

UNHCR ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NGOs
27 – 29 JUNE 2018

International Conference Center Geneva

DISCUSSION PAPER

Session title: *Americas Regional session*

Date: 27 June

Time/Room: 14h00 – 16h00 – Room 18

Background:

The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and its Annex, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) strongly called for innovative and more inclusive ways of working to collectively respond to refugee crises and engage a broader spectrum of stakeholders through a whole of society approach.

The Americas region has traditionally been at the forefront of durable solutions, with more refugees resettled and integrated than in any other region worldwide. In addition to the commitment of traditional and new resettlement countries, local integration is taken to the next level with the adoption of public policies that enable the effective inclusion of refugees and stateless persons. In this context, the proactive engagement of a diverse set of stakeholders is key to ensure access to justice and full enjoyment of economic, socio-cultural, civil-political and freedom from discrimination. A whole of society approach in responding to forced displacement in the region is therefore essential for a sustainable roadmap towards solutions and increased accountability.

This session will allow representatives from the NGO, Academia and refugee communities to share their experiences in responding to different sub-regional situations (namely Venezuela and the North of Central America), highlighting lessons learned, challenges faced and discussing ways forward to foster an effective multi-stakeholder engagement with the aim of “putting people first”.

Objectives of the session:

- Showcase innovative practices and lessons learned, including outstanding challenges in the implementation of comprehensive responses using a 'whole of society approach' with the aim of "putting people first" toward the pursuit of solutions.
- Exchange experiences of the responses to the different sub-regional situations in the Americas from the perspective of different actors: refugees, academia, NGOs, and local government.
- Foster a constructive dialogue and exchange of ideas on ways forward in creatively considering durable solutions taking them to the next level when responding to forced displacement in the Americas.

Desired outcome of the session:

- Awareness-raising and advocacy around the regional responses to the Venezuela and North of Central America situations.
- Collection of innovative practices, opportunities, lessons learnt from various actors and stakeholders in the region on the implementation of multi-stakeholder responses.
- Creatively discuss ideas on the implementation of durable solutions, maintaining the Americas at the forefront of solutions worldwide and promoting mechanisms for the inclusion of civil society in the implementation of regional instruments.
- Identify concrete actions and recommendations on how to strengthen synergies between actors with the aim of "putting people first" and foster true accountability to and participation of refugees in finding solutions.

Methodology:

This session will include five short presentations 'TED Talk' style from representatives of different stakeholders followed by a Q&A and exchange of ideas and recommendations between participants and the audience. Each speaker will have 7-10 minutes presentation time. The session will be moderated by the representative of the recently established Americas Network for Refugee Legal Aid (ANRLA).