best practices between resettlement countries and cities is key to maintaining and increasing resettlement opportunities. This shows that cities are committed to playing a role in burden sharing through resettlement.

12. CAMPAIGN TO END STATELESSNESS

BACKGROUND

In 2014, UNHCR is launching a ten-year campaign to eliminate statelessness. Resolving large-scale, protracted situations of statelessness is crucial to achieving this objective. The goals of this ambitious campaign can only be achieved with the full engagement of a strong network of stakeholders, including UNHCR, civil society actors and government champions. This session discussed opportunities for collaboration between NGOs and UNHCR to end stateless within a decade.

MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

- Since 2004, 11 states have reformed their laws to achieve gender parity in nationality laws, and there appears to be a growing willingness and commitment by states to follow suit. However, 27 countries around the world still prevent women from passing on their nationality to their children. Over 60 countries do not permit women to acquire, change or retain their nationality on an equal basis with men.
- According to UNHCR, in five countries hosting major stateless populations, a child is born stateless every 20 minutes. Childhood statelessness is entirely preventable and therefore inexcusable.
- UNHCR, NGOs and Governments cannot forget protracted situations of stateless persons who were stripped of nationality by discriminatory laws. With respect to protracted situations, there is a need to find a way to stop the spread of intergenerational statelessness.
- Challenges remain, including different legal and social definitions and understandings of statelessness, difficulties involving stateless persons in discussions and efforts made on their behalf, sensitivities around nationality issue in a number of cases, and lack of baseline data (research needed) for advocacy efforts.



RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- Participants called for coordinated efforts by UNHCR and NGOs to ensure the success of the newly launched Campaign to End Gender Discrimination in Nationality Laws (June 2014), as well as the European Campaign to End Childhood Statelessness (November 2014). This provides a great momentum and opportunity for collaboration.
- UNHCR should focus on legal and policy advocacy with states to join the international conventions on statelessness, in partnership with NGOs and networks, and to provide clarity on national law

interpretation. Legal advocacy on joining international statelessness conventions is particularly needed in the case of individuals of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic, as they are not party to any statelessness conventions.

- In order to effectively address all statelessness situations, some of which are currently not very well known and documented, joint efforts to gather information and improve identification of stateless persons are needed.
- There is a need to strengthen the global and regional networks and create coalitions around research and advocacy to address statelessness in all regions of the world, ensuring an effective and truly global approach to the issue.
- UNHCR needs to play a role in supporting and strengthening regional networks of NGOs to address statelessness, in particular in regions where such networks have still not been developed or are currently not very strong.
- There is a need to recognize that women and girls are disproportionately victims of statelessness, and that this is a great obstacle, especially in pursuing self-reliance and livelihoods activities.
- UNHCR, civil society, and governments need to create a global push to end statelessness by 2024.

E. SIDE EVENTS

1. WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP, FAITH AND PROTECTION

BACKGROUND

In keeping with this year's overarching theme, *'Women's Leadership and Participation'*, this side event discussed the role of Women of Faith in Protection. Drawing together recent work on Faith Literacy and Community-based Protection (CBP), presentations discussed how the leadership of women of faith has enhanced and developed understanding of the nature of protection issues and scope for action in response. The importance of faith for both beneficiaries and those involved in protection activities has often been overlooked. Similarly there is poor understanding of the impact of the informal and voluntary nature of much of this protection work on the ability of faith-based protection actors to connect to mainstream protection activities. Faith based organizations and religious leaders have often been key advocates for strengthening protection activities related to gender based violence.



MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

- Drawing together the recent work on Faith Literacy and Community-based Protection (CBP) and this year's theme, the Anglican Communion shared examples where the leadership of women of faith has enhanced and developed understanding of the nature of protection issues and the scope for action in response.
- Specific partnership challenges were identified with respect to the informal and voluntary nature of much of this work and their subsequent disconnect from mainstream humanitarian response.
- The impact of theology on gender and protection issues was also unpacked through two examples:
 - Islamic Relief presented on the challenges and opportunities Islamic faith groups face when trying to combat issues around violence against women by drawing on practical examples promoting positive behaviour change around child marriage and domestic violence through different forums, including schools and Muslim leaders.

- The World Council of Churches referenced their *Positive Masculinities* multi-country training with church groups. The need to better understand the complex intersection between culture and religion was also expressed from the floor.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- Participants welcome the identification of good practices from UNHCR's FBO partnerships as articulated in the *Partnership Note*. These lessons learned provide a point of departure for dialogue and cooperation with faith actors and communities, while setting out actions and activities to put these principles into practice.
- Good practice examples of partnerships will be further unpacked by UN agencies and FBOs at the Strategic Learning Exchange being convened by the UN System Staff College in November 2014. The aim of this Strategic Learning Exchange (SLE) is to explore the linkages between faith and the continuum of humanitarian to development work. The three-day meeting will examine human rights and gender equality as cross-cutting concerns, as well as lessons learned in program design, implementation and evaluation phases.
- Participants further recommended that UNHCR and its partners identify key research and learning topics related to faith and protection, recognizing that the *Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities* is continuing to identify key questions to analyse how the social, political and spiritual capital of local faith communities shapes the approach and impact of their humanitarian response.

2. PROTECTION SERVICES FOR ALL: INTEGRATING AND EMPOWERING THE DIVERSITY OF REFUGEE POPULATIONS IN SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE PROGRAMMING

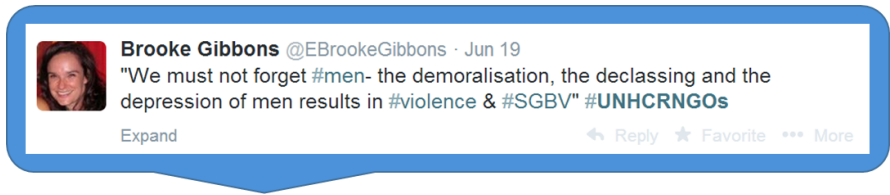
BACKGROUND

A range of services have been put in place in both camp and urban settings to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). There is increasing awareness, however, that certain refugee populations – including refugees with disabilities, older people, male SGBV survivors, and LGBTI– are often overlooked in SGBV programming. UNHCR field offices, NGOs, and government actors alike, experience challenges protecting these often-marginalized groups. Overworked and under-resourced, many say that they help any refugee who walks through the door. Field research shows, however, that until service providers adapt programs that both recognize and address the specific needs of these overlooked groups, these refugees will face ongoing exposure to SGBV and its mental, emotional, and physical effects. A central question that governments, the UN, INGOs, local NGOs, community-based organizations, and service providers must address is how SGBV prevention and response mechanisms can better meet the needs of all survivors. Recent research points to emerging good practices to empower and bridge protection gaps for refugees with disabilities, older people, LGBTI and male survivors, in particular.

MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

- For SGBV prevention and response mechanisms to be accessible to all, they must build in age, gender and diversity considerations in their design and implementation. Panellists highlighted key challenges male survivors, older refugees, refugees with disabilities and LGBTI refugees face when inclusion is not built into assessments and programming.

- Male survivors are often reluctant to disclose experiences of SGBV to service providers as a result of legal, religious and cultural barriers. Societal concepts of masculinity, including the belief that men cannot be raped, prevent men from seeking or accessing services. Many wait until they experience severe medical consequences of SGBV before seeking help. Very few specialized services are offered to male survivors of SGBV.
- GBV prevention is a multi-sectoral issue, and exclusion of persons with disabilities from wider assessments and programming, such as WASH and education programming, may increase vulnerability to GBV. A UNHCR analysis several years ago found that 49% of all rape survivors over 18 were persons with mental and/or physical disabilities. Across settings, women and girls with disabilities are most at risk, as they are exposed to stigma and discrimination based on both disability and gender. Persons with disabilities may be targeted by perpetrators, due to perceptions that they will not be able to physically defend themselves or to effectively report incidences of violence. Isolation and exclusion from social networks and GBV prevention activities further increases vulnerability to GBV.
- Older people generally lack access to health care services and relief supplies. Few service providers have the knowledge or skills to attend to the specific needs of older refugees. Isolation, stigma, exclusion, and lack of access to services all prevent older refugees from accessing targeted SGBV services. Older refugees are often completely excluded from SGBV program planning and implementation.
- LGBTI refugees experience high rates of SGBV in countries of origin and throughout the migration process, often relating to the failure to conform to gender norms. Survival sex in countries of asylum exacerbates vulnerability to SGBV. Due to lack of knowledge and bias, few SGBV programs integrate LGBTI needs. Lesbians, gay men, bisexual, transgender and intersex people have different SGBV experiences and needs. Safe shelter, sensitive medical care, focused mental health care and support groups are key. Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Act and other laws criminalizing LGBTI identities seriously impedes the ability of service providers to deliver SGBV programming to LGBTI refugees.



RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- UNHCR and its partners must recognize that there are a range of refugees who are at risk of SGBV, including older persons, persons with disabilities, male survivors, and sexual minorities. Age, gender and diversity considerations must therefore inform assessments and the design, implementation and evaluation of SGBV programs. This will ensure the inclusion of the diversity of persons of concern in needs assessments, interventions and evaluation of SGBV programs.
- There are many barriers preventing survivors from accessing services. UNHCR and its partners need to raise awareness about the challenges that diverse populations may face in accessing SGBV services and seek to change their approaches to ensure that their responses are as inclusive as possible. Integrating the voices of diverse refugee communities and survivors must be part of this approach (e.g., refugee male survivors, older refugees, refugees with disabilities and LGBTI refugees).
- To increase access to SGBV services by diverse refugees, it is critical to train, coordinate and engage: host communities and refugee communities, including community leaders, men and caregivers; INGOs and local NGOs; refugee assistance agencies; and government agencies, e.g., health services and police. Survivors should be empowered to self-advocate with these stakeholders.



- Stakeholder capacity building should include the development of training materials, tools and resources, but also the identification of actors with the expertise to provide technical support to country operations on specific groups.
- Building on work that UNHCR is doing to train staff on SGBV prevention and response, it is critical to develop a capacity building program for humanitarian officers that more deeply explores and provides hands-on tools to respond to the needs of older people, people with disabilities, LGBTI people and male survivors in SGBV programming.

3. ALTERNATIVE MODELS FOR INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION OF FORCED MIGRANTS

BACKGROUND

Human mobility is a defining feature of the 21st century. Mobility manifests in multiple forms (including as ‘trapped populations’ unable to move out of harm’s way) and is increasingly complex and multi-causal, often encompassing diverse and overlapping triggers and underlying stressors, throughout the lifecycle of a humanitarian crisis. The session centred on recent initiatives responding to humanitarian or migration-related crises where existing protection frameworks are either not applicable or practicable. These included the Nansen Initiative on Disaster-Induced Cross-Border Displacement, Georgetown University’s Institute for the Study of International Migration’s Crisis Migration project, UNHCR’s Guidelines on Temporary Protection or Stay Arrangements, and IOM’s Crisis Migration Operational Framework.

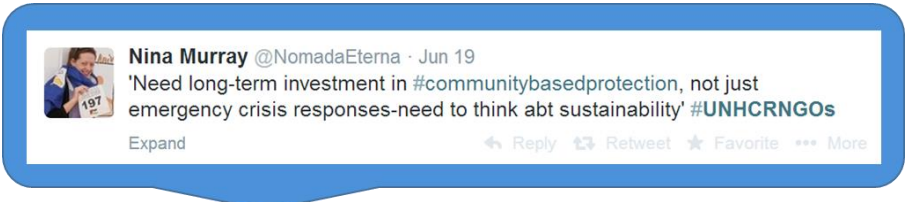
MAJOR POINTS ARISING FROM SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSIONS (TRENDS AND CHALLENGES)

- The numbers of non-nationals requiring protection is increasing and will continue to do so. The protection of non-nationals is politically charged and will become more and more complex.
- There are limits to examining and formulating responses to human mobility in the context of contemporary humanitarian crises through a pure ‘causal’ lens. The forced-voluntary dichotomy is deficient: for example, a generally accepted criterion does not exist for identifying the ‘tipping point’ at which a predominantly voluntary movement turns into forced displacement.
- Responses are necessary for those who move in anticipation of harm, as well as those who are ‘trapped’ in place and in need of relocation.
- A protection- and needs-centred approach that examines vulnerability/resiliency throughout the lifecycle of a crisis across various affected populations is crucial for understanding the complexity of movement/non-movements and protection needs and for formulating effective responses. Underlying reasons for movements and non-movements are multiple and interconnected and may require new tools.
- In recent years, a number of initiatives have been developed to examine these complexities, and to attempt to address gaps in protection – either at the national, regional and/or global level – with a view to building upon existing frameworks and augmenting protection. These initiatives highlight how institutional and international thinking and responses evolve and have the potential to adapt to changing realities.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

- The international community must not forget the centrality of the existing legal regime – most notably the *1951 Refugee Convention*. Indeed, in some instances, the existing legal framework is wrongly perceived as not applying to so-called ‘new phenomena’ associated with cross-border displacement, such as gang and cartel violence in Central America and Mexico.

- More focus should be placed on: (1) implementation of existing legal instruments; (2) other protection mechanisms; (3) and the role of all the relevant actors (governments at national and local levels, civil society organizations, international actors, and the private sector) as well as the clarification of the obligations and responsibilities of all these actors.
- Where gaps in protection have been identified, coordination among new ‘frameworks’ and ‘mechanisms’ of protection and assistance for those in need would be vital. These frameworks and mechanisms should have the capacity to generate buy-in from relevant stakeholders, including, most crucially, states. In this respect, rather than focus solely on causes, a framework that pays less attention to the causes of movement and more attention to whether or not countries of origin are willing and/or able to provide protection may be of utility.
- Responses must target not just the short-term as an immediate response to a crisis, but also the mid- and long-term. Different protection mechanisms are needed for these time periods. Often the worst conditions are experienced not in the immediate aftermath of a crisis but much later, when humanitarians have disengaged and international scrutiny is limited.



F. CLOSING SESSION

Guillermo Reyes, Rapporteur of the Executive Committee (Mexico), highlighted the results of the informal consultations for the 2014 Executive Committee Conclusion on International Protection. UNHCR’s Executive Committee members have not yet agreed a theme for this year’s Conclusion, but have narrowed their focus down to three potential themes: education, skills development in the return and reintegration contexts, and coordination in humanitarian matters.

Jessie Thomson, Rapporteur to the Annual Consultations with NGOs, recalled the High Commissioner’s call to action, the 2001 Five Commitments to Refugee Women and the nine areas of concern that came out of the



2011 Dialogues with Refugee Women. She summarised the highlights of the consultations around the Five Commitments, emphasizing their continued relevance and the need to expand

them to reflect the current global context. She called for UNHCR to put in place time-bound action plans and measureable goals for the full implementation of the Five Commitments within the next five years.

Lucy Kiama, Refugee Consortium Kenya, noted that women’s meaningful participation cannot be achieved without the support of men and boys. The empowerment of women cannot happen without cooperation, consultation and full community involvement. She also stressed the need to prioritize the prevention of sexual and gender based violence and the investment in higher education.

Alexander Aleinikoff, Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, considered the most significant problem of the world today to be the denial of equality for women and girls. He highlighted the need for a holistic approach, creating safe spaces and reducing violence against women, increasing opportunities for



women and girls to attend school and to be safe while doing so, and encouraging enhanced livelihood interventions. To achieve these goals he emphasized that we need to enlist men and boys. Women's empowerment is not just the business for women, and requires that men and boys support cultural shifts and female participation.



Nan Buzard, Executive Director, International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), noted that women's and girls' empowerment is also about inclusion. Each and every session of the Consultation reinforced the need to promote better inclusion of all

stakeholders, including women, national and international NGOs, faith-based organizations, affected communities and populations of concern (including youth and LGBTQI persons). She stressed the need to continue these conversations throughout the year, particularly at the regional and field levels and concluded the Consultation by calling on all participants to step up and demonstrate their own leadership at a time when the humanitarian system needs them more than ever.

