

**ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NGOs**  
**15 – 17 JUNE 2016**  
International Conference Center Geneva

***BACKGROUND NOTE***

**The Americas**  
**15 June 2016**

**Informal Regional Meeting**

**Brazil Plan of Action: The role of civil society organizations**  
**9:30 to 11:30, Room 5**

The Brazil Plan of Action (BPA) represents a roadmap for protection and solutions in the Americas. It is essential to sustain the progress achieved in the region in the field of international protection and the search for solutions. A comprehensive and differentiated approach to age, gender and diversity and the implementation of the highest human rights standards are essential to guarantee the protection of refugees, asylum-seekers, displaced and stateless persons. This dialogue session aims to provide an overview of the main achievements and opportunities in the region, and the value of strengthening strategic partnerships with civil society organizations. Likewise, NGOs will present their vision on how to enhance mutual collaboration, thereby contributing to the implementation of the BPA.

Open dialogue among the participants.

**Facilitator:** Renata Dubini, Director for the Americas Bureau, UNHCR

**Regional Sessions**

**Session 1**

**Protecting their future: Youth and children on the move in the Northern Triangle of Central America**  
**16:30 to 17:30, Room 6**

Recent years have seen a sharp escalation in the number of people fleeing persecution and violence in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, collectively comprising an area known as the Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA). Children and youth are particularly affected as they escape forced recruitment and situations of extreme violence. They seek protection elsewhere in their own countries, seek asylum beyond their countries' borders or attempt to join family members abroad. This has resulted in a growing protection crisis that requires a comprehensive regional response.

With a view to discuss such response and broader coordination mechanisms, NGOs from El Salvador, Mexico and Costa Rica will share their experiences and good practices in responding to specific protection risks affecting children and youth in the region.

The session will start with opening remarks by the Director for the Americas Bureau, Ms. Renata Dubini. Each panelist will have ten minutes for his/her presentation. After the panel, there will be twenty minutes for a Q&A session.

**Moderator:** Laura Elizabeth Valencia, Colombian refugee in Ecuador

**Panelists:**

Noah Bullock, Director, *Cristosal*, El Salvador

Ramón Márquez, Director, *La 72*, Mexico

Carlos Ariñez, Research and Communication Adviser, *Casabierta*, Costa Rica

**Session 2**

**Integration of refugee youth in the Americas**

**17:30-18:20, Room 6**

The impact of forced displacement on refugee children and youth is diverse. Research suggests that the experience of conflict and generalized violence and related trauma can be devastating to the social and psychological development of youth. Once in the country of asylum or country of resettlement, refugee youth often struggle to integrate into their new cultural context and maintaining their cultural identity. Assisting their integration requires a comprehensive approach that involves families, communities and different support services.

The panel will present the experience of supporting refugee youth to locally integrate in countries of asylum, focusing on examples from Ecuador. Additionally, the Canadian Private Sponsorship programme will be presented as a civil society model for engagement with youth development.

Each panelist will have ten minutes for his/her presentation. After the panel, there will be twenty minutes for a Q&A session.

**Moderator:** Diego Fernando Narvaez, Colombian refugee in Ecuador

**Panelists:**

Jennifer Bond: Professor and Faculty Coordinator of the University of Ottawa's Refugee Hub and Refugee Assistance Project, Canada

Michelle Manks: Manager of the Student Refugee Program (SRP), World University Service of Canada (WUSC), Canada

Patricia Galarza, Executive Director, *Corporación Humor y Vida*, Ecuador