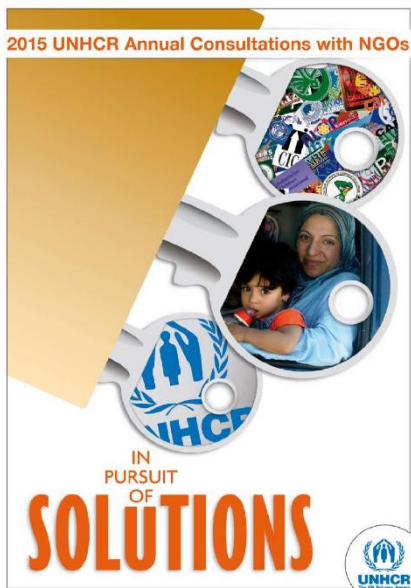
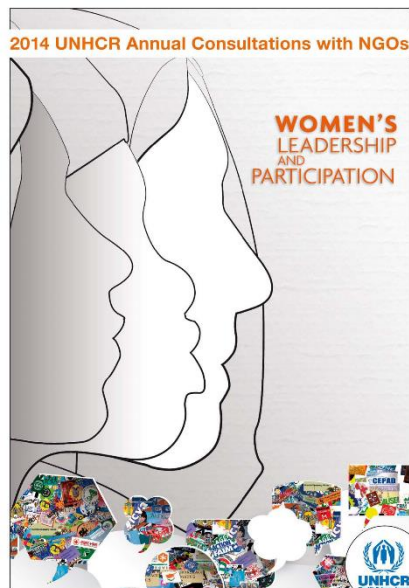
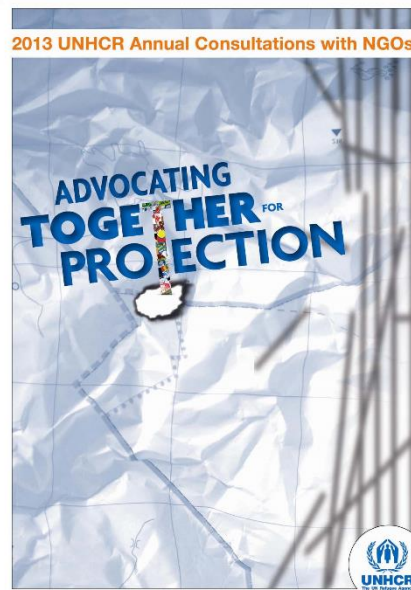
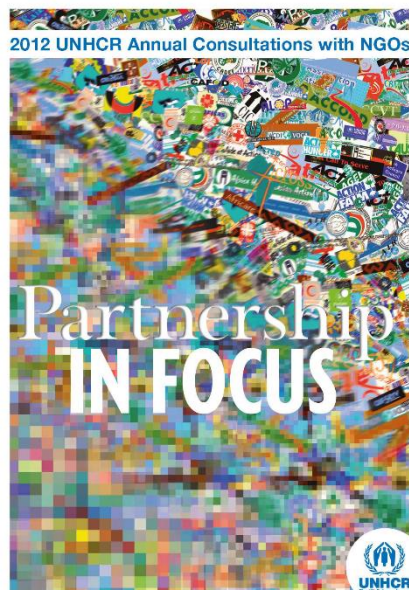


A Guide for NGOs Participating in UNHCR's Annual Consultations with NGOs



With Additional Information on UNHCR's Executive Committee, the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges, and the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement

Second edition

Prepared by the Partnership Section and ICVA

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Acknowledgements

The first version of this Guide has been jointly produced by James Thomson, Director of Policy and Advocacy, Act for Peace, National Council of Churches in Australia, and Eileen Pittaway, Director, Centre for Refugee Research, University of New South Wales, in 2008 to strengthen NGO participation in UNHCR's consultative and decision-making processes.

The Guide was last updated in August 2016 by the Partnership Section and ICVA.

How to provide feedback

The Guide is intended to be a 'living document' and will be updated as required. As such, we would really appreciate your thoughts on the Guide and its usefulness.

E-mail comments to ICVA (secretariat@icvanetwork.org) and to the Partnership Section (interagency@unhcr.org)

The Guide is available on the UNHCR and ICVA websites: www.unhcr.org/ngo-consultations and <https://icvanetwork.org/>

About This Guide

Introduction

Every year over 500 representatives from around the world attend the UNHCR's *Annual Consultations with NGOs* in Geneva, co-organized by ICVA and UNHCR.

While the Consultations started out as a half-day discussion where UNHCR talked with NGOs about the upcoming ExCom (the reason why it was often called 'Pre-ExCom'), it has now grown into a major international forum for NGOs working with refugees, IDPs and other persons of concern to network, gather and share information, hear about new policies and best practice, discuss protection gaps, and identify joint solutions.

This guide aims at providing information and useful tips to enhance your participation and opportunities for engagement in this and other key events you might directly or indirectly attend, such as the ExCom, the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges and the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement.

How this guide will help you?

- ✓ By increasing your knowledge and understanding of UNHCR's Annual Consultations with NGOs, UNHCR's Executive Committee (including its annual Plenary and Standing Committee Sessions), the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges, and the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement.
- ✓ By explaining the role and function of these meetings, how they are organized, and what opportunities you have to engage in these consultations.
- ✓ By referring you to more detailed sources of information and organizations that help you participate, such as UNHCR's Partnership Section (PS) and the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA).
- ✓ By giving you handy tips on how to prepare, strategize, and seek advice to make the most out of your participation to the Annual Consultations.

Why should you attend?

- ✓ To highlight the protection and assistance needs of refugees, stateless persons and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and gaps in the response.
- ✓ To share information, get to know, and consult with, other NGOs.
- ✓ To influence UNHCR policies, processes, and programmes.

- ✓ To raise awareness on emerging issues.
- ✓ To return home with new contacts, better sources of information, new policies, examples of good practice, and useful resources to assist you in your work.

What can you do?

- ✓ Arrange meetings with Geneva-based UNHCR staff, including UNHCR senior managers, to discuss and highlight issues of concern.
- ✓ Circulate position papers and briefings outside the meeting rooms.
- ✓ Meet people working with NGOs in very different settings and, learn from them, discuss common issues, share your good practices.

How can you participate without being physically present?

- ✓ By arranging for other NGOs to raise your concerns at the Consultations, meeting with them beforehand, and de-briefing
- ✓ By providing timely information and updates to NGOs and UNHCR.
- ✓ By following the Partnership Section ([@UNHCRPartners](#)) and ICVA ([@ICVAREfugee](#), [@ICVATalks](#) and [@ICVANetwork](#)) on Twitter
- ✓ By consulting the Partnership Section blog <http://unhcrngos.tumblr.com/>
- ✓ By watching the Opening and Closing plenary sessions livestream
- ✓ By disseminating the report from the Consultations (available online on the Consultations' website; <http://unhcr.org/ngo-consultations/>)



Who are we?

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless persons.

UNHCR is led by the High Commissioner for Refugees who is mandated by the United Nations to lead and coordinate international actions for the worldwide protection of refugees and the resolutions of refugee problems. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country.

What do we do?

We deliver life-saving assistance like shelter, food and water, help safeguard fundamental rights and develop solutions that ensure people have a safe place to call home where they can build a better future.

We also work to ensure that stateless people are granted a nationality

For more information consult the website: www.unhcr.org



A GLOBAL NGO NETWORK
FOR PRINCIPLED
AND EFFECTIVE
HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Who are we?

ICVA was established in 1962 and it has grown into a diverse network of NGOs operating at global, regional, national and local level.

What do we do?

We advocate for principled humanitarian action, enhances recognition by governments and international organisations of the vital role of NGOs and encourage high quality partnerships among humanitarian stakeholders.

We work in partnership with UNHCR to organize the Annual Consultations, and among others, to coordinate the drafting of NGO statements for ExCom, Standing Committee and other key meetings.

For more information you can consult www.icvanetwork.org, however to fully access their site you need to be a member.

UNHCR's Annual Consultations with NGOs



Introduction

The Annual Consultations between UNHCR and NGOs have been held for approximately 30 years, and have grown significantly over time. They started as a half day meeting for NGOs before ExCom and was often referred to as “Pre-ExCom”, but they have now developed into a busy three-day forum. The Annual Consultations provide an important opportunity for NGOs to raise issues, to network, and to exchange views with UNHCR and other NGOs.

Information on the Consultations is made available on the UNHCR’s website, at: www.unhcr.org/ngo-consultations

Who plans and organizes the Annual Consultations?

UNHCR’s Partnership Section and the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) are responsible for organizing the Annual Consultations.

Where and when are the Consultations held?

The meeting is held in Geneva, in the International Conference Centre (CICG/ICCG) (<http://www.cicg.ch/en/>).

Dates of the next editions:

Year	Dates	Venue
2017	14 – 16 June	CICG/ICCG
2018	Week of 25 – 29 June	CICG/ICCG
2019	Week of 1 – 5 July	CICG/ICCG

Who attends the Consultations?

In 2015, over 500 representatives of 273 different organizations from 86 different countries attended the Consultations. Participants included representatives from a diverse range of NGOs, international and UN organizations, including UNHCR staff, community-based refugee organizations, UNHCR operational partners, human rights groups, and humanitarian agencies. In recent years, there has also been a welcome increase in the number of refugees attending the event and able to provide valuable insights. Organizations range from national, local NGOs and community-based organizations to international NGOs. Although the Consultations are exclusively between UNHCR and NGOs, State delegates (government representatives) are invited to attend the Closing plenary session.

Criteria and access

NGOs who wish to participate to the Annual Consultations must register online and have their application validated by the Partnership Section. They should meet at least one of the following criteria:

- ✚ Be a member of ICVA (International Council of Voluntary Agencies) – please refer to <https://icvanetwork.org/>;
- ✚ Be an implementing partner for UNHCR in the preceding or current year;
- ✚ Be an operational partner of UNHCR (with a written recommendation from the UNHCR Field Office concerned, sent to the Partnership Section: interagency@unhcr.org).

How to register for the Annual Consultations

The online registration usually opens in February. The Partnership Section will send an invitation and all relevant information by e-mail to all prospective participants at least four months prior to the meeting. The same documentation is made available online, on the Annual Consultations' website: <http://unhcr.org/ngo-consultations/>.

If you need a visa for Switzerland, it should be obtained before your departure, and if you require assistance, the Partnership Section will be able to assist you.

You must complete the registration form online, and also send a credential letter from your organization to the Partnership Section. You will also be asked to

provide information about your position and the work of your organization. This information is intended to know better the NGOs that attend the Consultations and collect up to date information. A provisional list of participants is published before the Consultations and a final list is made available shortly after the Consultations on the Partnership Section website.

Registration is required for obtaining the temporary accreditation to the UN granting you access to UNHCR and the CICG/ICCG, during your stay.

To meet the strict security requirements, you should ensure that the name on your registration form and credential letter are exactly the same as shown on your passport, and that you bring your passport and a copy of the registration form with you when collect your badge. Individuals with permanent UN accreditation must still register online and send a credential letter as described.

The day before the Consultations

If you arrive in Geneva the day before the Annual Consultations, **you can collect your temporary badge at the entrance of the UNHCR HQ, in Rue de Montbrillant, 94, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.**

Please be reminded that in order to collect your badge, you will be requested to provide your passport and the e-mail confirming your registration and/or invitation letter.

ICVA Orientation session for moderators and note takers

The evening prior to the first day of every UNHCR-NGO Consultation, session moderators and note-takers are invited to ICVA's premises for a working session. During this session they will introduce themselves and meet one another, receive a briefing from UNHCR and ICVA about the agenda and guidelines for moderating/ note-taking, hear from the NGO Rapporteur her priorities for the week, and raise any questions they might have.

On the first day of the Consultations

When you arrive at the ICCG on the first morning of the Annual Consultations, at the Welcome Desk, you will:

- ✚ Collect your temporary badge (if you haven't collected it the day before),
- ✚ The detailed agenda;
- ✚ The nameplate for your organisation. (**Remember:** One nameplate per organization which will be given to the first participant of your organization who will come to collect the badge. Please ensure relevant coordination between all of your delegates to avoid confusion and misunderstanding)

As the Annual Consultations are now paperless, no other documentation will be printed.

All relevant information will be made available online on the Annual Consultations' website in due course: <http://www.unhcr.org/ngo-consultations/>.

What happens during the NGO Consultations?

The Annual Consultations begin with an opening plenary session, followed by concurrent thematic and regional sessions, before a closing plenary on the afternoon of the last day. The thematic and regional sessions are supplemented by a programme of Food for Thought events held before or after the formal programme or during the lunch breaks.

A summary agenda is published on the UNHCR website <http://www.unhcr.org/ngo-consultations> in advance of the Consultations, and a detailed programme of meetings is available online before the Consultations commence.

Regional sessions

UNHCR's five Regional Bureaux (Africa, America, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Middle East and Northern Africa – MENA) have two sessions on the first day:

- + **Regional Informal meeting**, as a welcome coffee, is organized in the morning. NGOs based and/or operating in a specific region will meet UNHCR staff from the relevant Bureau, get acquainted and discuss topics of common interest.

Tip! If you are a local or national NGOs, this meeting should not be missed because it is a good opportunity to meet Bureau Director and Snr UNHCR staff in an informal setting and put forward your issues and discuss it directly with them.

- + **Regional Session** is organized in the afternoon. The Directors of the Bureaux provide a brief overview of priorities and challenges in the region and then open the floor for questions and discussion. During this year's consultation, regional sessions will be the opportunity to hear main findings from the regional youth consultations that took place throughout the year.

Thematic sessions

Topics for the thematic sessions are proposed by both UNHCR and NGOs, and jointly selected by ICVA and Partnership Section in accordance to the overarching theme and objectives of the session several months in advance of the Annual Consultations. The session is then co-organised by UNHCR and NGOs, who decide format, moderator and speakers.

Food for Thought events

Food for Thought events are organized to touch upon topics that are not covered by regional or thematic sessions. The NGO who wishes to organize a Food for Thought event should send its request to the Partnership Section and ICVA by e-mail no later than November of the previous year.

Nota bene: Not all the requests can be satisfied. Timing of the request, bearing with the overall theme, topic of general interest, themes that were not discussed in the previous years are some the criteria to select the Food for Thought.

Participating in the NGO Annual Consultations as rapporteur, moderator or speaker.

The role of the NGO Rapporteur

Each year, one NGO representative is selected, in advance of the Annual Consultations, to be the Rapporteur for the meeting. The primary role of the Rapporteur is to report back during the closing Plenary Session, highlighting major developments, recommendations, and issues that emerged in the different discussions and that need to be addressed. A written report will also be finalized and shared with participants few weeks later.

In October, the Rapporteur will also share main findings and recommendations to member states during the ExCom meeting.

The role of the moderators

The primary role of the moderators is to **stimulate exchange and dialogue among participants** through an active style of moderation and **a good time management of interventions to ensure sufficient space for questions and answers**. With the introduction of social media, moderators are also responsible for monitoring twitter to see if there are questions from participants not physically present. **Remember to inform participants of the importance of filling the evaluation form**

Tip! Good time management and an active style are half a success of a session



The role of the speakers

Speakers are reminded that the purpose of the session is to set up the tone of the discussion and favour a lively exchange of views, opinions, questions and answers with and from the floor.

Speakers are encouraged to:

- ✚ Not exceed the allocated time of 7 minutes;
- ✚ Use interactive methodology (engage the audience, invite discussion, show short video clips) and avoid as much as possible power point presentations;
- ✚ Avoid lecturing or showcasing a specific project (unless useful for the more general debate);
- ✚ Favour an intervention that propose ideas, solutions, and way forward and stimulate the discussion and the debate with and from the floor;
- ✚ Provide a copy of the presentation in advance to the Partnership Section to be shared with interpreters and facilitate their job

Tip! If you decide to use PowerPoint do not exceed the “seven slide and seven lines per slide rule”. The presentation should be no longer than 7 slides and each slide should not contain more than seven lines.

Tip! Avoid too much text on a single slide and backgrounds or colours that makes it difficult for the audience to read.

Tip! Think that your audience sitting on the last row must also be able to read your slides.

The role of the participants at the Annual Consultations

Your active participation is strongly encouraged and very appreciated, whether it is in person or online.

Participating in the NGO Annual Consultations as audience



Most people attend in representation of their agencies and to advocate either with, or on behalf of, refugees. You should be familiar with the agenda items and what meetings you wish to attend in advance of the meeting. For example, if you are an NGO coming from Africa and you work with IDPs you would probably want to attend the regional sessions for Africa in addition to meetings regarding protection issues for IDPs. The five regional session will run in parallel, and more generally, there will always be three thematic sessions running at the same time.

The Annual Consultations can seem intimidating, as many people seem to know each other, the language is often very formal and generally in English. It is a big, busy meeting, with simultaneous sessions and a lot of exciting turmoil around that can be overwhelming at times.

If you are unsure of which session to attend or where to go, do not hesitate to ask advice. People are usually pleased to assist, and if you are really lost, find someone from ICVA or the Partnership Section and they will point you in the right direction.

Tip! Use every opportunity – coffee breaks, lunches, after hours – to chat to and with other participants. The coffee bar is often a good place to meet people, share experiences and find out what is going on.

Where do you sit?

There is no assigned seating in the Opening and Closing plenary sessions of the Annual Consultation. Due to space limitations, each NGO is assigned only one seat with a microphone. If your NGOs have more than one participant one of you will sit in the front with the name tag and the rest will sit behind him or her.

As said earlier, there is one name tag for each NGO and it will be distributed to the first representative of a given NGO that will arrive in the morning. Name tags will be used only for the opening and closing ceremony (not for the thematic or the regional sessions). The person collecting the name tag will be responsible for it for the whole duration of the event (s/he will collect it upon arrival on the first day and will return it to the reception desk at the CICG on the last day, after the closing ceremony).

Tip! If you are coming as a delegation, decide beforehand: Who among yourselves will collect the name tag, who will sit in the front and intervene in the plenary sessions, etc. to avoid confusions and misunderstanding.

Languages – live interpretation and document translation

Under standard UN procedure, all formal UNHCR documents are provided in English and French, and translated into other UN languages according to need.

During the **opening and closing sessions** of the Annual Consultations, simultaneous interpretation is provided in **English, French, Spanish, Arabic** and **Russian**. All speakers need to use a clear, measured tone to enable accurate interpretation.

Thematic sessions and **Food for Thought events** have **only English, Spanish and French** translation. Regional session will also have an additional third language (Spanish for the Americas, Russian for Europe, and Arabic for MENA).

How to ask a question?

If you have a question:

- During opening and/or closing sessions: Simply place your nameplate upright in front of you
- During Regional/Thematic sessions: Raise your hand

Once given the floor by the moderator, press the button on the microphone, and when the red light appears, you can talk. Make sure to use the microphone to be heard by the participants, and by the translators. **Begin your question or comment by first saying your name and that of the organization you represent.**

Asking questions or making comments is an important opportunity to get an issue on the record and is also one of the best ways to bring it to the attention of the audience and of the speakers but please do not make long or confusing statements. Moderators are instructed to cut short on them to allow as much participation as possible from the audience.

Tip! Keep your questions short and concise. This will help the translators and will ensure a satisfactory answer.

Social media

Social media technologies were introduced to the Annual Consultations with NGOs in 2014, with the aim to raise the profile of the event, increase the participation (of not only NGO partners but also potentially refugees, other beneficiaries and persons that were not able to attend in person) and to make the event more interactive.

- **Twitter:** the event's dedicated hashtag is **#UNHCRNGOs**. Hashtags allow to denote a topic of conversation or participate in a larger linked discussion, they help spread information on Twitter and organise the discussion. Using hashtags, other participants can find and read your tweets in real time based on specific topics. A list of session-specific hashtags will be made available online on UNHCR and ICVA websites before the Annual Consultations starts.
- **YouTube:** the Opening and Closing plenary sessions will be livestreamed, and some selected thematic and/or regional sessions will be recorded.

How can you get involved using social media?

- Ensure that your colleagues, in the field and at headquarters, project participants and any other interested person have the access to the social media information (hashtags, Twitter handles, livestreaming links and schedules, etc.) well in advance and are informed about how they can participate.
- Tune into the livestreamed sessions and share the schedule and links amongst your professional and personal networks when they are announced.
- **Tweet!** Follow the [@UNHCRPartners](#), [@ICVANetwork](#), [@ICVARefugee](#) and [@ICVATalks](#) Twitter accounts and use the hashtag #UNHCRNGOs in your tweets that are relevant to the Consultations. Encourage your colleagues and project participants to do the same.
- Create videos, photos and other media about projects and encourage project participants to create their own, and submit it to the event's blog. <http://unhcrngos.tumblr.com>

- Check out the Storify stories at the end of each day of the Consultations <https://storify.com/UNHCRPartners>

Tip! For all of you tweeting out there: **DON'T tweet for the sake of tweeting; get engaged in a back and forth with other twitter users; or use a bunch of abbreviation or slang, directly criticize a presentation or a speaker.**

Displaying documentation

As previously mentioned, the Annual Consultations are now paperless. If you wish to share some documentation from your organisation with other participants, bring an electronic copy of the document and so that you can upload it on the Partnership Section blog: <http://unhcrngos.tumblr.com/>

Tip! Do not bring a lot of hard copy material. The majority of participants are, like you, travelling by plane and with limited luggage space. UNHCR has a new “paperless” policy.

Use the **TUMBLR** blog to share your updates!

Where to find key documents

One detailed and one summary agendas are given to each participant during the registration at the UNHCR Welcome Desk. Any other useful information and documentation is available on UNHCR's website for the Consultations www.unhcr.org/ngo-consultations. There, you will also find all the background papers for each session, maps of the CICG/ICCG and the Palais des Nations, a list of hotels and participants, reports from previous Consultations, and other useful information.

How to make contacts and arrange informal meetings

NGOs are also encouraged to meet with UNHCR staff informally to discuss issues of common concern and share information and ideas. **If you wish to arrange a meeting with UNHCR staff members, get in touch with the Partnership Section.** They will help you to organise meetings with relevant UNHCR staff during your stay in Geneva.

There are several opportunities for you to identify people whom you may wish to meet. UNHCR's reception, usually held in UNHCR's Cafeteria on the first night of the Consultations, provides a great opportunity to mingle with UNHCR staff.

Tip! Don't wait for people to talk to you. Introduce yourself; ask where people are from and why they are at the Consultations – what do they want to achieve?

Tip! To get an idea of who attends the Annual Consultations, consult the participant list which is available online at www.unhcr.org/ngo-consultations. This document will also help you get an idea of who you may like to meet.

Attending the Food for Thought events

As well as the formal sessions in the Annual Consultations, there will be “Food for Thought” events, during lunch time to exchange on issues that are not necessarily focused on the overarching theme of the Consultations. It is important to check each day to see what is on the agenda. The outcomes of these meetings are also included in the NGO Rapporteur's written report to ExCom.

After the Consultations

Over the years, your comments and suggestions have shaped the Annual Consultations, transforming them from a half day event into a three-day major forum. **This is why your opinion is important!**

IMPORTANT: All the participants to the Annual Consultations are kindly asked to fill out a General Evaluation Form that is distributed prior to the Closing Session, and an Individual Session Evaluation Form that is available online after the Consultations (<http://unhcr.org/ngo-consultations/>).

UNHCR's Executive Committee

Who attends the annual ExCom session?

The Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme (ExCom) was formed in 1958 to advise the High Commissioner for Refugees in the exercise of the Office. ExCom meets in Geneva annually to review UNHCR's programme and approve its budget, advise on international protection, and discuss a wide range of other issues, together with intergovernmental organizations and partners, including non-governmental organizations.

The Committee is led by a "Bureau" made up of four office bearers which are elected on a yearly basis: a Chairperson, two Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur. The Bureau's function is to liaise between ExCom Member States and UNHCR, oversee the workplan of ExCom's working body, the Standing Committee, and chair formal and informal meetings.

Who attends the annual ExCom session?

The annual ExCom meeting is attended by:

- ✓ ExCom Member States
- ✓ Other UN Member States which attend as observers
- ✓ Intergovernmental organizations
- ✓ UN specialized agencies, funds, programmes and other offices
- ✓ NGOs meeting the ExCom established criteria (i.e. ECOSOC accreditation and/or member of ICVA).

What happens during ExCom?

The session opens with welcoming remarks and an overview of the week by the ExCom Chair. This may be followed by a keynote address by a guest speaker, after which the High Commissioner makes his substantive statement and launches the "General Debate". The General Debate, which lasts between 2-3 days, provides an opportunity for participants (ExCom Members, followed by other UN Member States, intergovernmental organizations, UN bodies and NGOs) to make interventions, commenting on the High Commissioner's statement as well as on the regional updates prepared by UNHCR in advance of the session. The NGO statement is coordinated by ICVA. Following the General Debate, other issues on the agenda include discussions on international protection; budgets and financial management; and oversight and evaluation. There is also a report on the Annual Consultations with NGOs, which is delivered by the Rapporteur of the Annual Consultations, together with comments from the ExCom Rapporteur. NGOs are invited to make statements under each agenda item.

Participating in UNHCR's ExCom Session



The ExCom annual session is very different from the NGO Consultations. It is a formal meeting of UNHCR's governing body composed of 98 Member States. NGOs attend as observers, without decision-making rights, and engage in the debate under the various agenda items through coordinated statements. The annual session is held in the Assembly Hall at the Palais des Nations.

Seating at the ExCom session

As ExCom is a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, seating follows GA rules, starting with ExCom Members, followed by other UN Member States and non-Member Observer States, inter-governmental organizations, UN agencies and other bodies, and NGOs. Since NGOs participate as a collective body, individual name plates are not provided. Instead, one nameplate marked "NGOs" may be found on the floor, behind which the designated NGO making the statement under any agenda item may be seated. All other NGO representatives are invited to take seats on the side of the Assembly Hall, in a designated area reserved for NGOs.

Interpretation and documentation

During the ExCom session, simultaneous translation is provided in all 6 UN languages – Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish – through a headphone set located on the desks or beside each chair, with a control to select

the desired language. Channel 1 is always the original language. Please note that interpretation at side events may vary, but is usually provided at a minimum in the two working languages of UNHCR: English and French. Official documentation for the ExCom session is provided in all 6 languages.

Side events

During the week, a considerable number of meetings are held in the margins of the ExCom session. These are generally held from 9:00-10:00 in the morning before the formal session starts, or during the lunch break, from 13:00-15:00. NGOs are usually welcome to attend, unless otherwise indicated, and UNHCR encourages participation.

Can NGOs arrange informal meetings?

The ExCom session provides a valuable opportunity for NGOs to network and to conduct informal meetings. They may be held in the various coffee lounges outside of the main meeting rooms or, for larger more formal meetings, space can be booked through UNHCR's Partnership Section.

During the ExCom session, State delegates should normally not be approached, particularly when a member of the delegation is speaking or otherwise engaged in the debate. If an organization wishes to make contact with a delegation, it is advised to wait for a break or transition between speakers. Alternatively, a handwritten note may be passed to the delegation, requesting a meeting.

NGO participation

NGOs are not permitted to speak individually or ask questions outside of the coordinated statement during the session. Collectively, NGOs are allowed to make one intervention (verbal presentation) on each agenda item, which is coordinated by ICVA. NGOs make every effort to ensure that key points from the NGO Consultations are included in the NGO statements at ExCom. Although the official role of NGOs in the session is minimal, the opportunity for NGOs to advocate, convey key concerns and hear the positions of various governments on humanitarian issues is extremely valuable.

Attending the ExCom session also gives NGOs an opportunity to hear the High Commissioner's perspective on the current challenges facing the humanitarian community and to familiarize themselves with policy issues through the interventions of UNHCR senior management. To make the most of participation, NGOs are advised to familiarize themselves with the documentation, which is available before hand, and to come prepared with a list of what they want to achieve.

Where to find key documents

Documents for the ExCom session are available online on the ExCom webpage: <http://www.unhcr.org/excom>. Statements may be placed on the tables at the back of the room after they are delivered.

Networking

Tip! A list of participants, including names and titles, is provided to all attendees. This will help NGOs familiarize themselves with who will be speaking/heading delegations, who is participation from capital level and who is based permanently in Geneva.

Tip! Know who you are talking to! Delegations can be distinguished by the colour of their badge: usually they are brown for NGOs, red or yellow for States (including NGOs attending as part of a State delegation), and blue for UN staff.

Tip! Another important opportunity for networking is the **Nansen Award ceremony**, preceded by a reception, which is traditionally held on the first evening. All ExCom participants are invited, and the reception preceding and following the ceremony provide a good opportunity to chat with delegations, ask questions and get to know them.

Attending the ExCom meeting as an NGO on a government delegation



Some governments currently have ‘NGO representatives’ on their government delegation (e.g. Australia, Canada, Finland, and the USA). Be aware that this position is a different role to being an NGO observer. The government will establish protocols about the role you will take, and what you are allowed to say and do. You will be less free to advocate during the ExCom meeting as an independent NGO representative in formal meetings. However, in private settings you will be able to speak on behalf of your NGO by making clear you are speaking on behalf of your NGO.

What advantages will you have being on a government delegation?

- ✓ You have a greater level of access to key people from the government while in Geneva, which can build trust and relationships for your year-round advocacy and help you to build a greater understanding of how the government involvement in ExCom works.
- ✓ You will (depending on the attitude of the government) be invited to bilateral meetings with other governments and get an opportunity to get more understanding of the views of other governments, and also how the government interacts with other governments.
- ✓ You will almost inevitably pick up information which you would not hear being an NGO observer alone – but you may not be free to share this with your NGO colleagues.

Being on a government delegation works best when you can work with NGOs at ExCom who are not restricted by being part of a government delegation. Where appropriate, you can share information with NGOs, pass on input for possible inclusion in NGO statements and gather information from NGO representatives to ask questions of the government delegation.

Whether you are on a government delegation or not, you should encourage governments, especially of your home country, to meet for a meal and/or an (in) formal meeting during ExCom with the NGOs present from your country. Such meetings are very valuable for both sides: for the government to understand and get to know NGOs better and for NGO advocates to understand the pressures and limitations on governments (and to realize they are human after all).

Understand what the Government Delegation is doing:

Tip! Ask the government for a full list of meetings they intend to have during the week.

Tip! Once you have a list of meetings scheduled, ask what topics they will cover and what the government is recommending to UNHCR or other States.

Tip! Ask what meetings you can attend and whether you will be permitted to speak in the meetings.

Establish ground rules for your participation:

Tip! Ask to attend delegation briefings and debriefings. If that is not possible, ask for a member of the delegation to be assigned to you to keep you informed.

Tip! Remember that the government will start planning well in advance, so make sure you forward your requests well in advance.

The High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges



What is the High Commissioner's Dialogue?

The idea of a flexible, non-directive consultation between the High Commissioner and States IGOs, NGOs, academics and experts first emerged during UNHCR's Global Consultations on International Protection which took place between 2000 and 2001. The *Agenda for Protection*, endorsed by ExCom at the conclusion of that process, urged UNHCR "to maintain the positive momentum of the Global Consultations process" and "provide a forum for high-level and participatory dialogue on protection issues, emerging global themes and challenges, as well as specific protection situations, particularly those of an urgent character".¹

The High Commissioner has recognized the need for, and value of, a flexible mechanism at his disposal for dialogue on a broad range of protection issues, emerging global themes and challenges, specific protection situations, and potential responses. The Dialogue is intended to serve as this mechanism, without becoming a standing body.²

¹ *Agenda for Protection*, UNHCR, Goal 1, Objective 5.

² Concept Paper on the "High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges", UNHCR, 30 July 2007.

Who attends the Dialogue?

The Dialogue aims to include stakeholders, partners, and those with specific expertise to offer on the chosen theme. Participation is, thus, not limited to ExCom Member States.

A frank and open dialogue

The Dialogue provides an important opportunity for all participants, including NGOs, to raise issues, ask questions, and make recommendations. More importantly, it gives NGOs the opportunity to participate, on an equal footing, in a dialogue with States, UNHCR, IGOs, and academics. Such an opportunity is not available in the Annual Consultations (as State delegates rarely attend) or the ExCom meeting (as NGOs are only permitted to make one formal NGO statement per agenda item).

Unlike the ExCom meeting, where States deliver pre-written and pre-approved statements during the discussion, the High Commissioner encourages those attending to participate freely rather than deliver formal statements. The Dialogue was designed to encourage an interactive, informal, frank, and open exchange of views.

ICVA has provided a platform for NGOs to develop key messages prior to the Dialogues. These can be found here:

- [IDPs](#)
- [Protection at Sea](#)
- [Root causes](#)

Further reading:

- ✓ High Commissioner's Dialogue Home page: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/501a39166.html>, which includes links to all previous eight Dialogues and their documentation.
- ✓ 2015 High Commissioner's Dialogue on Root Causes Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F3TZGDaM6O4p>
- ✓ For related UNHCR videos see: www.youtube.com/unhcr

The Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement

What is the ATCR?

The Annual Tripartite Consultation on Resettlement (ATCR) is an annual meeting between UNHCR, Resettlement States and NGOs. It was first convened by UNHCR in June 1996, and has evolved in size and participation over time as resettlement activities expanded at a global level, resulting in more than 200 participants from resettlement States and NGOs attending 2015 ATCR.

The ATCR plays an important role in raising awareness and building consensus for resettlement issues, such as:

- ✓ UNHCR's resettlement activities, operational issues, and key responsibilities for case and group identification, and referral;
- ✓ Establishing new programs;
- ✓ The regular sharing of information about resettlement needs;
- ✓ Reception and integration of resettled refugees in resettlement States.
- ✓ Program planning; and
- ✓ Analysis of policy issues.

The ATCR is the most important forum to advance the resettlement agenda, holding a tripartite spirit in that UNHCR, States and NGOs participate every year in these Consultations. NGOs participate in recognition of the critical role they play in resettlement, both in host countries and in countries of resettlement. Participating States include those with an existing and established resettlement programme, as well as those considering or starting to develop a resettlement programme.

How is the ATCR organized?

The ATCR meeting is held on a yearly bases and chaired by a different State Member. Each year at least two Working Groups on Resettlement are convened, preceding the ATCR, which provides an informal forum to discuss policy directions or enhance resettlement efforts. Discussions held at WGR level normally inform the topics that need to be discussed at the ATCR, and also used to discuss issues in need of follow up. As a result of the Reform process which took place in 2014 under the Danish Chair, WGRs are now theme-focused, and participation from both States and NGOs are decided by the ATCR/WGR Secretariat on the basis of their ability to contribute to the chosen theme. The Chair of the ATCR/WGR rotates between governments of resettlement countries on an annual basis. The NGO input into the meetings is coordinated by the ATCR

NGO Focal Point, which changes annually and is also from the same country as the Chair. UNHCR is part of the Secretariat and plays a major role in the preparation and running of the ATCR/WGRs.

Who can attend the ATCR?

As a general rule, Resettlement States and their national NGOs are invited to the ATCR in equal number along with selected international NGOs and relevant international organizations. The size of countries delegations are normally determined taking into account the size of each country's resettlement programme. Regarding the WGR, the focus has been placed more on dialogue among Resettlement States and relevant international organizations, with selected NGOs invited based on relevancy to the themes of the meeting. The ATCR/WGR Reform process undertaken in 2014 under the Danish Chair reinforced the need to ensure WGRs remain theme focused, providing for a smaller and targeted forum for discussing specific and operational aspects of resettlement.

For more information consult <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a2cd39e6.html>

Where to Stay and How to Get Around Geneva



How I go around?

Geneva has an efficient public transport network (www.tpg.ch), which covers the entire city. From the airport, you can take buses, trains, or taxis. ***You can also get a free bus ticket valid for 80 minutes at the airport from a machine to the left, in the baggage reclaim area, before you pass through customs.***

The **CICG** (International Conference Center Geneva) is located at **17 rue de Varembe, 1211 Geneva (phone: +41-22-791-9111)**.

Tip! Tickets cannot be purchased on the trams/buses. You can buy it at the machines located in each stop or directly via sms (Text TPG1 and send it to 788).

How do I stay?

Hotel accommodation is provided only to NNGOs funded by UNHCR and/or ICVA to attend the Annual Consultations. Other participants are expected to make their own arrangements.

UNHCR and ICVA do not have the capacity to assist with bookings or hotel recommendations.

MANDAT is an organization offering cheap accommodation for NGOs attending meetings in Geneva (approximately 20-30 Swiss Francs per night including breakfast). Preference is given to people applying from less developed countries. (www.mandint.org)

Most hotels provide a complimentary transport card, which entitles guests to free public transport around Geneva.

You can also consult the **Geneva Tourism Office** for information both on hotels and on restaurants (www.geneve-tourisme.ch, e-mail; info@geneve-tourisme.ch)

The John Knox Centre also offers rooms with cheaper prices (www.johnknox.ch or e-mail: welcome@johnknox.ch).

Tip! Book early, Geneva can get quite busy!