

# 2013 UNHCR Annual Consultations with NGOs

## ADVOCATING TOGETHER FOR PROTECTION

## Rapporteur's Report

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# Report on UNHCR's Annual Consultations with Non-Governmental Organizations

**11 – 13 JUNE 2013 - GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

## Abstract

This report provides highlights of the Annual Consultations with NGOs, which this year brought together some 411 representatives from around the world, representing 220 different NGOs, UN and international organizations from 78 different countries, of which 126 of these NGOs were national NGOs and 101 were international NGOs.

This year's main theme, *Advocating Together for Protection*, guided much of the discussion. The consultations included five regional sessions and ten thematic sessions covering: internal displacement, sexual and gender-based violence, statelessness, UNHCR's Framework for Implementing with Partners, the High Commissioner's Structured Dialogue on Partnership, protection of children, national asylum systems, refugee resettlement, detention, and advocating together for protection. In addition, several side events took place on: faith and protection (as a follow up to the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges); cash-based interventions in UNHCR operations; kidnapping of refugees for ransom; displaced youth; stateless Rohingya; the refugee status determination (RSD) process in Latin America; professional standards; and refugees' sexual orientation and gender identity.

Three major points emerged during the consultations:

- The Syria crisis is a major concern. The international community must do more to respond not only to this crisis but also to less visible emergencies and protracted situations around the world.
- The urban refugee issue affects all regions. Humanitarian actors are encouraged to pursue creative, practical strategies to promote income generation, employment and social inclusion for this population.
- More should be done to advocate together for protection, including on issues of statelessness, detention, child protection, internal displacement, mixed migration, etc. Upcoming opportunities for joint advocacy include: the December 2013 High Commissioner's Dialogue on the Protection of IDPs, the 60th anniversary of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, and the 30th anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration.

This report has been prepared with the information provided by those responsible for each session and input from UNHCR and NGO participants. The report contains information from all of the main sessions and some of the side meetings. It has been structured in the following way: (A) introduction; (B) the opening session; (C) the five regional sessions; (D) the ten thematic sessions; (E) side events on *Faith & Protection* and *Cash-based interventions in UNHCR operations*; and (F) the closing session.

The full report may also be accessed at [www.unhcr.org/ngo-consultations](http://www.unhcr.org/ngo-consultations) and [www.icvanetwork.org](http://www.icvanetwork.org).

Prepared with the assistance of resource persons from the following organizations:  
Care Canada, North-western University (USA), and Asylum Access.

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# REPORT ON UNHCR'S ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

11 – 13 JUNE 2013 - GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

## A. INTRODUCTION

This year's main theme, *Advocating Together for Protection*, guided many of the discussions, and many participants agreed on the need to work together to promote protection and durable solutions as part of a comprehensive and holistic response. Participants discussed examples where complementary advocacy by UNHCR, civil society and refugees themselves had produced positive results, and pinpointed other situations where partnership in advocacy could be useful. Advocating together requires mutual respect, transparency and understanding of different roles and complementarities among partners.

This report has been prepared with the information provided by those responsible for each session and input from UNHCR and NGO participants. The report contains information from all of the main sessions and some of the side meetings. It has been structured in the following way: (A) introduction; (B) the opening session; (C) the five regional sessions; (D) the ten thematic sessions; (E) side events on Faith & Protection and Cash-based interventions in UNHCR operations; and (F) the closing session. Specific recommendations to advance the protection of refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR are proposed throughout the document.

Over the course of the next year, several actions need to be taken together in partnership. As the High Commissioner pointed out in his closing statement, working together requires open communication and information sharing, mutual respect, trust, transparency and understanding, and the recognition that there are both complementarities and distinctions between different organisations' mandates and roles. The coming year presents important opportunities to advocate together for protection, including: (1) the December 2013 High Commissioner's Dialogue on IDPs; (2) the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons; and (3) the 30th anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration.

## B. OPENING SESSION

UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner (DHC) T. Alexander Aleinikoff recalled the essential role of NGO partners in working together to fulfil UNHCR's mandate.

He spoke of examples of the partnership between UNHCR and NGOs in Burundi, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Yemen, Kenya, the UK, and elsewhere. He stressed that more progress was needed on unresolved issues such as protracted refugee situations. He welcomed ideas on how to push jointly for solutions to problems that cannot be solved by humanitarian organizations alone.

UNHCR's Director for External Relations Daniel Endres recalled various helpful initiatives to improve the partnership between UNHCR and civil society, including the High Commissioner's Structured Dialogue on UNHCR-IFRC-NGO Partnership and the 2012 High Commissioner's Dialogue on Faith and Protection. He noted that advocating for protection together required joint advocacy on core protection issues.

ICVA Executive Director Nan Buzard spoke on the challenges of working with a growing number of NGO stakeholders on an increasing number of issues. She highlighted the need for more outreach towards affected populations, host governments, and development institutions. She also previewed plans to take global-level discussions on partnership to the regional and field levels.

## C. REGIONAL SESSIONS

### 1. THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (MENA)

#### Background of the session

The number of refugees in the Middle East and North Africa region has considerably increased over the last year, mainly due to the Syrian refugee crisis as well as the conflict in Mali. The region continues to experience dramatic developments resulting in more refugee outflows, more internal displacement, and sadly, more loss of life. With some exceptions, refugees in the MENA region reside largely in urban settings not camps. This requires the adoption of different assistance strategies and methods on part of the humanitarian community.

The discussion centred on current conflicts in the region, with a particular focus on Syria and the implications of this conflict in terms of protection, coordination, resource optimization and involvement of local NGOs. Participants were also keen to ensure that other emergencies in the region were not overlooked.

#### Major points arising from speakers and discussions (trends & challenges)

- The Syria situation, with more than 1.6 million refugees and 4 million IDPs, is becoming one of the worst humanitarian situations the MENA region has ever faced, with increasing difficulties in accessing populations in need and delivering humanitarian assistance due to deteriorating security conditions on the ground.
- There is a disparity of treatment between Syrian and Palestinian-Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries.
- Humanitarian aid helps but cannot resolve the on-going conflict in Syria due to the political root causes of the situation.
- On 7 June 2013, the UN launched the largest humanitarian appeal ever for the Syria situation, seeking \$2.9 billion to assist Syrian refugees and \$1.4 billion to assist IDPs. Along with the Jordanian and Lebanese Governments' own appeals, the appeal surpasses \$5 billion, making it the biggest humanitarian appeal in the history of the UN.
- While the situation in Syria is catastrophic and warrants a massive humanitarian response, it is eclipsing other humanitarian situations in the region that also deserve attention and funding.
- The majority of funds available for MENA are allocated for Syrian refugees, thereby limiting the funds available for other situations in the region. In the case of Egypt, Syrian refugees receive twice the amount of money, clothing and food vouchers that other refugee populations receive (e.g., Eritreans.)
- The influx of Syrian refugees into neighbouring countries is creating a scarcity of local resources in host countries and causing local discontent. Host communities' generosity cannot be taken for granted.
- Across MENA, the absence of a legal framework in a majority of countries in the region places an excess of responsibility on UNHCR. The responsibility to protect refugees is first and foremost with the governments.
- There is a new web portal ([www.data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees](http://www.data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees)) that is an information-sharing and coordination tool.

## Recommendations/Conclusions

- Participants requested agencies operating inside Syria to do more collectively when it comes to the protection of civilians, opening of humanitarian corridors, etc.
- The international community should not take refugee-hosting countries for granted. They should share the burden.
- NGOs and UNHCR should work together to create more targeted initiatives. They should coordinate better amongst themselves in order to avoid duplication of efforts.
- Skills gained by responding to previous conflicts in the region (e.g. the Iraqi refugee crisis) should be utilized and shared more effectively.
- Local NGOs should be more involved in the humanitarian coordination because of their knowledge of the local circumstances.
- Cultural differences should be assessed when determining solutions.
- The emergence of new refugee crises, like Syria, should not prevent other existing refugee crises from receiving adequate attention and aid.

## 2. ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

### Background of the session

The absence of legal and institutional frameworks for refugee protection in many countries in Asia poses great challenges. Disparities in asylum practices often lead to secondary movements as refugees and asylum seekers search for countries where they have a better chance of having their needs met.

Of the 3.6 million refugees in Asia, fewer than 1.3 million live in refugee camps. The overwhelming majority are in urban environments. While urban settings may sometimes offer certain advantages compared to camp settings, such as greater freedom of movement and livelihood opportunities, they also bring significant risks for vulnerable populations. In some countries, the granting of residence permits and socio-economic rights have allowed good progress in the situation of urban refugees. However, other challenges persist in terms of access, assistance, and funding.

This session discussed the need to think creatively about urban refugees, including local integration, access to work permits and participation in the labour economy. The Asia Bureau renewed its commitment toward women and children and the SGBV framework, especially in the urban context.

### Major points arising from speakers and discussions (trends & challenges)

- Civil society has played and is playing an important role in supporting governments and UNHCR to ensure the protection of refugees and asylum seekers in mixed migratory flows (e.g. through or in parallel to the Almaty and Bali processes).
- There are ways to improve the situation of urban refugees through advocacy, even in countries which have not acceded to the Refugee Conventions (e.g. India's example of access to work permits, employment in the formal sector, ATM cards, etc.)
- It is useful to exchange country-specific practices and engage in constructive discussions to find alternatives to detention (e.g. successful joint advocacy in Thailand).
- Effective livelihood programming, including training, is required to address refugee needs. There is no "one size fits all" approach to this, especially in the case for youth (e.g. tertiary education, language education, basic skills, etc.)

- Boat movements and recent tragedies highlight the need to put better reception arrangements in place.
- A variety of situations were discussed, including Afghanistan, the Bhutanese in Nepal, the Chin in Mizoram, IDP reintegration in Pakistan, Tibetan refugees in Nepal and India, Hazara refugees in Iran and Pakistan, and the overall situation in Myanmar, including IDPs in remote, inaccessible areas.

### Recommendations/Conclusions

- **Livelihoods:** There is a need for a fresh, creative approach towards alternative forms of “local integration” that include self-reliance programs such as youth clubs and campaigns, income generation programs and placement support, business grants, long-term visas, bank accounts and work permits. It should promote access to work permits and better livelihoods within the regular labour economy, with social networks providing a safety net. It should avoid undermining refugees’ abilities to cope with real-life situations (e.g. repaying their loans, fulfilling their responsibilities, etc.) and creating parallel systems. UNHCR should partner with local NGOs to help them promote youth’s skills in line with market demand. It would be helpful to have more UN bodies such as ILO present during future consultations to generate more partnership opportunities.
- **Protection of children in urban areas:** Partners should encourage governments to develop protocols for dealing with unaccompanied minors (UAM). NGOs can be involved in various forms of care to UAMs.
- **Durable solutions:** Addressing durable solutions from the onset of a situation is necessary, as most issues raised at the Consultations are associated with the lack of durable solutions. NGOs need substantial funding to support durable solutions.
- **Engage NGOs and CBOs from the beginning:** Session participants acknowledged the great work carried out by civil society in Asia (especially the APRRN network) in launching initiatives, capacity building and work towards promoting national legislation in countries that currently do not have refugee laws. UNHCR and NGOs could better promote each other’s missions and mandates with governments. Joint messaging and transparency of UNHCR’s actions are important to reduce refugee population anxiety, including in the Thailand / Myanmar border camps.
- **Gender:** A gender focal point should exist within each of UNHCR’s Divisions to ensure women and children issues do not slip off the agenda. A renewed commitment of the Asia Bureau towards Women and Children’s issues should be addressed not only in a specific “Women and Children” context or in the SGBV framework, but at all levels. Networking with women’s organizations should be pursued, especially in the urban context.

## 3. AFRICA

### Background of the session

The Africa session focused on the use of new approaches to protection and included discussions on: strategic litigation to protect urban refugees in Kenya; supporting durable solutions for refugees in protracted situations; the global strategic priorities in Africa; and the challenges presented in addressing growing needs with limited funding. The Africa session was divided in three main parts:

(1) A discussion on UNHCR’s urban refugee policy and on how advocating together in an urban setting can bring tangible protection results. The discussion centred on the situation in Kenya and the experience of Kituo Cha Sheria (Legal Advice Centre), the NGO that filed a petition asking the Kenyan High Court to pronounce itself on the legality of a government directive that effectively suspended Kenya’s urban refugee policy.

(2) An update on the implementation of the comprehensive solutions strategies for refugees in protracted situations in Africa, including Rwandan refugees. The Director of the Bureau briefed

on the outcomes of the Ministerial meeting recently held in Pretoria, South Africa, involving the countries of asylum and of origin, as well as on the next steps with regard to the strategy's recommendation to invoke by 30 June 2013 cessation of refugee status for those who fled Rwanda before 31 December 1998.

(3) A briefing on UNHCR's programmes in Africa for 2014 and 2015. While funding for UNHCR programmes in Africa has increased, so have the needs, with multiple emergencies on the continent receiving the bulk of available funding. The Deputy Director of the Division of Programme Support and Management presented the Office's 2014-15 Global Strategic Priorities that will guide the prioritization of programme activities for the next two years.

## Major points arising from speakers and discussions (trends & challenges)

### Urban refugee policy

- Participants discussed the need to work jointly with all actors in the field and explored ways to respond collectively to the threats on the urban protection space.
- Concerns were raised about some governments reversing the implementation of the urban refugee policy in the region, illustrated by the halting of registration of refugees in urban areas in Kenya and the closing of registration centres in urban areas in South Africa.
- Some participants underscored the perception that UNHCR had failed to publicly respond to allegations of serious abuse of Somali refugees by Kenyan police after the issuance of the Directive in Nairobi. UNHCR acknowledged that there are times when UNHCR's ability to react publicly and robustly is limited, and there are also instances when protection-related advocacy is more effective when communicated privately.
- Participants highlighted the need for a change in mind-set with regard to non-camp approaches of refugee operations.
- Participants emphasized the importance of outreach to urban populations. Humanitarian actors are still not reaching a large part of the urban refugee population, and the underfunding of urban operations remains a big challenge.
- Participants expressed concern about some governments' lack of registration capacity and resources. Governments have a fundamental role to play in the implementation of the urban refugee policy.
- As shown in the Kenya case study, litigation is an important protection tool in urban areas. It is crucial to establish funding mechanisms to support local initiatives for local cases, as the costs of litigation processes can be high.
- Participants highlighted the importance of providing urban refugees not only legal protection but also social protection (e.g. housing, livelihoods, etc.).
- In many locations the urban policy is working well (e.g. an urban refugee orientation centre in Senegal).
- The use of cash-based assistance was cited as a critical consideration when determining whether the camp or out-of-camp option would be the best approach in a certain situation.

### Comprehensive solutions strategies for refugees in protracted situations

The Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa briefly presented the main comprehensive solution strategies that have been implemented with the aim of bringing a closure to specific displacement situations. Four situations were mentioned in particular:

1. Situations almost resolved, but with outstanding issues: Congolese from the Republic of Congo in Gabon, Sierra Leoneans, and the Mtabila situation in Tanzania
2. Situations for which important outstanding issues remain before going to closure: Angolans, and Liberians
3. Recent situations (considered as specially complex and extremely sensitive): Rwandans and Somalis in Kenya

#### 4. A situation in limbo whose positive momentum could be reversed: the 162,000 newly naturalized Tanzanians (former Burundian refugees) in Tanzania

With regard to the Rwandan strategy, the main components were presented, i.e. voluntary repatriation, local integration, the recommendation to cease refugee status, and continuing protection for those who require it. A meeting of all States concerned was organized in Pretoria in April 2013 to review how to move forward on the implementation of the Rwandan strategy. Pursuing local integration opportunities remains at the heart of the strategy. The different asylum countries have started implementing several components of the strategy at a different pace. It was stressed that there was no general agreement about the recommendation to cease refugee status.

States which could roughly be divided into three groups:

- States which will invoke cessation: Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe
- States which cannot invoke cessation: Republic of Congo, South Africa and Uganda
- States announcing that they will not implement cessation: DRC, Mozambique.

The situation of Rwandan refugees in Uganda was then presented by Ms. Charity Ahumuza from the Refugee Law Project in Uganda. While this NGO had collected testimonies of those who did not want to return, there is currently no body to deal with those cases, which has created some tensions within the community. Therefore, the Refugee Law Project would like to work on a mechanism to process such cases.

Some of the key issues that came out of the following discussion included the following:

- Information should be shared more regularly and transparently among UNHCR, partners and governments.
- NGOs stressed that the choice for repatriation should be voluntary and the process open and fair.
- Participants expressed concern about the risk of people becoming stateless after the cessation of refugee status and highlighted the need to provide for alternative status.
- Participants wanted to know more about UNHCR's approach after 30 June. In particular, some questions were raised on the status of UNHCR's discussions with governments to avoid abuses once the cessation clause entered into force. UNHCR stated that it would "keep the door open" and continue working with all actors, including relevant governments, on any pending issues after the invocation of the cessation clause on 30 June.
- UNHCR reported it was not putting pressure on governments to invoke the cessation clause, and that it was focusing mostly on the local integration component of the strategy.

#### **UNHCR's programmes in Africa for 2014 and 2015**

The Deputy Director of UNHCR's Division of Program Support and Management (DPSM) presented UNHCR's Global Strategic Priorities (GSPs) and their overall objectives (e.g. to strengthen protection, improve the quality of life and contribute to durable solutions). He pointed out that reaching the GSPs is an incremental, continuous process. All actors need to communicate and exchange information to ensure the eventual achievement of measurable progress. The importance of GSPs for monitoring programmes to measure the actual change in the beneficiaries' situation (as reported annually through UNHCR's Global Reports) was highlighted. The need to work collectively and raise enough resources to meet these essential priorities was also stated.

The following are some of the key issues that came out of the ensuing discussion:

- The difficult humanitarian situations in Chad, Sudan and South Sudan were raised. In particular, the recent inflow of Darfuri refugees into Chad in a context of decreasing operations in this country was discussed. The decision of the Chadian government to stop

considering displaced Chadians as IDPs as of 2014 raised some concerns. The lack of access to populations in need in South Kordofan and the Blue Nile States (Sudan) was also mentioned by participants.

- Some participants raised the issue of statelessness in Côte d'Ivoire for returnees, but also for host populations. UNHCR briefed participants on statelessness in the country and in South Sudan, its biggest statelessness operation in the Africa region.
- Some participants underscored the challenge of being held accountable when funding is limited and donors communicate conflicting priorities.
- Changes in the planning process have raised the expectations of refugees, putting additional pressure on local partners who do not always have enough information to be able to manage these expectations.
- Participants reiterated the need for more joint planning and a more participatory process in the field.
- UNHCR invited all participants to make suggestions on how to improve monitoring and measure impact. Participants suggested UNHCR focuses too much on quantifying results and is not asking the right questions or using the right metrics to measure success in improving the quality of life.
- Participants expressed concern about the lack of funding and the difficulties to prioritize activities. They urged UNHCR to ensure more predictability and stability in funding. Participants discussed the need for all actors to plan and fundraise jointly.
- UNHCR called upon all partners for collective planning, prioritization, and monitoring of activities.

## Recommendations/Conclusions

### Urban Policy

- There is a clear need for a more collective approach to operations in urban areas, in particular with regard to the following:
- Responding collectively to protection threats in urban areas (e.g. developing a joint strategy to respond to those threats, using regional treaty bodies, mitigating risks, and reviewing partnership with municipal and national actors)
- Improving access to social services in urban areas
- Complementing each other and coordinating actions and strategies
- Changing minds about encampment policies by using new tools to promote protection of refugees and their assistance in urban areas.

### Comprehensive solutions strategies for refugees in protracted situations

- There is a need for more collective discussions to set priorities and for UNHCR to share the outcomes of the Pretoria meeting.
- There were concerns on detention and alternatives to detention in the Africa region.

### UNHCR's programmes in Africa for 2014 and 2015

- UNHCR and partners committed to work together on the issues raised during the session. There is a need to define new ways of planning, working and raising funds.
- Regarding programmes, participants advocated for better joint planning, prioritization and programming. They called upon more transparency and sharing of information on resourcing.
- Participants were encouraged to contact UNHCR's new focal points in the region, including a focal point on statelessness based in Dakar.

## 4. AMERICAS

### Background of the session

This session was titled *Advocating for protection of persons with specific needs: LGBTI, unaccompanied children, indigenous people and Afro-descendants in the Americas*. While all individuals forced to flee because of persecution, conflict or violence leave behind their homes, families and communities and find themselves in a situation of acute vulnerability, asylum-seekers, refugees and displaced persons have distinct and specific needs depending on their gender, experience during flight or their belonging to minority groups. These needs require special attention to ensure access to protection and to safeguard individual rights.

Participants in the Americas session looked into developing a multi-faceted integrated advocacy strategy, including political and legal responses, for protection of persons with specific needs: LGBTI individuals, indigenous people and Afro-descendants. They also discussed using the 30th anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration to address protection gaps and promote effective responses. The aim was to explore challenges and share best practice in addressing the plight of persons of concern with specific needs in the region.

### Major points arising from speakers and discussions (trends & challenges)

- On LGBTI issues in Haiti, Mr. Laguerre of Fondation SEROVie provided insights on the protection needs among the LGBTI displaced population, mainly in terms of access to justice, shelter, medical, and psychosocial support. He indicated that private medical assistance is more neutral to LGBTI issues but is less accessible and more costly, that rural areas are somewhat more tolerant than urban centres on sexual orientation and that certain religious groups are spreading prejudice and discrimination against LGBTI people. Underground networks of advocates can bring forward the protection agenda for this group and create a trustworthy and reliable system for LGBTI individuals to access protection.
- Mr. Nunez Medina presented the work of Fundación Casa Alianza in Mexico in helping migrant children coming out of violence, trafficking, drug addiction and street life. Their project aims to integrate unaccompanied children into Mexican life. A significant challenge remains for those who want to proceed north towards the U.S. rather than repatriate or stay in Mexico. There is a need for a more concerted approach at the regional level to address the issue of UAMs.
- Mr. Minda of Universidad Luis Vargas Torres de Esmeraldas presented the challenges for protection of indigenous people and Afro-Colombians who flee armed conflict. He highlighted new displacement trends due to megaprojects and mining in Colombia. This new source of displacement is left unattended. International mobilization is needed to provide solutions to those most affected by this phenomenon, namely indigenous people whose attachment to the land is intrinsic to their culture and being.

### Recommendations/Conclusions

- While different in nature and needs, the common trait among groups with specific needs is their minority status. Protection responses need to take this into account in diversified yet coordinated actions.
- There is a need to establish multi-layered advocacy interventions aiming at bringing together international, national and local actors dealing with the specificities of the protected groups in an integrated approach.
- There is a need to reinforce public policies aimed at protecting groups with specific needs. Neutral or favourable legislation is not enough.
- More regional cooperation is needed on a differentiated strategy for persons with specific needs.

- Building safety nets at various levels is key to success, including acting at the political level, awareness-raising to change public opinion, and legal support through judicial interventions and counselling.
- Participants noted the importance of working within the framework of the 30th Anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration to address protection gaps and provide adequate responses.

## 5. EUROPE

### Background of the session

This session was entitled *Refugee Protection and International Migration in Europe: Challenges and Responses*. All countries in Europe are, albeit in different ways, affected by irregular mixed movements of refugees and migrants and all are struggling with the complex challenges arising in this context. Countries in the EU's eastern and south-eastern neighbourhoods are located along major migration routes. They face a particularly challenging task in managing irregular migration in a way that takes into account the protection needs of people within these movements.

Civil society plays a vital role in assisting governments to set in place protection-sensitive responses, including through the direct provision of assistance to those in need. In many countries, civil society and UNHCR are working together with governments following UNHCR's 10-Point Plan of Action on Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration. Rising xenophobia in some countries constitutes another challenge requiring enhanced cooperation among stakeholders.

This session brought together representatives of NGOs from all around Europe to share their experience, exchange relevant good practices and explore areas for enhanced cooperation with each other, with their governments and with UNHCR. Twenty years after UNHCR established a presence in Eastern Europe and eighteen years after the ParInAc Conference, the session offered an opportunity to take stock of the challenges facing NGOs in Eastern Europe and review in which ways partnership and sustainability could be enhanced.

### Major points arising from speakers and discussions (trends & challenges)

The discussion focused in particular on access to the territory and to the asylum procedures in countries in Eastern and South-eastern Europe.

Particular protection challenges identified include:

- Difficulties accessing territory (entry officials are not always able to identify asylum-seekers and persons with specific needs and may refuse their entry)
- The lack of adequate reception capacity and long-term detention of asylum-seekers
- The lack of adequate NGO access to detention facilities
- Difficulties accessing asylum procedures and a substantive examination of the asylum request (asylum requests are, inter alia, rejected with reference to the "safe third country" concept, but a proper procedure is missing in many countries to ensure that individuals returned to a safe third country are referred to the relevant asylum procedure)
- The lack of adequate access to legal aid in the asylum procedure
- The lack of protection safeguards for groups with specific needs, such as children, victims of trafficking, persons fleeing Syria and failed Afghan asylum-seekers
- Xenophobia (which affects the protection environment).

NGOs are actively engaged, often in cooperation with UNHCR, to address these challenges. Examples include:

- The provision of practical assistance to state authorities, for instance in identifying asylum-seekers and in their referral to the asylum procedure
- Data collection and analysis as well as public awareness-raising
- Cross-border cooperation among NGOs in South-eastern and Eastern Europe (such as through the Zagreb Protocol) contributes to the provision of protection and information sharing
- The Strengthening Reception Capacity to Handle Migrants Reaching the Island of Lampedusa (Praesidium project), which is an initiative of the Italian government to develop protection-sensitive reception systems for sea arrivals together with several humanitarian agencies, demonstrating the importance of a multi-agency approach when addressing mixed maritime movements.

### Recommendations/Conclusions:

- UNHCR and civil society should further promote dialogue and practical cooperation. Organizing a separate UNHCR-NGO session for Europe and/or different sub-regions in Europe outside of the annual UNHCR-NGO consultations would allow for more detailed and focused discussions on specific issues and help to identify areas where more practical cooperation is needed. It would also contribute to enhanced cross-border and regional coordination.
- UNHCR and civil society should closely cooperate, with entry officials, on protection-sensitive entry systems. Border monitoring projects could assist countries that face difficulties in establishing effective asylum referral systems at the borders.
- Joint UNHCR-NGO advocacy efforts and detention monitoring could contribute to the reduction of the use and duration of detention and improvements in detention conditions.
- Recent successful court decisions demonstrate that strategic litigation can be an important advocacy tool.
- Sustainable capacity building of asylum and entry authorities, in particular in Eastern and South-eastern Europe continues to be necessary. Such capacity building has to be part of a comprehensive and balanced strategy. Asylum processing needs to be developed in parallel with enhanced reception and integration capacities.
- Cross-border cooperation among NGOs is resource-intensive and requires support.
- Good practices and lessons learned from the Praesidium Project (Lampedusa Model) can be replicated elsewhere. This includes a multi-agency approach with closely established mandates and methodologies for the deployment of mixed teams of experts when addressing mixed migratory movements, in particular in the context of large-scale arrivals.
- UNHCR must continue efforts to support governments and NGOs in Europe to fight xenophobia and fully integrate asylum seekers and refugees (focusing on education, health care and employment).

## D. THEMATIC SESSIONS:

### 1. Advocating Together to Resolve Statelessness

#### Background of the session

Collaborative advocacy efforts between UNHCR, civil society, academic institutions and stateless persons themselves are vital to resolving statelessness. While there has been

significant progress towards realizing commitments made by governments in areas such as the reform of nationality laws, creation of determination procedures and accession to the two UN Conventions, more effective strategies are needed to resolve protracted situations of statelessness, such as those affecting the Rohingya in Myanmar and former Soviet citizens in Europe and Central Asia. There is also a need to develop strong, working partnerships and to increase the number of NGOs working on statelessness worldwide. To this end, the upcoming commemorations of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (1954 Convention) provide an excellent opportunity through which to strengthen existing and develop new advocacy partnerships and networks.

This session focused on improving advocacy and collaboration in three key areas, with speakers from civil society and UNHCR for each:

- Advocating for implementation of State commitments to address statelessness
- Advocating for the resolution of protracted situations of statelessness
- Advocating for action in the context of the 60th anniversary of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.

### Major points arising from speakers and discussions (trends & challenges)

- There has been forward momentum on statelessness since the 2011 Ministerial Meeting involving a significant number of State pledges and the 2012 High Level of Rule of Law Event. In addition, the UPR process has increasingly addressed the issue.
- This “statelessness renaissance” enjoys increased knowledge and interest in statelessness. There is now a consensus in the analysis of the problem of statelessness and where action is needed.
- Challenges remain:
  - Very few NGOs work exclusively on statelessness
  - NGO actors have a different understanding of statelessness
  - Partners have failed to articulate the human impact of statelessness
  - The concepts of statelessness and refugees are sometimes conflated
  - It is difficult to involve stateless persons in discussions and efforts on their behalf
  - Stateless individuals are often not themselves aware that they are ‘stateless’
  - Nationality remains a sensitive issue (particularly in protracted situations which have a historical genesis)
  - It is difficult to resolve the tension between state sovereignty and the human right to a nationality (for everyone)
  - The lack of baseline data on the number and situations of stateless persons hampers advocacy efforts
  - Funding is lacking.

### Recommendations/Conclusions

- Speakers discussed developing global and regional networks to build a more proactive movement to eradicate statelessness and the need to engage with stateless communities to highlight the ‘human face of statelessness.’
- UNHCR and NGOs working on statelessness should develop a better understanding of each other’s mandates and strengths to enable better collaboration.
- NGOs and UNHCR were encouraged to participate in international fora to influence States to take action on statelessness (i.e. the OHCHR report on arbitrary deprivation of nationality, the post-2015 Millennium Development agenda, the UPR process, treaty body sessions, etc.).

- With respect to protracted situations, there is a need to find a way to stop the spread of intergenerational statelessness.
- A wider range of NGOs should form global and regional networks on statelessness. This includes 'non-traditional' NGOs working at the grass roots level with stateless people, community-based organizations, and country-level advocacy groups. NGOs need to identify how addressing statelessness can be incorporated into the work they are already doing.
- One area of collaboration is to collect evidence on the number and situation of stateless populations. UNHCR, NGOs and academic institutions can partner together to complement each other's skills and resources.
- Discussion should continue to determine whether a "Day of Action" or "Week of Action" on statelessness is a good way to highlight the issue, raise awareness and galvanize action – especially in the context of the upcoming anniversary of the 60th anniversary of the 1954 Statelessness Convention.
- NGOs and UNHCR should collaborate to provide legal assistance to stateless persons.
- NGOs and UNHCR should work together to share knowledge and train a wider network of stakeholders, including policy makers, the judiciary, the media and other civil society actors.

## 2. **Sexual and gender-based violence in emergencies: our collective responsibility to move from rhetoric to reality, from policy to implementation**

### Background of the session

Humanitarian response should be designed to deliver assistance in ways that strengthen protection and mitigate risk. Humanitarian organizations know that conflict and displacement increases vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) for women, girls, men and boys. We also know that humanitarian response will be more effective and risks will be reduced if protection considerations are integrated into all programming and if SGBV programs are in place at the beginning of an emergency. The humanitarian community has developed guidelines for addressing SGBV across program areas, including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines on Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings, which are currently being revised. UNHCR and NGOs have pledged to hold one another accountable for meeting basic protection standards in their work. Yet in too many places, they continue to fall short, and those most at risk pay the price. This session focused on the concrete, practical steps that must be taken across program areas to address SGBV and meet collective responsibilities to affected populations.

### Major points arising from speakers and discussions (trends & challenges)

- It was stressed that SGBV programming is a life-saving activity and must be prioritized. SGBV prevention and response are still not treated as life-saving interventions, and pooled funding allocations do not adequately address SGBV.
- UNHCR was encouraged to ensure that resources are prioritized for SGBV prevention and response interventions both from the start of new emergencies and in the context of protracted refugee situations.
- UNHCR stressed that the main challenge arising in the context of SGBV in emergencies is cultural. There is a need to identify what it can be done collectively to achieve social change.
- A study conducted by Raising Voices and Save the Children revealed around 48 per cent of school drops-outs are linked to violence in schools. The Good Schools Toolkit, a programme developed in Uganda, emphasizes working with children as agents of change as well as ensuring teachers are motivated and qualified and treat girls and boys equally.
- The International Rescue Committee (IRC) shared the experience of a program model for accurate emergency programming that takes into account the following lessons: there is a

need to deploy experts to lead coordination bodies, advocate for necessary funding, and ensure standards are met and SGBV is prioritized within the first 12 weeks of an emergency.

- The Human Rights Center of the University of California presented research conducted in four countries in 2012 examining safe shelter available to SGBV survivors among refugees and other forced migrants. It identified available options for safe shelter and examined gaps in protection. Several challenges were identified, such as: lack of security, lack of emotional support for both residents and staff; limited transition options leading to protracted stays; weak linkages between programs serving the host community and those serving refugees; legal and policy barriers; and limited services for LGBTI survivors, men and boys survivors, and persons with severe health conditions or survivors of certain types of SGBV.
- CARE spoke of the importance of engaging men and boys in discussions about cash-based assistance for female household members to prevent conflict in the household and ensure SGBV prevention and response are integrated into cash-based programming.
- Best practice includes: providing information on men's and women's rights (including both for staff as well as communities); working with community leaders to advocate for positive role models; and ensuring complaint mechanisms are in place for issues to be raised in a confidential manner, including by women.
- With regard to survival sex, it is important to remember the longer-term objective of helping individuals transition from survival sex to alternative forms of self-reliance through livelihoods programming. It is also important to ensure protection and services for individuals currently engaging in survival sex (e.g. reproductive health and HIV services). Education is closely linked to the prevention of SGBV and survival sex. There is learning required within the humanitarian community on how cash-based assistance can provide positive protection outcomes and how this can impact survival sex.

### Recommendations/Conclusions

- Multi-sectoral actors must recognize SGBV prevention and response as life-saving interventions and should be involved in both activities from the onset of an emergency.
- Men and boys must be engaged in multi-sectoral programs such as cash-based assistance to help prevent SGBV within households and communities.
- Men, boys and other marginalized groups of survivors need access to SGBV services.
- Cultural factors, including masculinities and community coping mechanisms, contribute to SGBV and are exacerbated by displacement. UNHCR and NGOs need to find a way to act collectively to plant seeds for social change regarding SGBV, challenging patriarchal norms, and promoting gender inequality.
- We should not impose a one-size-fits-all approach to SGBV, as this may be rejected by communities of concern and lead to a failure of SGBV prevention and response programmes. We need to work with local organizations and with local religious leaders, including before a crisis happens as part of emergency preparedness.
- The way we address SGBV must ensure that our intervention does not cause harm. This requires training and expertise.

## 3. Achieving durable solutions for IDPs in a changing operational context

### Background of the session

The UN Secretary-General's Framework on Durable Solutions calls on all UN agencies to engage in the process of finding durable solutions for IDPs. Various governments have recently taken steps to include IDP protection and durable solutions in development and social protection programs. The adoption of the Kampala Convention, which recognizes all forms of durable solutions, is a major step forward. Many civil society organizations, national and international, implement programs in support of the search for durable solutions. The search for

durable solutions for internal displacement almost always continues well beyond the humanitarian emergency phase. Sustained engagement with a wide array of actors, including with governments, civil society, and development actors is required.

The session promoted dialogue on the steps UNHCR and NGOs can take to jointly engage in the search for durable solutions, especially in fast-changing operational contexts facing diminishing resources. Panel presentations addressed: UNHCR's vision for IDP protection and solutions, the role of advocacy, lessons learnt from the past, and opportunities for advocacy to promote durable solutions.

### Major points raised by speakers and participants (trends & challenges)

- With 28.8 million IDPs displaced by conflict and 32.4 million newly displaced by sudden-onset natural disasters, there is a broad acknowledgment that the global number of IDPs continues to grow. The majority of IDPs find themselves in protracted displacement context, suggesting that the search for durable solution is not working.
- It is challenging to: (1) advance protection, assistance, solutions, and prevention simultaneously; (2) find solutions for IDPs when their plight is often not high on the political agenda and political will is often lacking with respect to other solutions than return; (3) grapple with the politicization of solutions; and (4) create local ownership for solutions despite the stigma attached to IDPs and disregard of the IDPs' citizenship.
- Twenty years ago consistent advocacy efforts, particularly from NGOs, brought internal displacement onto the international agenda. Yet today the specific needs of IDPs remain overlooked for a combination of reasons: (1) a decline in IDP-focused advocacy; (2) inadequate resources; and (3) a lack of security at the national level. One significant repercussion is that there is still no predictable protection system for IDPs in place. For example, in Iraq the government's overwhelming desire is to return IDPs back to their place of origin despite IDPs' fear for their security and an increased sectarian divide in the country.
- Positive steps are taking place at the national level as more and more countries continue to develop, amend or implement laws and policies on IDPs. Recognition of internal displacement in a country is the necessary first step to improve the protection of IDPs. In Colombia, this was achieved through the empowerment of IDPs to demand their rights and the prominent role played by the Colombian Constitutional Court that led to a culture of enforcing IDP rights and relevant laws to protect IDPs. Addressing the past is not enough --, solutions must be forward looking, address socio-economic needs of IDPs and include peace-building efforts.
- The partnership of NGOs and UNHCR is invaluable for advocacy.
- Advocacy efforts have to become more nuanced and look at forced migration more holistically, also taking into account the linkages between internal and external displacement.
- Sustained advocacy is indispensable in order to achieve solutions for IDPs. National NGOs and community-based organizations play a critical role due to their sustained presence, deep knowledge and long-term relationships built with authorities and displaced communities. They can also serve as 'watchdogs' of current UN processes including on durable solutions.
- States assume the primary responsibility in the search for durable solutions. The only sustainable long-term solution is to anchor IDP protection with authorities at the national level through technical support and capacity building. This also requires strong and concerted advocacy from national civil society and the international community, sometimes together and other times apart.

### Recommendations/Conclusions

- Advocacy on IDP protection needs to consider the broader perspective of forced migration and the changing environment in the context of solutions, and in particular include development agencies early on in advocacy efforts.

- The particular challenges for IDPs who find themselves in urban settings should be recognized.
- Advocacy for solutions needs to involve the participation of national NGOs, community-based organizations and IDPs.
- Anchoring IDP protection at the national level is indispensable for solutions. Comprehensive legislation and clear national policies on IDPs should be developed with the recognition of all durable solutions and plans for national standards and instruments to be implemented.
- Solutions require strong and concerted efforts from humanitarian, development, human rights and peace-building actors, as well as donors.
- Independent voices are needed to hold authorities and organizations, including UNHCR, accountable to their commitments. Additional funding should be allocated and prioritized for IDPs, especially when the primary obstacle is not a lack of political will but rather economic hardship.
- 2015 will mark 10 years since the beginning of the humanitarian reform. This opportunity will be seized to take stock, highlight achievements and identify gaps to promote a humanitarian institutional system that provides a more predictable approach to internal displacement.

#### **4. Advocacy and action for the protection of children**

##### **Background of the session**

Children represent half of the population of concern to UNHCR, and their protection is a priority for UNHCR. The UNHCR Framework for the Protection of Children, launched last year, outlines the direction for the protection of children as it pertains to the mandate of the organization. Effective Partnership between UNHCR and NGOs is crucial for the implementation of the Framework.

The session was an opportunity to share experiences in effective advocacy and action for the protection of children. Two contexts were considered: emergencies and mixed migration flows. The concept of “a children’s emergency” has emerged within UNHCR and partners over the past few years, recognizing that children are often those most affected and with the most acute protection needs during emergencies. An increasing number of children are moving across borders, either moving on their own or with the ‘assistance’ of smugglers.

These two scenarios pose new and unprecedented challenges to governments, UN agencies, and NGOs as they try collectively to address the protection risks facing children and adolescents.

##### **Major points arising from speakers and discussions (trends & challenges)**

Children in mixed migration flows:

- Unaccompanied children are a global issue. Examples include children on the move in Latin America, the Horn of Africa and MENA (Egypt, Sinai, and Yemen), South East Asia (Indonesia), and Southern Africa.
- The Best Interest Determination (BID) procedure is a useful tool for screening, assessments and case management. All are important for child protection.
- The return of rejected unaccompanied children involves many considerations. Sometimes children are returned to their country of origin without considering that they have never lived in that country or without successful tracing for relatives.

Advocacy and action for children in emergencies:

- Strong, sustainable child protection systems that include a clear solutions orientation from the very beginning are critical to successful outcomes for children. Emphasis must be placed on not setting up parallel systems. It is critical that such an approach focuses on

building the capacity of local systems and local actors and not burdening possibly fragile national systems.

- Children face a multiplicity of protection risks in emergencies. It is important to ensure services and programmes include all children and address the increasing risks to children as displacement becomes longer-term and family coping mechanisms are weakened.
- Participants also emphasized the critical importance of linking SGBV prevention and response programmes to child protection responses to ensure SGBV programs are child focused and child friendly.
- Education is an important tool for child protection, in particular for preventing recruitment into armed forces or groups, and increasing knowledge and awareness to avoid separation and landmines.

## Recommendations/Conclusions

- Given the demographics – e.g. 57 per cent of refugees in camps are children – there is a need for a paradigm shift in UNHCR.
- Child protection in emergencies needs to be recognised as a life-saving sector. Children are being killed and maimed, whether as civilians or while recruited into an armed force or group. They are at risk of brutal domestic violence and being abandoned or separated from their parents as infants or toddlers, all of which life are threatening.
- Child protection procedures and services need to become more child-friendly and include the participation of children themselves.
- Identification of children in need of international protection/trafficked is the responsibility of any official who encounters children. Border guards need to be trained in identification.
- Governments should separate immigration enforcement from child protection functions.
- Data management and sharing information on trends and cases between countries is key for the protection of children.
- There is a need to review family reunification procedures. Many children move for family reunification purposes, sometimes facilitated by smugglers.
- Child protection risks and gaps must be addressed from the outset of emergencies and with an understanding of the increasing complexity of the child protection issues in humanitarian emergencies.
- Identifying what works and strong, comprehensive child protection programming is central to address the multiplicity of protection risks that children face in emergencies as well as the increasing risks to children as displacement becomes longer-term and family coping mechanisms diminish. Programmes to strengthen family resilience are essential components of a comprehensive, systems approach to child protection.

## 5. Partnership in focus

### Background of the session

At the end of 2011, the High Commissioner invited the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), InterAction and their members, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to participate in a 'Structured Dialogue' to review the quality of partnership with UNHCR with the broad objective of strengthening operational collaboration in the field through stronger mutual respect and trust, and a culture of transparency and shared responsibility. The Dialogue served as a platform to develop a series of recommendations on translating into action the five Principles of Partnership (PoP), namely equality, transparency, results-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity, to which UNHCR and partners are all committed. UNHCR, ICVA, InterAction and the IFRC committed to take these recommendations forward in the field as well as in various fora in 2013, including at the Annual UNHCR-NGO Consultations.

## Major points arising from speakers and discussions (trends & challenges)

Participants were given an overview of the process and outcomes of the Structured Dialogue and discussed the follow-up to the Dialogue's recommendations to be taken forward both at the HQ and field level.

- UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner (AHC) for Operations Janet Lim underscored the importance of partnerships for UNHCR's work.
- Mitzi Schroeder of Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS-USA) outlined the Structured Dialogue's work in key areas of joint planning, information sharing, partnership, advocating together for protection, and urban refugees.
- Nan Buzard, Executive Director of the International Council for Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), added an update on the need for an institutional strategy on capacity building suggested the next step is moving from the Structured Dialogue to "Structured Action."

## Recommendations/Conclusions

- **Field Missions:** The Assistant High Commissioner (AHC-Operations) Janet Lim highlighted the need to take the Structured Dialogue to the field with a focus on delivering better together. ICVA Executive Director Nan Buzard offered ICVA's support in targeted joint field missions. NGO participants urged that the selection of operations to visit be carried out on the basis of trust and respect in an effort to highlight where partnership is and is not working.
- **Problem Solving Mechanism:** An NGO pointed out that many problems in partnership were related to personalities. The AHC acknowledged that not all colleagues approach partnership in the same way, and warned that culture change does not happen overnight. NGOs welcomed additional clarity on how NGOs could access different parts of UNHCR Headquarters if they do not have a strong presence in Geneva. The AHC expressed her willingness to listen to NGOs' problems, but urged NGOs to be frank and honest with the UNHCR concerned staff at the field level before escalating issues to HQs. Nan Buzard of ICVA pointed out that some NGO staff fear retaliation for raising particular issues, and encouraged further monitoring at the field level.
- **Capacity Building:** An NGO reported that the Africa NGO Task Force has already made an impact on southern NGOs' capacities through hosting two workshops. The Task Force could benefit from additional funding. NGOs encouraged more INGO-NNGO mentorships and south-south NGO exchanges. One NGO recommended giving additional attention to refugee- and community-based organizations.
- **Mixed Populations:** The AHC recognized that the Transformative Agenda had highlighted areas for improvement in UNHCR's management of partnerships in refugee operations. One NGO noted the difficulties operating in areas of mixed populations, and suggested further discussions to clarify issues surrounding NGO involvement in financing and appeals processes for refugees.
- **Consultations:** UNHCR and ICVA welcomed ideas to improve and strengthening the UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations in Geneva and to explore further opportunities to strengthen dialogue at regional and field level.

## 6. National asylum systems: building and maintaining protection systems for refugees

### Background of the session

States are primarily responsible for the protection of refugees, including by: (a) ensuring access to territory and protection from *refoulement*, (b) providing humane and dignified reception arrangements, including protection against arbitrary detention, and fair and efficient status

determination procedures, (c) guaranteeing the enjoyment of rights, and (d) facilitating durable solutions. A range of actors are relevant to determine the quality of the protection in a state, including the legislature/parliament, the executive, the judiciary, the legal community, the media and press, civil society, the public, academia, and the international community as a whole, including UNHCR.

To effectively build, strengthen and sustain state asylum/protection systems it is important to understand the gaps, problems and challenges in the system. How progress is leveraged in this area varies depending on a range of factors, including the political, economic, socio-cultural, legal, and regional contexts, as well as broader migration trends. The level of development of the system ranges from: (1) a system with no functioning state asylum system, to (2) transitional systems where the state has assumed some responsibilities, and finally (3) developed systems where the state is in full control.

The following three questions were analysed: (1) what are the essential building blocks for a national asylum system that enables refugees to enjoy their rights? (2) How can key stakeholders best take responsibility for building and maintaining a national asylum system? and (3) how can civil society and UNHCR better advocate for and cooperate in this regard?

### **Major points arising from speakers and discussions (trends & challenges)**

- No (or very few) states have “no” national asylum system
- All systems are “in transition”
- Developments are not always progressive
- The national should not obscure the local
- National asylum systems must be complemented by local asylum systems (particularly when the provision of many state services has devolved)
- In addition to developing national asylum systems, programs must be rescaled and re-focused to take into account the local
- Participants promoted:
- Networking
- Trust and understanding building
- A holistic approach to advocacy (including law reform and litigation, UN advocacy, comprehensive field and comparative legal research, and various public awareness campaigns)
- Strong partnership among NGOs, UNHCR and national institutions
- Continuously working with the legislature, the executive and the judiciary
- Fighting against increasing xenophobia and racism.

### **Recommendations/Conclusions**

- The fundamental elements of building quality national asylum systems include:
- Ensure access to territory and follow non-refoulement
- Refrain from arbitrary detention
- Ensure access to fair and effective RSD processes
- Developing durable solutions
- Regarding cooperation between civil society and UNHCR:
- Need to recognize strengths and weaknesses of each partner
- Need to allow that there will not always be agreement between partners
- Need to support each other in securing resources
- Need to avoid duplication of services
- No (or very few) states have “no” national asylum system; all systems are “in transition”

- Of crucial importance to ensure create a functioning national asylum system:
- A vibrant civil society is needed
- Mutual trust of stakeholders needs to be built as well as mutual understanding as a basis to develop strategies together
- Judicial engagement is important
- Partners have to work directly with relevant stakeholders and parliamentarians
- Create ownership of the process among the local stakeholders is of utmost importance to ensure sustainability.

## 7. Strengthening the Implementing Partnership Framework

### Background of the session

Throughout its history, UNHCR has worked in close partnership with NGOs to protect and assist refugees, including through programmes facilitated by UNHCR and implemented by NGO partners. In 2012, over a third of the \$2.3 billion spent by UNHCR on protection and assistance was channelled through more than 760 NGOs across the globe. Of these, 600 were national or local NGOs and 160 were international.

Partnership dynamics among UNHCR and NGOs have always been influenced by the manner in which UNHCR and NGO field offices engage with one another in implementing projects. A new framework for engagement could present significant new opportunities as well as challenges for UNHCR and its NGO partners in serving refugees together.

This session briefed and solicited feedback from NGOs on components of the UNHCR-NGO implementing partnership framework which have been further developed since the 2012 NGO Consultations: the new partnership portal developed by UNHCR to identify qualified and interested NGOs for project partnerships, the draft agreement for implementing partnerships, changes in the transfer of funds from UNHCR to NGOs, and new approaches to joint (NGO-UNHCR) monitoring of programmes.

### Major points arising from speakers and discussions (trends & challenges)

- Recognition by both UNHCR speakers, NGO speakers and NGOs (as demonstrated by survey results presented) that the manner in which UNHCR works with partners (from both an administrative perspective as well as fostering partnership relationships) is inconsistent across operations with NGOs viewing them very positively and highlighting good communication in some places, and very negatively (as contractual relationships) in others.
- It was felt that the introduction of the enhanced Framework for Implementation with Partners may assist in making UNHCR's partnership approach across operations more consistent and more uniformly positive.
- The new selection/retention policy and procedure have been tested and are currently in the final stages of being prepared for issuance.
- UNHCR requested that NGOs submit feedback on the proposed joint monitoring approach (including partner feedback form) and draft project agreement by 15 July 2013. Feedback received will be incorporated prior to legal review and UNHCR senior manager approval. The intention is to begin using the new project agreement and joint monitoring approach for the 2014 implementation year.
- NGOs voiced appreciation for the highly consultative approach undertaken to enhance the Framework for Implementation with Partners. They said it was important to continue with a partnership-oriented approach rather than a process-oriented approach.
- Partnership with national/local NGOs and community-based organizations is becoming increasingly important in providing protection and assistance to refugees and other persons

of concern. UNHCR's recognition of this and drive to partner with national/local NGOs is demonstrated by the steep growth in the volume of agreements and expenditures over the past 10 years of partnering with national/local NGOs for project implementation.

- There is a risk the new selection/retention processes for project implementation may be perceived as UNHCR looking negatively upon long standing project implementation with partners. However, this is not the case as the intention is to "cast the net wide" to look for partners that are the 'best-fit' for a particular project – whether the partner is an 'old partner' or a 'new partner'.

### Recommendations/Conclusions

- UNHCR should review the Dadaab experience with regards to reducing the number of NGO implementing partners and issues related to transition
- UNHCR should ensure that newly introduced processes are 'light processes'
- UNHCR should continue to consult and keep partners informed on initiatives related to enhancing the Framework for Implementation with Partners
- UNHCR should pay adequate attention and properly plan/resource sufficient knowledge transfer and training for both UNHCR staff and NGOs for any new concept/process/requirement introduced
- UNHCR should ensure that NGOs feel safe in providing honest and frank feedback (in reference to partner feedback forms being introduced) by ensuring forms are also sent to UNHCR HQ and/or providing some form of anonymity.
- UNHCR should ensure proactive internal and external communications so to diffuse any misconceptions related to the new selection/retention for project implementation so to clarify the intention is to seek the best fit partner'- whether the partner is and existing or a new one.

## 8. Refugee resettlement: expanding its reach and effectiveness through broader NGO participation

### Background of the session

UNHCR currently has the capacity to refer some 91,000 persons for resettlement out of the nearly 181,000 refugees estimated to be in need of resettlement in 2013. Systematic and transparent identification systems are essential in determining which individuals from amongst the total population in need of resettlement will be prioritized according to their specific needs and vulnerabilities. An effective and consistent identification system ensures fair access to resettlement consideration and prevents fraud in the process. It requires close collaboration between UNHCR Protection, Community Services, and Durable Solutions staff and NGO partners in the field.

At the 2012 NGO Consultations, UNHCR and NGOs collectively acknowledged that identification of cases for resettlement is one of the biggest challenges in the system. The resettlement efforts are often dependent upon referrals from other UNHCR units or partners, which help in the identification and prioritization of the refugees most in need of resettlement. This session focused primarily on how international and local NGOs can partner effectively with UNHCR to ensure that the refugees in greatest need of resettlement have access to this life-saving intervention.

### Major points arising from speakers and discussions (trends & challenges)

- UNHCR reported that there are limited places for resettlement in comparison to the many in need. Out of 10 million refugees, 700,000 have been identified as in need of resettlement. Only 80,000 places are available, meaning that only a little more than 10 per cent of refugees can actually be resettled in a given year.

- Presentations were made by NGOs working on refugee protection in three refugee situations: South Africa, Egypt, and Pakistan. These are largely urban populations; however, in Pakistan the situation also includes camp and rural populations. While resettlement was not the major focus of any of the organisations, identification and referral of those in need of resettlement has become an important part of their work. In each instance, resettlement activities have also opened the door to other avenues of cooperation and protection interventions.
- The speakers noted common challenges, including:
  - 1) the length of time required to complete the resettlement process;
  - 2) the lack of information and communication about cases in the resettlement process;
  - 3) managing expectations of refugees;
  - 4) ensuring the accuracy and availability of information about resettlement;
  - 5) preventing fraudulent claims;
- To address these challenges in an effective and collaborative way requires proper planning and the establishment of clear communication channels between all stakeholders. All the speakers mentioned that strong connections and established referral systems between the UNHCR office and other stakeholders have been essential for ensuring successful identification and submission of resettlement cases.

### Recommendations/Conclusions

- Continued partnerships, clear communication channels, and established identification and referral systems between UNHCR and NGOs for cases with identified resettlement needs are essential components of the refugee protection regime and can widen opportunities for NGOs to provide solutions and strengthen interventions for some of the most vulnerable persons.

## 9. Immigration Detention – Finding Alternatives

### Background of the session

Immigration detention measures continue to affect thousands of men, women and children within the mandate of UNHCR. At times, their detention conditions falls below international standards, may lack adequate due process safeguards, and be for prolonged periods. In 2012, UNHCR released new *Guidelines on the Applicable Criteria and Standards relating to the Detention of Asylum-Seekers and Alternatives to Detention (2012)*, which were launched at the 63rd session of the Executive Committee. They set out the international legal standards applicable to the detention of asylum seekers and other persons seeking international protection. International human rights and refugee law and standards require that detention of asylum seekers should be used only as a last resort, in exceptional cases and after all options other than detention have been shown to be inadequate in the individual case. In other words, where a government intends to detain an asylum seeker person for immigration related reasons, it needs to first consider alternatives to detention.

An increasing number of governments have implemented or are exploring Alternatives to Immigration Detention (ATD) and recent research highlights their benefits, including that they reduce the financial and human costs of detention.

### Major points arising from speakers and discussions (trends & challenges)

- **The use of immigration detention is on the rise:** The use of immigration detention by States has grown over the past 20 years both as a migration management and a political tool. As a result, it is estimated that millions of migrants are detained around the world each year, although the number of detainees at any one time is unknown.
- **Detention is not an effective deterrent:** There is no empirical evidence to show that detention policies deter irregular migration or discourage persons from seeking asylum.

Several studies have shown that most refugees, asylum seekers and migrants have limited understanding of migration policies in their destination countries, are often reliant upon others to choose their destination, and are primarily motivated by other concerns, such as reaching protection and safety, reuniting with family or friends, historical links between the origin and destination countries, and common language.

- **Detention harms health and well-being:** Research shows that detention is associated with poor mental and physical health including high levels of depression, anxiety and PTSD, and that mental health deteriorates the longer someone is detained. The impact on children is particularly disturbing given the consequences for their cognitive and emotional development may be life-long. The physical and mental consequences of detention extend well beyond the periods of confinement, and can also impact on the ability to integrate into the host communities
- **Detention interferes with human rights:** The use of detention for purposes of deterrence or political gain is always inconsistent with international human rights law. Even though detention may be justified on the basis of national security, health or safety, it must be shown to be necessary in the individual case, proportionate to the risk or threat posed by the individual, limited to the shortest reasonable time period, reviewable by an independent authority, and the least restrictive form applied.
- **ATDs are increasingly becoming normalized:** Legislation, policies and practices that allow for the non-detention of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants are increasingly being normalized in domestic and regional contexts.
- **ATDs are effective:** Research shows that refugees and asylum seekers arrive with a “cooperative disposition” and exhibit very high rates of compliance when they are treated fairly and with dignity. Community supervision programmes have been shown to maintain high compliance rates with a range of populations.
- **ATDs are more cost-effective than traditional detention models:** Although more research needs to be conducted in this area, significant cost benefits have been shown to be associated with ATDs in many national contexts. Avoiding unnecessary cases of detention, or reducing the length of time someone is detained, is a key strategy in reducing the costs associated with detention.
- **ATDs respect the human rights of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants:** Appropriate management in the community is more likely to uphold human rights and support well-being, thereby contributing to people being able to contribute fully to society if residency is secured or being better able to face difficult futures, such as return.
- **UNHCR is continuing to devote attention and resources to these issues:** In addition to the release of guidelines and research, they are in the process of developing a Detention Monitoring manual in collaboration with the IDC and the Association for the Prevention of Torturing (APT); will release a Global Detention Strategy in 2013-14; and will continue their research-based approach and commitment to engaging in government dialogue around these issues.
- **Good practice solutions are needed:** Both governments and civil society are in need of good ATD practices, especially in difficult, under-resourced, and mixed-migration contexts. IDC has developed a forthcoming CAP+ model to address some of these challenges, but more work is needed on identifying and developing best ATD practices.
- **There is need for further strengthening of the evidence base for ATDs:** While much important research has been done on the issue of immigration detention and alternatives, including the challenges/success factors in ATD implementation.
- **Children as a starting point for policy and ATD development:** Immigration detention is particularly harmful for children who may suffer life-long physical and psychological harm from even the shortest periods of detention. We must work together to end the immigration detention of children and to develop and implement child-sensitive alternatives to detention for children.

## Recommendations/Conclusions

- UNHCR's Detention Guidelines (Oct 2012) are an important source of the standards of immigration-related detention and need to be widely disseminated. Their implementation at the national level ought also to be closely monitored.
- ATDs are most effective when individuals are:
  - treated with dignity, humanity and respect;
  - provided with clear information;
  - given access to legal advice;
  - provided with material support;
  - benefit from individualized case management; and
  - have adequate documentation.
- The IDC's Community Assessment and Placement (CAP) model provides an example of best practice with regard to ATD development and implementation.
- Further research on alternatives to detention and the documentation of good practices are needed.

## 10. Advocating Together for Protection

### Background to the Session

This session built on the 2012 High Commissioner's Structured Dialogue on NGO-IFRC-UNHCR Partnership, which recognized that protection of refugees, IDPs and stateless people requires strengthened coordination and partnership in today's increasingly complex humanitarian landscape.

A Guidance Note on Partnership in Advocacy for Protection was drafted by the Structured Dialogue Advocacy Task Team. It is based on good practice in the field and spells out what is already taking place in many locations, rather than imposing a new process. It is structured around the principles of partnership – including equality, transparency, responsibility and complementarity – and what they mean for advocacy. It provides a series of considerations and guiding questions to help partners in their complementary advocacy.

### The Session

Following an introductory panel discussion, three breakout groups discussed how UNHCR, IFRC and NGOs can better advocate for protection at the global, regional and field levels. The groups then reported back to plenary, which included discussion and an opportunity to make recommendations.

### Introductory Session

- UNHCR, IFRC, and NGO partners have different mandates, capacities, limitations, and roles in the humanitarian system in relation to persons of concern. Advocacy works best when partners understand these differences and leverage their respective advantages in a complementary manner.
- There are examples of excellent collaboration and good practices where UNHCR and NGOs have accomplished much more in partnership than either could have separately. Specific examples include advocacy on SGBV, IDPs, child protection, statelessness, resettlement, detention, disabilities, LGBTI, and the HC's Dialogue on Faith and Protection.
- A one-size-fits-all approach is not possible. Rather, as the diversity of tactics, actors, and issues are explored, partners are able to build on what is working well and address what is not. They see the importance of relationships and informal brainstorming, and the value of open and honest communication and information exchange.

- Partnering in advocacy for protection is an ongoing effort that requires partnership at all levels, including the strategic policy level. Advocacy in partnership means that mutually reinforcing on-going relations are established in which advocacy has a dedicated space.
- While the Dialogue has considered partnership among UNHCR, IFRC, and NGOs, the panel highlighted the significance of local ownership, including the role of affected populations in advocacy efforts.
- The panel noted the myriad and complexity of protection issues deserving advocacy, emphasizing both the opportunities ahead and the highly challenging and complex nature of providing protection in today's world. Recognizing this context, participants were encouraged to bring fresh energy and ideas into the breakout groups.

## Field

- At the field level best practices of complementary advocacy that have led to stronger protection include:
  - Making long-term commitments and investments in partnership through regular engagement, coordination, information sharing and feedback; Analyzing the context and protection concerns collaboratively; Recognizing complementarities and limitations in partnership and respecting different roles;
  - Mobilizing key civil society actors, promoting local ownership of advocacy messages, and conducting capacity building where civil society is less developed;
  - Advancing advocacy through existing coordination mechanisms, such as protection clusters, sectors, etc.
- Challenges include:
  - Creating a catalogue of options adapted to the location, and escalating advocacy efforts as appropriate;
  - Recognizing that operational entities may be more selective about speaking out;
  - Striking a balance between information sharing and protecting confidentiality;
  - Gaining acceptance by local authorities and persons of concern, and gaining credibility by staying out of politics and remaining impartial;
  - Ensuring complementarity between efforts underway at the local, capital, regional and global levels.

## Regional

- Advocating together at the regional level can:
  - Create pressure, increase influence, and amplify domestic voices (finding power in numbers)
  - Allow states to compare what they are doing nationally with what other states are doing in the region
  - Utilize existing regional networks
  - Bring governments and civil society representatives together to discuss issues in a way that may not be possible at the national level
  - Help mobilize resources.
- Recommendations include:
  - Start engaging at the regional level early
  - Share good practices across networks and regions
  - Find the right people to get the messages across
  - Discuss regional advocacy further at the 2014 UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultation in Geneva and consider supplementing this with regional-level consultations.

## Global

- There are good examples of alliance building toward protection-related goals at the global level. These alliances have benefited from strategic investments that have been carefully encouraged over time.
- Global advocacy works best when there are shared goals, a basis in evidence, a positive focus on solutions, and the right people around the table, good timing, strong information sharing and momentum.
- Recommendations include:
  - Using global advocacy to strategically support national-level and regional-level advocacy
  - Utilizing existing networks, including engaging actors who are sometimes overlooked, like national NGOs, faith networks, and issue-specific ‘allies’
  - Increasing collaboration with academics, including for research and for the evidential base of complementary advocacy efforts.

## Conclusions

- Many good practices emerged during the session, reinforcing the value of complementary advocacy and demonstrating how partnership in advocacy can put the power of numbers to good use to influence state practice.
- Partnership, especially partnership in advocacy, is not something that can be prescribed. It builds on good relationships and regularly exchanging information.
- It is important to maintain linkages and complementarity between global-, regional- and field-level advocacy.
- Greater investment in alliance building is needed, particularly to address issues such as statelessness.
- NGOs recognized they should be more active in some areas, working within their own organizations as well as local, regional and international consortia.
- UNHCR acknowledged there are issues that go to the heart of partnership where UNHCR can and must do better. The key message UNHCR took away from the session is that there are means to better communicate to ensure that partnership is taken seriously. The guidance note will facilitate this.

## Next Steps

- The guidance note and key-takeaways from this session will be shared with UNHCR, IFRC and NGO staff. UNHCR’s communication will be accompanied by a message from the High Commissioner articulating UNHCR’s commitment.
- The issue of advocacy will be included during upcoming Structured Dialogue joint field missions.
- The December 11-12, 2013 High Commissioner’s Dialogue on IDPs will be an opportunity to advocate together for this often overlooked population.
- The theme of “Advocating Together for Protection” will recur in future UNHCR-NGO Consultations to take stock of what is happening and on particular streams of work.

## E. SIDE SESSIONS

### 1. Cash-based interventions in UNHCR interventions

#### Background of the session

In-kind distributions are still the predominant form of assistance in humanitarian emergencies and in transitional settings. In recent years, however, there has been a growing awareness that in-kind distributions such as seeds, tools, food, non-food items, etc. may not always be the most appropriate response. Cash-based interventions can play an important role in assisting people to meet their various needs in emergency settings, and evaluations of cash-based interventions conducted during the last decade have been largely positive. UNHCR and its partners have been using cash and vouchers in displacement and return contexts since the early 1980s. This session explored the role, actual and potential, that cash and vouchers have in protecting people in displacement settings.

#### Major points arising from speakers and discussions (trends & challenges)

- Cash Transfer Programming (CTP) can be useful in a variety of operational contexts (in emergencies and protracted displacement situations, to support repatriation or to meet essential needs in the asylum country), sectors (health, education, food, shelter, NFIs, livelihoods) and modalities (stand-alone or combined with in-kind assistance).
- The use of CTP has been increasing in UNHCR operations since the 1980s – in particular since 1998. Currently, one in three operations uses cash- or voucher-based assistance. A growing number of humanitarian agencies and donors have incorporated CTP into their assistance policy (WFP, UNHCR, Oxfam, ECHO, PRM, etc.).
- CTP does not always constitute the most effective approach. A context-specific analysis is a precondition to determining whether minimum criteria for success are met (favourable protection environment, functioning markets, geographic accessibility, community acceptability, a functional payment system, and a reliable method for identifying beneficiaries).
- Cash-based interventions can offer several protection and programmatic advantages: dignity and empowerment, choice of preferred resources for the household, avoidance of risky coping mechanisms, cost efficiency, and support to local production and markets.
- These interventions can also involve risks (theft/diversion, fraud, perception of inequity by host community or government, decreased follow-up ability by social workers, women's disempowerment) which have to be carefully assessed. If overall anticipated benefits outweigh disadvantages and CTP is deemed appropriate for a given operation, mitigation measures for these risks should be explicitly included in programme design (e.g. using innovative technology such as smart cards). Robust programming factoring in these considerations is also likely to reduce possible concerns by donors (e.g. terrorism).
- Monitoring of the results and impact of cash-based programmes - where NGOs have a key role to play – will be crucial. A fair and reliable method for selecting beneficiaries, based on their specific protection needs, is critical to the credibility and effectiveness of cash-based interventions. At present, agencies intervening in the same operation seem to lack coherence and coordination in the criteria they apply.
- More evidence is needed regarding the impact of CTP on the protection and well-being of refugees. WFP and UNHCR will soon release a joint study analysing the gender and protection aspects of CTP (which largely resemble those related to in-kind programmes). A recent study by NGOs including Save the Children and the Women's Refugee Commission also noted positive CTP outcomes on education in Pakistan, where grants accorded to refugee families were conditional to children's school attendance.
- In non-camp settings where displaced and host communities are heavily mixed (e.g. Lebanon), including local residents among the beneficiaries of cash-based assistance

programmes has proven to be critical to favour peaceful coexistence and preserve the overall asylum space.

- In camp settings where freedom of movement is limited, a good practice has been to discuss with local traders to reach an agreement on market-attuned price levels for commodities purchased by refugees.
- To what extent do (cultural) views of programme designers unduly restrict refugees' freedom of choice? According to Caritas Lebanon, prohibiting the purchase of certain goods - such as tobacco or alcohol - does not constitute a blanket proscription; rather, it helps ensure that CTP serves its goal of meeting families' basic needs. Freedom of choice may also be limited by an agency's mandate (e.g. WFP and the provision of food items), from which significant departure may produce negative audit results. A multi-agency complementary vouchers system could help overcome these limitations.
- UNHCR is currently developing operational guidance and organising training sessions for its field offices and partners; strengthening its partnerships (with development agencies, UN organisations and the private sector); and planning to scale up its CTP projects in the field.

### Recommendations/Conclusions

- Coordinate methodology of vulnerability assessments and beneficiary selection for cash-based assistance programmes among agencies and NGOs involved.
- Build capacity by disseminating operational guidance on CTP and implementing training in the field.
- Strengthen preliminary feasibility analyses and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

## 2. Faith and protection: follow-up to the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges

### Background of the session

A special session on Faith and Protection at the June 2011 Annual UNHCR-NGO Consultations explored the challenges faced by national faith-based organizations (FBOs), their unique strengths and protection potential, and how INGOs, UNHCR and national FBOs can maximize their collective field-level protection efforts. Building upon that special session, UNHCR devoted its 2012 High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges to the theme of Faith and Protection. The High Commissioner closed the 2012 Dialogue with a series of actionable suggestions for follow-up. To build on the momentum around this topic, participants of the 2012 Dialogue also proposed a side event at the 2013 Annual Consultations. The side event provided an opportunity to take note of progress made in follow-up, solicit input into thinking on good practices, and invite broader NGO engagement and commitment to the follow-up initiatives.

### Major points arising from speakers and discussions (trends & challenges)

- Volker Türk, Director of International Protection, affirmed that the High Commissioner's Dialogue on Faith and Protection was a "journey of mutual discovery" for UNHCR and a group of faith leaders and FBOs from across the world. In a polarized world where religion is often a dividing force, the Dialogue on the theme of Faith and Protection reflected UNHCR's commitment not only for 'advocating together for protection' but also for engaging on faith issues and recognizing the role of FBOs, local faith communities, and religious leaders in promoting welcoming communities and protecting refugees, asylum-seekers, the internally displaced, stateless persons and other 'persons of concern' to UNHCR.

- At the conclusion of the High Commissioner's Dialogue, a coalition of FBOs embraced the recommendations to welcome refugees and other forcibly displaced persons into their communities. Together, they drafted a document entitled *Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders* ('Affirmation of Welcome') that drew upon principles and values of welcome shared by major faith groups including Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
- Two faith leaders representing the Christian and Jewish faiths spoke about the place of religion in the life of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, as well as their role in promoting inter-religious understanding and dialogue. Both fully endorsed the Affirmation of Welcome, adding that religion should be part of the solution, has the power to shift public opinion and lay aside differences to focus on common ground. The document is meant to be a practical tool for religious leaders to encourage positive behaviour through common language to welcome the displaced and to teach those at large about the 'commandment' to treat the stranger as one would wish to be treated.
- NGO representatives explained their advocacy in relation to the Affirmation of Welcome and indicated that this document is directed at receiving communities across the world who often sacrifice much more than the international humanitarian community when they welcome the stranger. It raises issues of resource competition and limited livelihood opportunities that can be further exacerbated upon the arrival of displaced persons. For this reason, the Affirmation of Welcome was written in the first person and translated into seven languages to appeal to the personal faith of all persons and recognize the 'oneness of humanity'.
- The side event closed by highlighting the recent UNHCR-NGO initiative to better understand the contributions to protection outcomes across the world of FBOs, local faith communities and faith leaders. With over 50 good practices compiled, notable examples include: physical protection; national legislative changes; combating xenophobia and discrimination; supporting resettlement and integration; prevention of and response to SGBV and forced recruitment; deterrence of violence through presence and accompaniment; reconciliation and peace-building; legal counselling and asylum case management; and mediating ethnic and land-related tensions. The initiative demonstrated the value of thoughtful collaboration between UNHCR and faith-actors, and included innovative and strategic partnership to address specific protection issues. As UNHCR and partners continue to implement recommendations from the 2012 High Commissioner's Dialogue, the good practice examples will be used to support efforts to improve the 'faith literacy' of UNHCR staff and the broader international humanitarian community and consider operational implications of the dialogue.

## Recommendations/Conclusions

- Carry out the global and country-level roll-out and endorsement of the Affirmation of Welcome, including through the Religions for Peace World Assembly, in coordination with a wide array of faith-based organizations, governments and international organizations.
- Improve the 'faith literacy' of the international humanitarian community, including through guidance for UNHCR and partner staff on how to meaningfully engage with faith actors who fall outside of the traditional humanitarian system.
- Consider the operational implications of the faith and protection dialogue, especially how UNHCR and partners can better understand and reinforce the role of faith actors in advocating for and achieving protection; for example, through faith-sensitive community-level 'protection preparedness,' developing faith-sensitive protection tools and approaches, and fostering grassroots and protection mobilization activities that appropriately utilize faith actors and networks.
- Take account of the dialogue in UNHCR and partner work on community-based protection; hold a community-based protection session at the 2014 NGO Consultations, and ensure that the session explores the faith component of community-based protection.

## F. CLOSING SESSION: PLENARY SESSION AND CLOSING ADDRESS

### Main issues from the plenary session

Karina Sarmiento, the Rapporteur to the Annual Consultations with NGOs, presented the main recommendations of regional and thematic sessions of the consultations. She stressed the need for mutual respect, transparency and trust among NGOs and UNHCR, recognizing their different and complementary roles and mandates.

Hassane Boukili, rapporteur of the Executive Committee (Morocco), explained the conclusions of EXCOM, with a particular focus on the EXCOM Conclusion currently being negotiated on civil registration. He mentioned the importance of the participation of civil society in EXCOM discussion.

Daniel Endres, the Director of UNHCR's Division of the External Relations Unit noted that 2014 will be an important year, with various important celebrations and benchmarks, such as the 60th Anniversary of the Statelessness Convention and the 30th Anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration. He also mentioned the 2015 World Humanitarian Summit as an opportunity to advance shared objectives.

Nan Buzard, ICVA Director, thanked conference organizers and participants for their efforts and underscored the need to follow up these discussions at the regional- and field-levels.

### Closing Remarks from the High Commissioner

The High Commissioner highlighted the importance of joint advocacy efforts in solving the challenges to protection that we are facing today.

He pointed out that while humanitarian crises worsen, there is a continuous decline in available resources. Similarly, there are enormous constraints to humanitarian space and in accessing population of concern. More and more humanitarian actors are targets of violence.

He referred to issues that require more collaborative effort including the multiplication of conflicts with a huge impact which the international community has been unable to prevent or bring to timely resolution (e.g. the present situation in Syria).

New challenges pose a significant impact on the ability of the humanitarian community to respond. They are exacerbated by global mega trends (i.e. population growth, urbanization, food insecurity) more frequent and dramatic natural disasters (i.e.: floods, storms, drought), and slow-onset environmental degradation that is leaving more and more people unable to live sustainably in their place of origin.

NGOs welcomed the High Commissioner's announcement that the focus of the 2013 High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection would be the protection of IDPs.

The High Commissioner closed by stressing that no one can do it alone. Partnership is more important than ever and protection needs to be at the centre of it.