

Summary of Participants' Evaluation of the 2006 Annual Consultations with NGOs

This evaluation is based on the response of 42 participants, which represents 14% of the 306 participants. The findings can be considered representative, although not conclusive.

The overall rating for the Annual Consultations with NGOs was good. Its clash with the Human Rights Council was regretted as some NGOs were supposed to be attending both. Overall, the structure and quality of the sessions were considered to be good. Nevertheless, lack of time continues to be a negative element owing to too many speakers, long introductions, poor moderation, and poorly prepared panellists. Suggestions include moderator training, diversifying the panel so that NGOs and moderators are not used repeatedly, more focused presentations and more involvement from southern NGOs. The Regional Sessions are considered very useful; however, comments vary from a more focused and less reporting approach to being less restrictive on only one or two themes for discussion. Some proposed breaking up the regions so that more substantive discussion could take place.

The agenda content was congratulated on the one hand, and found too general on the other. Despite the thematic approach, meeting the needs of such a diverse group of agencies is challenging. "A number of my NGO colleagues reiterated my view that they would not come to Geneva solely in order to attend these Consultations but only if another event brought them there at the same time." Some NGOs that had not attended the Consultations since the late 1990s found the agenda and structure more participatory. Disappointment was voiced about the Linkage to ExCom session, particularly the lack of time for the NGO Rapporteur to report on the prior days' discussions. More work should be done to link ExCom to the NGO Consultations. It was recommended to move the High Commissioner to the beginning of the Consultations so that his address is less "anti-climatic" and more helpful for NGO consideration, attention and action throughout the few days. Another suggestion comprised a panel discussion with the HC, the NGO Rapporteur, the ExCom Chair and the ExCom Rapporteur as the issues brought up by the HC and the Consultations were similar.

The table below provides some indication of the degree of satisfaction of the 2006 Annual Consultations with NGOs.

| Rating: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = good; 4 = very good | Structure | | | | | Usefulness | | | | |
|---|------------------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Avge. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Avge. |
| Agenda | | 1 | 30 | 9 | 3.2 | | 2 | 25 | 9 | 3.2 |
| Overall quality of the round-tables attended | | 2 | 30 | 10 | 3.2 | | 7 | 24 | 7 | 3.0 |
| Overall quality of the regional sessions attended | | 4 | 27 | 7 | 3.1 | | 4 | 18 | 10 | 3.2 |
| Overall quality of the plenary sessions | | 3 | 28 | 8 | 3.1 | | 4 | 23 | 8 | 3.1 |
| Venue | | 3 | 12 | 26 | 3.6 | | 1 | 9 | 24 | 3.7 |
| Side meetings | 1 | 4 | 18 | 10 | 3.1 | | 3 | 13 | 13 | 3.3 |
| Opportunity to network | | 2 | 21 | 16 | 3.4 | | | 17 | 20 | 3.5 |
| Overall organization of the Annual Consultations | | | 28 | 14 | 3.3 | | 2 | 22 | 13 | 3.3 |

Further below are comments on the working and regional sessions, as well as general comments on the Annual Consultations with NGOs and recommendations for 2007. Comments are in the participants own words.

Orientation Session

- Poor notes given to the organization of the Pre-ExCom meeting on Sept. 27th at UNHCR HQ. No translation, many representatives present coming from French speaking countries, could not understand the gist of the meeting conducted in English only (which was the case of my “neighbour from Togo). Furthermore, not enough room for “comfortable” seating—many participants had “standing room” only.

Round-table Sessions

- These sessions were an opportunity for useful discussion and covered some interesting topics (particularly on UN reform and clusters). In some instances, the mix of topics within one session resulted in a very mixed group of people being in the room who may not necessarily have had an interest in both sets of issues covered within one discussion.
- It was useful having such an open discussion where everyone was able to present their views. However, this did also result in the discussion perhaps being a bit too unstructured in certain instances, especially where people had very specific issues that they wanted to raise. It might be useful for discussions to have a bit more structure and clear outputs to help focus the discussion but this is perhaps difficult with such a diverse range of organisations!
- The majority were very good. The only one I found disappointing was the session on Challenges of Return. While Greg Balke from UNHCR was excellent, I found the other speakers weak and their input not particularly helpful. As always, there are too many panellists on the round table sessions – fewer panellists but who are well-versed on the issue would be more constructive. There was a more concerted effort, however, to leave time for questions and comments this year by the round table facilitators.
- More time should be allocated to discussions, debate as the round table session should be a learning experience for panellists and participants.
- The time allocated was too limited. Participants essentially could complete pleasantries exchanges only to find out they had to move to another session. If we were to have more constructive discussions, clearly more time is needed
- As someone quite new to many of the specific issues facing refugees, I found the roundtable sessions very useful. Both the speakers and the comments from the participants were very interesting and (thankfully) not made incomprehensible by over-use of jargon.
- On a personal level, I also prefer sessions where everyone is working together to ones where the participants are trying to bait or nail the UNHCR. But I know this is not something that can be planned and that it is good to have some frank discussion of the way things are not working well.
- Of the sessions I went to (cluster approach in Uganda, statelessness, integration and rape of refugee women) the statelessness one was probably least interesting, but this was because the discussion got more caught up in legal terminology and there was less about people’s lives than the other sessions. But then it is always more interesting to hear about people and what is happening to them, as well as the often innovative ways that they are being helped or encouraged to help themselves, than it is to hear about the duller, but also very important, work done at the more rarefied level of international diplomacy.
- Organization was fine. Speakers were thoughtfully selected and made good contributions to the subjects at hand. I was particularly appreciative of the running themes throughout several sessions.
- The Round-table Sessions weren’t always relevant and dynamic. Unfortunately, some of the moderators were less informed and trained, and they couldn’t give answers to some questions. Over all, it was interesting. I have participated to this meeting in 1999, and I can say that there was less enthusiasm during the meetings at that time.
- The round table sessions attended did not give enough opportunity for discussions.
- Les tables rondes ont été très bien, mais il faut dans l’avenir laisser plus de temps pour les

débats.

- The management in so far to ensure optimal participation by the NGO community as partners. The great majority of sessions attended did not allow enough time for NGO input and discussion.
- While panel contributions are most useful, consideration should be given to the idea of apportioning the time allocated to session equally between all panel presentations and discussion time. This would of necessity call for greater time restriction on presenters. Commendations re the preparedness to focus on the issues of mixed migration re asylum seekers and statelessness.
- Outstanding speakers were disciplined in presentations so was lot of time for useful discussions. Content was excellent and applicable. Questions were sharp and more intelligent than in time past. Choice of sessions was limited so all well attended. Congratulations to the NGO Liaison Unit and ICVA. Only suggestion would be to spread the panel participation to more NGOs rather than just a few used repeatedly. Same with moderators.
- I could not attend many but these were interesting since they gathered many different actors giving a global view (practical and theoretical) on issues.
- I found the round table discussions to be generally well presented and helpful in broadening an understanding of the issues being raised. In the roundtable discussion of which I was a part, I felt that more lead time in preparing for the session was needed. Additionally, I thought that greater coordination among the presenters would have enhanced the focus of the roundtable. The invitation to participate reached me a week before the session and I was belatedly informed that a paper was expected. I think that the roundtable went reasonably well but the topic of enhancing advocacy for national resettlement programs warranted more preparation and coordination.
- Understandably very general. A wide variety of HCR partners and other NGOs demands a rather general and open agenda. That however undermines the actual quality of the presentations and becomes a missed opportunity to actually have a dialogue between the implementers and the HQ. Some sessions had so much promise, especially the whole durable solutions track, but the actual presentations didn't seem to be screened for content prior to the meeting so instead of learning more about the solution(s) that are available, the audience had a chance to hear about the work of the individuals on the panel – which was interesting but totally misplaced. Combining the research and direct service NGOs with Educational Institutions and UNHCR staff from the HQ creates a bit of an environment of confusion and competing priorities. Some sessions had one too many speakers with not much to offer to the not-so-general debate.
- They were good in theory but so many different orgs with such specific needs/questions made both the presentations and discussion time very disorganized. I have no idea how you'd get around this, though!
- The Round table sessions could have been more in keeping with their titles...I found the actual presentations to be quite different from what was stated on the agendas.
- The moderators, in general, were very good.
- In general, Round table Sessions responded well to the most important issues facing UNHCR and partners in 2006.
- I feel that it was not very good unfortunately. Being a Canadian, which is the only country with a huge private resettlement program in place for more than 25 years, it was sad to hear bad and superficial presentations about the sponsorship program in other places. I feel that the moderator couldn't really balance, and in this way the NGOs got a very bad picture about resettlement. It affected on our other meetings and networking too. On the other hand we have to give the credit that – even without a word about the 'most- NGO-like' sponsorship program; at least there was an overview of this small scale durable solution option. I hope to have more dialogue on this topic at the next Pre-ExCom.
- These were very helpful. I found that the session on integration was a more theoretical.

There is no serious thinking on what the refugees think about the issue itself.

- The round-table session was very useful. Unfortunately, due to the fact that other important meetings were scheduled at the same time, the number of participants was rather low. Perhaps this could be overcome if the roundtable sessions were organised differently.
- Good – they could be improved with better moderation!!
- Interventions in part of participants were positive. Points were clear and concise allowing for an interactive participation from members.
- Clear interaction provided the opportunity to learn and discuss themes from participants of other regions. Their descriptions gave first-hand knowledge of issues in various regions.
- In order to further discuss various regional themes it would be positive to have more time to interact in the round tables.
- More time for discussion and questions could give participants greater possibilities to discuss points of joint interest.

Comments on specific Round tables

Implementation of the new cluster approach in situations of internal displacement

- The session which allowed for input by a Minister with relevant responsibility was most useful.

Combating the use of detention as a deterrent

- Presentations went on for far too long and apart from UNHCR they were quite specific and more aimed at informing people of certain issues rather than provoking a good overall debate on the theme. So while I picked up some useful information it was not as useful as could have been.

Challenges of Return

- While the presentations were extremely interesting again they were too long and very diverse to the extent that the discussion was not very focused – there didn't seem to be many points being concluded and the panellists did not answer all questions. The panellists were not able or willing to look at return in the industrialised context either which meant this was not so helpful for European NGOs.
- Although the example situation (refugee situation in Burma) had little in common with the situation in Iran, the session provided a broader perspective of the problems surrounding protracted refugee situations. All such situations have in common that a durable and stable solution can only be attained if the underlying causes of the refugee problem are addressed and solved.
- Very well organized and very instructive.

Mainstreaming education within humanitarian response

- I found that the mainstreaming meeting dealt to a large extent with bureaucratic questions of inter-agency cooperation and coordination. There was no passion, except from one or two of the NGOs in the audience.
- It was not very helpful. The decision to make a cluster for education cannot be made at this level. It would be more helpful to work on more practical issues: Including prevention of SAE in schools!

Integration: The forgotten 'solution'

- This was a very lively discussion and extremely interesting despite the fact that the Chair did not chair but rather answered most questions and should have allowed panellists more opportunities to respond.
- The session provided important insights into what seemed to be urgent issues.
- Local integration examples taken were really restrictive. Nothing was mentioned about the DRC, Somalia.

Collaboration in addressing gender issues

- Salvatore's presentation in particularly helpful. Definitely an area that must work together.

What are the strategies for countries supportive of resettlement?

- Despite a good introduction from the chair, there were too many panelists and they each spoke for too long, and also at a far too basic and general level, descriptive of the national situations rather than raising common issues/dilemmas for debate. However UNHCR's presentation was very good and concrete. There was too little time for discussion and what we did have was pretty unfocused and ad hoc and as such no information or exchanges took place that were useful for me in my work. Many of the stated objectives were not met, e.g identifying lessons learned. Some colleagues felt the session had been 'boring'.
- The NGOs who were in charge of the presentations are making very impressive efforts in their own field. It was interesting to hear about resettlement from the point of view of resettlement countries.
- Not enough time for discussions. Only 20 minutes

They don't talk about rape!! Improving protection for refugee women and girls

- The session provided important insights into what seemed to be urgent issues.
- The refugee women and rape session was the most affecting, which might be partly because of the powerful and shocking nature of its subject, but also because there were some very good speakers there. A good speaker (like the High Commissioner) can really make or break a session.
- Very good, very practical, can be implemented.

Regional Sessions

- The round table attended was good and was relevant.
- It helps discuss migration crisis vis a vis asylum.
- It helps share information strategies and ways in lobbying and working together.
- It was very helpful, specially to be informed about the progress made in Americas Region. Unfortunately, the discussion was dominated by Columbia situation while the region has other current and potential hot spot countries.
- First of all, very few NGOs showed up at the venue. The discussions therefore could not be as interactive as they should have been. I did not get the impression that the NGOs would go back with a clear position what they would do to help mobilize resources. They came across as counting on UNHCR for funding, especially when touching on overhead costs, delay in instalment etc.
- I believe the request from the NGOs to UNHCR to intervene with the Governments when it comes to access to the camps, security, port and Customs clearance and duties are realistic. UNHCR should do all it can to help them overcome these challenges.

- The concerned people of hot crisis like Iraqis and Lebanese were totally absent.
- The session was generally informative although there was quite a bit of territory and topics that had to be covered. While an overview is necessary it could be interesting to break up the region in to sub-topics as well.
- Opinion is generally good and I think it was interesting.
- Les sessions doivent laisser plus de temps pour écouter les différentes régions et leurs difficultés.
- These were informative but tended to become too politicised sometimes.
- The regional sessions were generally quite useful. I found the presenters to be well prepared and attentive to the concerns raised by those attending the sessions. A possible area for improvement would have been a clearer delineation of the issues to be discussed so that those attending the sessions might have been a bit better prepared for the sessions. A real plus of these sessions were the contributions of the audience and the interaction between presenters and the audience. Ample time for interaction should always be accounted for.
- While understanding that it is impossible to accommodate all scheduling requests, the strange manner in which the regional sessions take place at the same time is hardly the way to go. For some NGOs (and I trust UNHCR colleagues as well) this is a unique opportunity to hear about the trends and developments in all regions and perhaps compare the experiences. The current setup makes that attempt a futile one.
- Sitting a large number of a bureau staff in the back row behind the podium just reaffirms the level of bureaucracy that UNHCR is almost always (deservingly?) accused of. "...do they really need 20 people to manage the specific [minimal] program in the country x...?" Some Bureaus are guiltier of this than others. As expected the side meetings with Bureaus definitely provided more opportunity for open conversations, which is greatly appreciated. Generally speaking all bureaus seem to be open to suggestions and willing to collaborate with NGOs on designing and implementing programs in the field, a welcome change of heart.
- The individual presentations were general, as expected. The NGOs appreciated the opportunity to hear about the HCR accomplishments on certain fronts, and asked some questions which were left largely unanswered about the situations which aren't being resolved.
- The session was good. However there was not enough time for the discussion. I feel that we needed to have at least another hour in order to cover the topics that were raised.
- The UNHCR panellists were a little defensive. It would be nice if we could get to the point of putting issues on the table in a spirit of co-operation instead of defensiveness. Better facilitation could help
- Interventions in part of participants were positive. Points were clear and concise allowing for an interactive participation from members.
- Clear interaction provided the opportunity to learn and discuss of regional situations. Their descriptions gave first-hand knowledge of issues in various regions.
- More ample time for discussions during the Regional Sessions would allow the participants an opportunity to learn different approaches and perspectives being applied as well as hear experiences from the ground.

Comments on specific Regional Sessions

CASWANAME

- The session was less useful and not well chaired. I felt it a shame that so much time was spent on the Cluster approach and would have liked more time to be spent on the issues for the region.

- The presentation and the discussions were very useful and concise, especially to those already acquainted with the cluster approach.
- Very Helpful. I really felt like a working team.
- 1. More themes could be included in discussion to respond to the concerns of NGOs in this region.
2. To respond to 1, more time could be allocated and two sessions could be arranged with 90 minutes each.
3. More active and interactive participation of NGOs is necessary. For example, several NGOs from this region could have their own presentation to reflect their experiences, possibly 5-10 minutes each. This may encourage more information sharing and exchange of expertise regarding field difficulties, relations with authorities, security problems, etc., among NGOs on one hand, and with UNHCR officials on the other hand.

EUROPE BUREAU

- The session was well structured and useful as speakers spoke for a short time and other UNHCR staffs not on panel and NGOs were able to address a range of issues. Most useful session of Consultations.
- Very helpful, able to address specific concerns. I am encouraged to hear of the hope to twice yearly meetings.

AFRICA

- When we come from the field we come with real issues. The Director African Bureau was not conversant with Issues pertaining to Africa or rather was not prepared with facts. Sometimes one feels like “they know the answer but would rather not give it”.
- All in all, it was a good session. However there was not enough time to cover the issues in the whole of Africa dealing for examples repatriation operation, protection issues, early warning mechanism in place where there is potential conflict.
- I found it interesting, but would’ve liked more time for Q&A. I thought the new Africa bureau chief did a very good job both presenting and answering questions on such wide-ranging topics. Things were kept to the point fairly well.
- I found the Regional session helpful. It was good to meet the staff and others who have an interest in Africa. I expected more people to attend than were there and wondered why. I am not sure of the value of lunch time session that we had with the Africa team. This caused confusion to some of us who were attending the meeting for the first time. For example, I said things that I should have repeated at the Regional Session. I did not because I did not have an understanding that these were actually two different meetings with different audiences although we had the same staff from the Africa office.

ASIA and PACIFIC

- It was very informative, helpful updates on UNHCR’s strategy in the region.

General Comments on 2006 Annual Consultations with NGOs

Overall organization of the Annual Consultations with NGOs

- I have attended part of the NGO Consultations; on the round table I attend it was good in the content and in the format. It is a starting point to follow up discussions and networking.
- It would be interesting to know exactly what actions will be taken forward from these discussions to ensure that they do not serve to just be an exchange of information interesting though that is. Unfortunately I missed the session on how the meetings were going to feed

into Excom (as the agenda was changed at short notice) so this question may have already been answered. Without such concrete actions, the meeting will not be as beneficial as it could be and would not serve to foster a further UNHCR/NGO partnership that is currently being encouraged as much as it could. Perhaps key actions and outputs from these sessions can be prioritized so that key recommendations will actually be achieved / utilized.

- Last minute meetings such as the one on UNHCR contracts that was held on Friday afternoon need to be planned further in advance. It is not possible to change flights to attend such meetings when they are raised at such short notice. This is a pity as this meeting would have been useful.
- Meetings that are being held outside the main meeting venue (i.e those at the UNHCR building) should be made more explicit in the briefing notes that are sent out. Further it would be useful if people organising the main meeting were more aware of this so if you do get lost, someone is able to send you to the correct place!
- Despite all that, the conference was very helpful, with lots of room for discussion and to meet people – the cocktail party at the UNHCR building was particularly useful for networking.
- Answers provided by UNHCR representatives were generally evasive, lacked information on issues related to detention, border control and manifested passive response in dealing with asylum issues globally.
- It is expected that UNHCR comes to the forefront with a stronger mandate in fighting racism and “terrorism”. Projecting a heavy responsibility on shoulders of NGOs in regard to detention, racism or asylum issues is a naïve response to the growing and frightening xenophobia and closing borders policies. It will be advisable to have state representatives along with UNHCR representatives on the platform of NGO – Pre-ExCom regional or side meetings and develop dialogue on the concerned issue.
- Overall, very well structured. An interesting array of topics and speakers. The difficulty was in attending everything of interest as side meetings were organized by the umbrella organizations which coincided with Pre-ExCom sessions – an issue raised with InterAction and RCUSA. Also found the AHC-Operations plenary session weak. Some of the side meetings – like the Building Safer Organizations lunchtime session - were not well advertised and, hence, well-attended.
- ICVA also did a great job on the statements—particularly the one relating to Protection. Bravo!
- Over all, I found the consultations highly useful. I attended a side-session on the subject of training for NGOs in dealing with sexual abuse within their own organizations. In addition to various presentations, time was set aside for inter-active participation by all members of the audience. I found this approach to be highly productive and would recommend that the secretariat try it out on a larger scale in future round-table discussions.
- Overall organization of the event was good to excellent. However, it might be better to issue invitations earlier. This would greatly simplify proceedings for attending NGO delegates, especially logistic issues like obtaining accommodation and cheap travel arrangements.
- When one asks a straight question, a straight answer should be given; if the question asked is sensitive such should be notified so that a side meeting is arranged.
That more time be given for the sessions
That the NGO Statement should be read to the ExCom Delegates at the opening of ExCom
- It was a very good opportunity to express opinions and hear from others.
- 1. Ahead of the Annual Consultations, perhaps the NGO LU could work out mechanisms with NGOs from Australia and Japan to tap funding from these two countries. A draft paper on mechanisms should then be shared during the sessions.
- 2. from funding point of view, there are 3 main categories of NGOs, those who are well organized (InterAction), those from developed countries but with limited channel of funding

(Peace Wind Japan, AMDA and Auscare) and those newly created seeking partnership with UNHCR. Would it be possible to encourage all these NGOs to exchange their experience in raising fund, so that they (especially the third category) could increase their capacity in this area? In the round table discussions with InterAction, I felt that other too should perhaps be there to benefit from their funding strategies and concerns on the operational activities on the ground.

- We do appreciate that such can be arranged. It costs money to come. The first problem is that the time given to discuss issues whether in the plenary, Regional or round table meetings is never enough. NGOs coming for the first time miss out due the way the meetings are arranged. By the time one picks up a session has ended.
- Talking about representation, most of the NGOs that come for the consultation are either attached to an International NGO or are international NGOs. There are many indigenous and national NGOs who cannot afford to come and so they miss out. For example this year there were less than 6 African NGOs represented.
- It was a very good opportunity to meet staff of UNHCR you work with and you never meet, to put names on figures, to exchange ideas, concerns and way of work with other countries, and to resolve internal problems between UNHCR and Implementing Partners.
- The arrangements for locations were very good but too far from Palais des Nations and Downtown, and we can add that three in a room was too much.
- Without undermining the overall importance and usefulness of pre-Excom, there should be discussion on how to improve the presence and involvement of organizations coming from the South as well as to put their issues and concerns on the agenda of the meetings. One way could be to organize regional pre-Excom meetings in the different regions in preparation for the Geneva pre-Excom meetings.
- I am grateful for the opportunity given to my organization to be part of this year Pre-Excom NGOs' Consultations.
- Ensure a more transparent and organized NGO Statement drafting process. May be add a session where NGOs can contribute their input and where the statement can be approved.
- I want to commend the NGO Liaison Unit for the wonderful consultation they have put together.
- Everything went well, in terms of structure and usefulness. It was my first year to attend, so I cannot really compare with previous editions. Also, I was part of the planning team so; I do not have the most objective view on them. What I can say is that thanks to the consultations and the panels that we (Save the Children) could organize, we managed to have relevant SC colleagues attending and the quality of our participation and input to the consultation gained enormously.
- It was the first time I participated and was very impressed by the smooth organisation of this event. Participants come from varied background: advocacy, field, Human rights, academia etc so it must be difficult to accommodate all preoccupations/interests.
- I felt that these consultations were useful and well organized.
- For most NGOs which have been attending these meetings for a while, this is not an opportunity to learn much any more, but to network and reaffirm old and establish new relationships.

Many of us in the NGO community are still looking forward to being a part of the discussion about the restructuring of HCR, as we do believe that we can offer some constructive criticism and assistance in the process. The sessions offered at the Annual Consultations represent a good starting point.

The cluster approach is still more of a theory than a reality. We are concerned that not enough time was spent during this meeting discussing this matter in more depth. The Ugandan example was useful, but it was just that – an example of what happens in a country whose government is ready and willing to take part in resolving the crisis. But what happens in places where the governments (some of the members of ExCom) do not recognize the IDP

situation on their territory and do not want to engage the international community on resolving it. Is UNHCR really up to the task? Is this new approach any different from any old one? How do we manage to attend all the meetings that are being called in countries piloting the Clusters? All of these and many more questions were left largely unanswered. The overall impressions are positive, and NGOs do appreciate the openness of HCR to network with us through the NGO Liaison Unit. Special thanks need to go to the staff of the NGO Liaison Unit for their efforts to make this experience a pleasant one.

- I think the side meetings were much more useful than the plenary/regional/roundtable sessions, but were organized in such a manner as to overlap – meaning you’d miss the plenary, etc., if you wanted to attend a side meeting. This was confusing, and led to less participation in each than would otherwise be the case.
- 1. Although NGOs participating for the first time in consultations were introduced to the main concepts of consultations and what is expected from them, through pre-consultation information and the preparatory meeting held on first day 27-09-06, it seems more suitable to achieve more active participation to deliver more clear picture earlier.
2. From our perspective, more reaction was anticipated from NGOs considering the large number of participants. Certainly more active participation is necessary with more interactivity from participating NGOs. Ways to encourage this should be sought to get better results next year. Suggestions such as conducting surveys among participants during the period of consultations or allowing some sort of voting for certain issues of concern could be considered.
3. More time interval could be allowed between the Annual Consultations and the ExCom session, so that conclusions and reporting from consultations with NGOs would be available to ExCom in time. This could be achieved alternatively by allocating more human resources for this purpose.
4. Taking into consideration the venue of consultations, and the number of NGOs participating in the consultations, with many of them operating in different fields and with other UN agencies, may be more coordination could be obtained if more key officials from other UN agencies are invited to the consultations.
- I highly appreciate the work done by the Unit. Last time I participated on Pre-ExCom and ExCom meetings 7 years ago... (1999). There is a great improvement since!! I am impressed how you can provide with this ‘efficient’ environment, in the same time allow lot of diverse organizations to lobby and learn.
- The meetings were good and very useful.
- Maybe more preparation for the moderators – a Trial run??
A preparatory session for the NGOs – in particular those there for the first time (over and above the ICVA briefing, which is excellent – more of an introduction to the UN in general and UNHCR in particular
- I was not able to attend many of the other meetings except the ones I was presenting at (and therefore am not in the best position to judge their value!) but overall found the experience of being at the Annual Consultations enormously rewarding and worthwhile. As my first experience, I was impressed by the atmosphere, the general level of organisation and the quality and variety of people who were there. I will certainly try and come again.

Link to Excom

- The Link to ExCom must be emphasised. Delegates coming to ExCom must have the statement from NGOs before they come otherwise the NGO Statement is not considered by the ExCom Delegates. OR at least the NGO statement should be read on the very first day of ExCom preferable during the opening session.
- The connection with ExCom is rather weak and some cynics may say it doesn’t even exist. NGOs generally feel that the role we play in the development and implementation of humanitarian programs is a crucial one and that only by sharing information and combining resources we can be somewhat successful in delivering the promise to those whom we serve.

There shouldn't and couldn't be only one agency that has the final authority when it comes to serving forcibly displaced, regardless of its mandate, capacity, expertise or history. Only through the continuous partnership with the private and public sectors will the beneficiaries of our service be able to take advantage of them.

Structure

- Ultimately I question the format of these sessions are right in order for this to be called a real consultation between NGOs and UNHCR. More time is needed between sessions for networking. There perhaps needs to be a market stall area where NGOs can inform others of their work, so they don't do so during debates. Perhaps questions that NGOs want to raise and want answers to can be prepared and sent to UNHCR in advance so discussions are more concrete.
- The structure this year was really clean, and seemed to work well. One suggestion though: add some kind of plenary-type session where participants might have 5-7 minutes each to voice special individual country issues or regional concerns. This would go a long way towards solving every year's problem of so many who come such long distances determined to present a particular experience or worry no matter what the actual topic or time allowance of a session might be, as well as offer a genuine opportunity to surface some NGO issues that otherwise might be lost in the formats of the other sessions. Among this year's examples: the Chaldean Iraqi refugees, several movements of people in Africa.

Sessions

- Where speakers cannot speak in English there really needs to be interpretation available to ensure a session is successful and enough time is available for discussion.
- The key to the success of these discussions as they are now lies very much with the quality of chairing and of presentations and the preparation. In 90 minutes there needs to be a clear focus and objective. Participants need to leave not only feeling like they learned something but like some ideas on what can be done to address problems have been raised and will be followed up.
- Some of the sessions were really good about encouraging participants to ask related questions together—i.e., after one question was asked, immediately inquiring as to whether other participants had related questions on the issue.

Interaction with the High Commissioner

- The High Commissioners remarks on the IDP issue and the migration / asylum nexus were very much to the point and very reassuring. I think the NGO community can be greatly encouraged by the High Commissioner's position on these two issues and also his position on NGO-HCR partnership. We all hope that we can build on these positions.
- Commendations to the High commissioner on being so candid in his presentation and supportive and accommodating re NGOs.

Plenary sessions

- I noted that during the Plenary session on Fri 29th Sept most UNHCR staff were in HQ for a meeting on the internal situation/redundancies etc. Scheduling this meeting at this time appears to indicate that UNHCR do not attach a lot of importance to these consultations with NGOs.
- A number of my NGO colleagues reiterated my view that they would not come to Geneva solely in order to attend these Consultations but only if another event brought them there at the same time.

- The Final Plenary should give absolute priority to the NGO summary/ExCom Link report of the Rapporteur. Cutting the time was of course regretted this year, but it's also a question of place in the agenda. It would be better to put the NGO report ahead of anything else that last session.
- Even then, can the NGO presentations and High Commissioner's report be moved up in the week—maybe even leading off the NGO Consultations? This would allow the NGOs to more formally “kick off” the week, perhaps with one or two “keynoter” types of presentations that could frame a theme or suggest a unifying element. In the same spirit, if the High Commissioner were to go either on the first day or well before the last day, his address would be far less anticlimactic—and far more helpful for NGO consideration, attention and action throughout the week.
- Though this is more about ExCom than the NGO Consultations themselves, Christine Bloch at the side event on the Migration-Asylum nexus was simply splendid. Together with Micheline from Canada and Erika Feller, it was one of the finest moments of the entire Pre-ExCom and ExCom weeks.
- Time was at times pressing and prevented expanding on discussions and general interaction.
- Given that it would be difficult to extend time for round-tables and sessions, Esquel suggests the creation of round-tables within Regional Sessions to provide more specific thematic discussions for participants' interests.

Side Meetings

- The side meetings should be on the website early on and should be at the end of the official Agenda as many Organizations do not read other documents and are thus unaware of the side meetings.

Recommendations for 2007

- For 2007 Southern NGO need more visibility, opportunities and participation in putting together the agenda.
The visibility and the active participation of southern NGO are still low in my view.
There is a need to promote more engagement of Southern NGO on panels and putting together the agenda and round tables.
- A more representative selection of the panelists that takes into consideration the richness of experience of the various players on the ground. Less presentation to allow more debate during the sessions.
A more flexible agenda to facilitate more networking opportunities.
- Please include in the packets a map or some basic plan of Palais if possible—to help folks find not just the main meeting rooms but also the principal rooms used for side events.
- For the coming two or three years, this time of September will coincide with the month of Ramadan. In the spirit of the High Commissioner's remark on this fact, it would be good to make sure that the NGO consultation conference does not coincide with the Islamic month of fasting, as travelling during this month and attending meetings is very stressful for Muslim delegates.
- Perhaps you could include a session specifically for filling in evaluations. I know of other conferences where the participants are made to do this and it makes for a much higher response rate.
The social event on Thursday evening was good (more vegetarian options next time though please, and can you label foods so people with dietary requirements know what they can/cannot eat).
Oh, and if possible could you time it next year so that it doesn't collide with the Human Rights Council? I was meant to go to both and had to split my time between them. However, I appreciate that this will be a minority concern, as most NGOs at the consultations will not

be Geneva-based (no, they're all from Australia!)

- Maybe for the next time more people organizations and NGOs from the Middle East are required because the hot crisis is still not resolved.
- Generally I thought the consultation was good. My only problem was that all the side meetings were scheduled for the UNHCR HQ which meant that it was next to impossible to get back to the round tables even if that hour was free. It was suggested to us that the delegation come one day early to enable less of a scheduling crunch, and I think this is a good idea which we will consider next year.
- There should be more time to have real Q & A and debates. It should be a forum for making real consultations and come up together with acceptable solutions/resolutions etc.
- Suggestion for 2007 is to initiate correspondence between different organizations and associations which have an IP status. You can try to connect and to put face to face the donor organizations with the ones that work directly with the subjects (in this case, the refugees)

I think that we should concentrate more upon the legislation of the countries and raise awareness upon the uniformity of the applicants for asylum and the refugees.

We should exchange experience even if those are not sustained by Geneva. I think that you should try the organisation capacities of other countries in order to exchange exceptional information and competence skills, in order to improve our activities.

One of the most important things that should be taken into consideration is the fact that the participants return home by plane and cannot take home all the informational materials provided during the ex-com. All the brochures are extremely interesting and important and I think that the organizations should find solutions. You can send these by post, on the addresses of the associations, foundations and organizations, especially to those organizations which work effectively as IP.

- If we use September 11, 2001 as a benchmark, how far this tragic event affected asylum policies in countries which used the known as "Terre d'Asile" are legislating anti refugee law or are introducing xenophobia policies. What can NGO's do together to counter this Trend?
- Only suggestion would be to spread the panel participation to more NGOs rather than just a few used repeatedly. Same with moderators!
- The main concern of the NGOs present is: how to communicate the lively and stimulating nature of the Pre-ExCom discussions into the ExCom process. One means might be to videotape the proceedings to the Web for consultation by ExCom members, though this might inhibit some of the discussions.
- Another matter of concern to some of us is: how to ensure some "seepage" into Pre-ExCom and ExCom of the simultaneous meeting of the Human Rights Council and its Treaty Monitoring Bodies. Several issues – Uzbeks, IDPs, Arbitrary Deprivation of Nationality/Statelessness, to name but a few – were being addressed separately and simultaneously by both instances. Although some Missions were in attendance at both, by and large NGOs and UNHCR were not.
- The most negative aspect was the clashing of the NGO consultations (and ExCom) with the second session of the Human Rights Council. I know that this worry is shared by other NGOs too. For us, this has implied further stretch of already limited resources between official and non-official meetings happening at the same time, without being able to contribute and attend them fully. I have heard that this will happen again next year and I sincerely expect the NGO liaison unit to try and avoid such an overlapping (including with ExCom). The risk is to have fewer NGO representatives participating and lower level of contribution. I could not attend many of the side events and sessions.
- Another point for improvement is the last plenary of the NGO Consultations. It would have been of much more benefit to have it organized as a panel discussion amongst the HC, the NGO rapporteur, ExCom chair/rapporteur as the issues/questions were at the end of the day very similar. It was a big frustration not to have any possibility (2 minutes is not a

possibility) of hearing Christine Bloch and her report. It was good to have her addressing

- I think that a real challenge of future consultations, commencing with the 2007 Annual Consultations with NGOs, would be to ensure that NGO input leads to a clear synthesis of the issues – something beyond the limited boundaries of the standard NGO statement – and feeds more intentionally into the Executive Committee sessions which follow. A presentation of the NGO statement close to the end of the EX COM hardly represents an adequate means of considering NGO issues and concerns.
- A general suggestion for 2007 meeting would be to drop the case studies when discussing general policy and to screen the various presentations to eliminate waste of time and energy. Additionally, the Regional Bureau presentations should happen at different times to allow the participants to attend all of them if they so choose. The link between the Annual Consultations and ExCom needs to be strengthened and one mechanism for that would be to allow the NGOs and HCR to jointly start off the ExCom meetings with a statement prepared during the annual Consultations. I would even venture out to say that this approach would allow for a more vibrant meeting and perhaps would have a bit more flare than prepared statements read by various governments.
- In 2007 I would like to come back (well it still depends on funds), but my suggestion is to encourage NGOs IGOs and governments to have much more displays. Governments should also organise side events for NGOs just to improve their relationship with us. It would be great to start to have a ‘group photo’ each and every year (with the high commissioner if possible).
I would like to have a side meeting for NGOs involved in resettlement: maybe we could form a loose ‘Working Group’ incl. email list serve. In addition, I plan to have another side event for those who do not know about the resettlement, but would like to learn (especially the Canadian perspective).
(Cheap food for lunch would be a great help. Also, the food at the reception was not the very best and was not too much.)
- This was a useful meeting for me. I wish many more NGOs would attend such meetings. With only very few people attending from the third world especially from Africa, their voice may not be heard. For those of us from Africa, raising the money for travel and cost of staying in Geneva would be a challenge.
- Although I am aware of the difficulty of having the Annual Consultations with NGOs over a period of four days (instead of three), it would still be beneficial to do so. This would enable participants to attend more meetings without having to sacrifice some sessions for others.
- Esquel proposes the creation of round tables sessions for specific themes such as resettlement, protection and assistance. These thematic discussions could allow for greater specificity in specific regional aspects. Also, Esquel suggests that Regional Sessions be divided into Micro-Regional Sessions. These could provide a closer and more interactive discussion of issues that are of greater concern to the participants from a Micro-Region. For example Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela and Panama have similar issues and problems which can be discussed in more detail than if they were to share the time with other issues. By providing these Thematic Round-Tables, more specific themes and solutions could be discussed.