

UNHCR Annual Consultations with Non-Governmental Organizations

Wednesday, June 27, 2018

Thematic session on Partnership, 16:30-18:30 hrs.

Panel Topic: Systemically Strengthening Partnerships with UNHCR, and Beyond

This topic will be facilitated by Ms. Caroline Nichols, Senior Manager, Humanitarian Policy, InterAction and Mr. Jeremy Rempel, Coordinator, Less Paper More Aid, International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA).

Background

In order to better track partnership dynamics and develop a body of evidence on perceptions of UNHCR-NGO partnership, since 2014 UNHCR's Implementing Partner Management Service (IPMS) alongside HIAS, and, in 2017, InterAction, have been systematically soliciting UNHCR and partner feedback via an annual survey on the state of UNHCR-NGO partnership.

Generally, both UNHCR and NGO Partners report a favorable and positive overall relationship. Results continue a four-year trend of increasingly favorable assessments of the UNHCR-NGO partnership by NGOs. Although UNHCR reported similar levels of satisfaction with their partnership with local NGO/CBOs and INGOs, INGOs were less positive about their partnership with UNHCR than National NGOs. NGOs report improved communication between UNHCR and their office, with a greater proportion of respondents rating communication as 'excellent' than 'good' for the first time.

In parallel to the ongoing work to improve UNHCR-NGO partnership, the efforts toward UN harmonization have focused on how to better align and simplify systems between the UN agencies, namely UNHCR, OCHA, UNICEF, and WFP. A key initial focus of this work was the 2017 rollout of the harmonized UN Partner Portal (inspired by and on the features of UNHCR's pioneered Partner Portal) which provides a common platform for UNHCR, WFP, and UNICEF partners to respond to calls for expressions of interest.

ICVA and InterAction have hosted consultations between NGOs and UN agencies in 2017 to discuss how to move forward with a range of areas for potential harmonization across UN agencies, including partner capacity assessment, partnership agreements, audit, and reporting, as well as the UN Partner Portal. This work continues in 2018, particularly in the areas of partner capacity assessment, partnership agreement, and reporting, where there are ongoing research and pilot projects to help guide the way forward.

The purpose of this session is to bring these streams of work together to help better understand how to best use feedback on NGO partnerships with UNHCR, and ensure that UN harmonization efforts meet the expectations of both UN agencies and NGO partners in order our partnerships to achieve efficiency and better results for persons of concern.

Questions for discussion

1. On a systems level, what would you prioritize to further strengthen partnership?
2. What aspect of UNHCR's approach to partnership should other agencies emulate? What elements could UNHCR and NGO Partners implement to further strengthen their partnership?
3. Which areas should UNICEF WFP and UNHCR focus on simplifying and harmonizing their agreements, process and approaches for better serve persons of concern



Source: UNHCR/IPMS- 13 June 2018.