

**Remarks by NGO Rapporteur Musarait Kashmiri
UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations Closing Session
15 June 2016 – CICG, Geneva**

Excellencies, Colleagues and Friends.

On Wednesday I ended my remarks with two quotes; today let me begin my remarks with a definition.
RESILIENCE: “A dynamic process of positive adaptation in responses to significant adversity.”

The youth sitting with us today embody resilience. We must recognize and acknowledge their capacities, sacrifices and contributions to their communities.

Some examples of their work include:

- Youth Voices working in advocacy in Kakuma camp, Kenya through arts and dance
- Cisawar’s primary school in Indonesia
- CIYOTA’s work in education in Kyangwali settlement in Uganda
- Spark 15 promoting social cohesion and integration in Malta to name but ONLY a few.

These initiatives show us the future is NOW!

Nan challenged us on Wednesday to be proactive, productive and concrete in our conclusions for these CONSULTATIONS. Let me therefore summarise our time together around strategic partnership, data collection and inclusivity.

I will also highlight some opportunities we have together for complimentary advocacy.

Yesterday the youth demonstrated dance steps from their diverse communities. But as this consultation ends how do we learn to dance together? How do we make sure youth participation remains meaningful and is NOT JUST A TOKEN gesture?

To NGOs our challenge IS to partner with youth actors as they are already meeting critical needs. Youth must be included in policy and program development and we need to be held accountable to this.

With a bit of support and mentoring, youth leaders can take their efforts to scale. Mentorship includes sharing information in youth-friendly ways and supporting the creativity and innovation we’ve admired this week.

At the opening plenary we heard the 7 core actions from the youth, these are intentionally focused on a holistic approach to youth programming. The reality is the existing system is siloed and there are narrow doors to enter the partnership space. We’ve seen this week how much we have to gain if we can widen our doors and learn to speak each other’s language.

Let's INNOVATE together, creating a new dance; COMMUNITY BY COMMUNITY.

We welcome the High Commissioner's commitment to the 7 core actions for youth, but leave today still questioning what concrete steps will be taken to sharpen the focus on youth programming.

If we expect funding shortfalls to continue, what trade-offs will be made to increase protection for youth? What is the roadmap for change in a year's time? In five year's time?

Furthermore, the High Commissioner acknowledged on Wednesday that there are challenges in the existing partnerships. We learned this week from the HIAS survey that the state of our partnership is improving but is not yet good enough. Let's work together to apply these lessons learned in our new partnerships with youth.

To our youth representatives the challenge is that dancing together is learning to trust one another and also managing expectations. Our dance is slower than you would like. Civil Society, UN agencies and NGOs alike are tied to complex accountability systems that make it possible to sustain funding and take projects to scale. Be patient and learn some of our steps around legal registration, financial requirements and coordinated response. But hold us accountable when we are not good dance partners.

Collectively we challenge that inclusive approaches to partnership mean a greater amount of power-sharing. Our hierarchical structures make this difficult. Let's ensure OUR ecosystem of response is the best fit for persons of concern, getting resources to those BEST SUITED TO RESPOND.

Let's move beyond our UNHCR-NGO discussion on capacity strengthening and start taking action. Another powerful image from the youth this week came with the question 'How can we work and progress together if we are invisible?'

It is important to address another definitional issue. What is the definition of youth? We have heard several versions. Should we be flexible to accommodate for local context? Moreover, how are we going to budget and program for the protection needs put forth in the panels when we lack critical data?

To NGOs we challenge that youth inclusion means engaging them in a rights based approach in the design, implementation and evaluation of programs. These programs must meet their diverse needs. The youth representatives this week have provided detailed needs for education, livelihoods, timely and accurate information, gender equity and protection against sexual and gender based violence. Let's do a better job of realizing rights and identifying vulnerabilities in assessments, not just disaggregating data.

We challenge UNHCR that we can't pledge to leave "no one behind" if we don't know who is currently left behind. Integrate youth-related priorities into Calls for Proposals and program design to help make youth visible. Use your institutional knowledge from previous data collection processes to improve our global understanding of the needs of youth. One group we know that has been left behind is Internally Displaced People, as acknowledged by the High Commissioner on Wednesday.

Let us take the time to prioritize what is needed to take the blindfolds off!

After the moving account on Wednesday of the challenges of statelessness each of us needed passports or a photo ID to enter the UNHCR building for the evening reception.

Nationality and identity documents are essential to day-to-day life and central to protection. When youth are denied these, their vulnerability grows as they work in the grey economy and have inadequate access to essential services. With the I Belong campaign UNHCR and partners seek to end statelessness, but documentation was an issue raised by all of the young people forcibly displaced.

We challenge the Member States to recognise that youth are a marginalised group that need to be prioritized – from funding, to integrating into educational systems and labour markets. Furthermore, youth are READY to part of the solution and bring relevant knowledge and experience to the table.

In my opening remarks I challenged us all to look for opportunities to be champions of change and to utilize the power of complementary advocacy.

The most immediate opportunity to affect change is to inform the text that will be used by the 98 Member States in UNHCR's Executive Committee as their "Conclusion" on Youth. I am happy to have Madam Yanit HABETEMARIAM, the UNHCR Executive Committee Rapporteur here today and invite her to explain how she thinks the issues raised by youth this week can be integrated into the draft CONCLUSION text.

The other imminent opportunity for complimentary advocacy is the 19 September Summit on Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants. We note with concern that at this time IDPs, the largest group of person of concern are left out of this Summit. We challenge the Member States to ensure --neither IDPs nor youth--are left behind in this critical dialogue.

Furthermore, I could not give a speech without mentioning the World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain. We expect Member States and organisations to fulfil their commitments to work more closely with affected persons and better support national and frontline responders, many of whom are youth.

As we've seen this week, youth actors are solving real problems on the ground and have potential to do much more with adequate support and resources. Let's work together to ensure a more resilient future for persons of concern.

On behalf of the NGOs present, I want to thank UNHCR, particularly the Partnership Section, and ICVA for working so hard to co-organize this event. I want to thank the refugee and stateless youth for sharing their stories, which we know was not easy. And, of course I want to thank you all for your active participation during these 3 days.

As we look forward it's clear that we have more questions than answers, but we also have greater understanding of the needs of displaced youth as a result of our time together this week.

Let us work together across boundaries to truly be champions of change as we move forward together in partnership.

Thank you.