

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

THEMATIC SESSION

BACKGROUND PAPER

Session Title: **Supporting the World Humanitarian Summit: Towards solutions for protracted displacement**

Date: **Wednesday 1 July**

Time/Room: **15h00 – 16h30 – Room 4**

UNHCR and its partners are currently facing humanitarian needs on a massive scale, with particular challenges in protracted crises. In our rapidly changing world, we must continually seek better ways to meet the needs of millions of people affected by conflicts and disasters.

An initiative of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, managed by UN OCHA, the first World Humanitarian Summit will bring together governments, humanitarian organizations, people affected by humanitarian crises and new partners including the private sector to propose solutions to our most pressing challenges and set an agenda to keep humanitarian action fit for the future. The Summit provides an opportunity for UNHCR and NGOs to utilise their partnership to **help find better solutions** to both short and long term displacement. Although it has yet to be realised, the WHS provides an **opportunity to foster a step change in humanitarian response** and, through partners, link into other global processes such as the SDG process, to support new approaches to forced displacement.

Through a two-year consultation process, the WHS has been working to build a more inclusive and diverse humanitarian system by bringing all key stakeholders together to share best practices and find innovative ways to make humanitarian action more effective. The summit seeks to set an agenda for a larger change process within the humanitarian system. Key topics under discussion include **humanitarian effectiveness, reducing vulnerability and managing risk, transformation through innovation and serving the needs of people in conflict**. In keeping with the theme of this year's consultation, the focus of the session will be primarily on solutions.

There is a broad consensus in theory, (though not in practice) between virtually all UN member states and among 'traditional' actors around many of the topics under discussion, including the need for a rebalancing towards accountable national action in many contexts, more resources, strongly principled humanitarian action and stronger accountability to affected populations.

Many actors (including UNHCR and many of its partners) have engaged with the process to date, joining online and physical consultations, submitting papers and reports, and seconding staff to the WHS Secretariat.

The High Commissioner has said that *‘a truly universal humanitarian system can never be achieved by translating the perspectives from one part of the world into a "one size fits all" approach. Instead we need to expand and spell out something that is already there – the shared basis for our values as humanitarians. Only with this understanding can we go beyond the essentially Western creation that is the present multilateral humanitarian system, and build a true universal partnership that can draw on the totality of efforts and resources to meet humanitarian needs’*.

Recognising this, the WHS session at the Partner Consultations seeks to allow UNHCR to hear and be influenced by the current thinking of its partners, and for those partners to support and engage with each other’s positions. This may have the potential to generate some coordinated or **common messaging and positioning** on how we address protracted displacement situations as we enter in to the final leg of the WHS consultation process.

These discussions will **contribute to the results of the thematic work on solutions to protracted situations**; and together with findings from global research and policy work, the results of all the various WHS consultation processes will translate into a set of concrete recommendations which will be presented at the World Humanitarian Summit, the first global summit on humanitarian action of this size and scope in Istanbul in May 2016.

The Speakers:

Dr **Kamel Mohanna** of Amel Association will present potential WHS asks from their own experience of humanitarian action, bringing a specific national partner perspective. Amel Association is a Lebanese, non-sectarian, non-profit non-governmental organization (NGO), created by Dr Mohanna in 1979. Being active both on emergency projects as well as longer term development projects Amel Association has a huge amount of experience in seeking solutions in one of the highest profile and most challenging environments in the world at the current time.

Dr. **Mohamed Ashmawey** from Islamic Relief will reflect back on the work that IR led on regional WHS consultations. Again, with a focus on the 4th WHS theme “Serving the Needs of People in Conflict,” IR will utilise their case studies from the Syria region and CAR and explore potential solutions to the problems faced in Conflict.

Mr **Gareth Price-Jones** of Oxfam will briefly present some thoughts and possibilities on how proposals and ideas for solutions can be integrated into the WHS process as it consolidates inputs and asks can be taken forward. He will also share some outline thoughts about the potential for popular mobilisation and the building of public support in multiple countries and contexts, with a focus on how we can translate the ideas presented by participants into improved response and solutions that can be delivered on by a diverse and broad humanitarian community.

Mr **Johan Cels** will present UNHCR’s thinking on how to bring a change in how the humanitarian system addresses protracted refugee situations. He will outline UNHCR’s thinking on how to bring more coherence between humanitarian and development actors in addressing protracted refugee crises, as well as the potential role of NGO partners, many of whom are actively engaged in humanitarian and development work at the community level.