

# UNHCR ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NGOs 27 – 29 JUNE 2018

International Conference Center Geneva

## ***CONCEPT NOTE***

**Session title:** Panel with the Deputy High Commissioner on Innovation

**Date:** Thursday 28 June

**Time/Room:** 15h15 – 16h15 – Room 2

### **Background:**

Whilst the prime cause of our work has not changed, the scale and the nature of the issues we seek to address has. Hence our ability to innovate becomes a core competence - new ideas, new ways of solving problems, new ways of engaging and relating become critical. As the world becomes increasingly complex, UNHCR and its NGO partners must embrace innovation to achieve better, more creative and more inclusive solutions to humanitarian problems.

Innovation is about technology, but not exclusively. It is also about partnerships and processes. The key to all innovation is finding new ways to overcome barriers as effectively and efficiently as possible by experimenting with new processes and making use of competencies and creativity of a wider range of partners, including civil society, governmental, academia and the private sector.

By joining hands, UNHCR and its partners shall continue to utilize an innovative approach to the growing humanitarian needs of today, and more critically— the future. This session will provide a platform for different actors sharing perspective and practice in “people-centered” innovation when responding to forced displacement.

The first part of the session is the *Official Launch of the NGO Consultations Innovation Award*. The DHC will make the official announcement of the launch and call for submission from NGOs.

The second part of the session is a *Panel Discussion on Innovation*. Moderated by Imogen Foulkes, BBC, with DHC as the lead panelist, this discussion will further showcase the practice of innovation by different actors and explore the linkage between “putting people first” and innovation. CTEN will showcase their work in innovation to serve as example and inspiration for potential applicants.

### **Objectives of the session:**

- Officially launch the Innovation Award and to call for submissions.
- Showcase innovation practice by a refugee-led agency, a private sector partner, and UNHCR.

- Highlight the importance of an innovative / creative approach in solving humanitarian problems in an inclusive manner with affected populations and diverse partners.

**Panelists:**

- **DHC (Lead Panelist)** – The Deputy High Commissioner oversees human resources, partnerships (external relations), finance and ICT in UNHCR. She is also spearheading organizational reform and is UNHCR’s Sherpa in the Grand Bargain.
- **CTEN (Panelist)** - Community Technology Empowerment Network, Peter Batali, Co-Founder and Executive Director. Peter manages the CTEN-Uganda team and sets the course for CTEN-Uganda’s vision and partnerships. Building community and empowerment in northern Ugandan refugee camps through skill-building, awareness-raising, and increased access to information and communication technology.
- **BroadLights (Panelist)** brings affordable wifi connectivity to the most vulnerable communities in the world by financing hotspots and bandwidth with the savings from LED lamp replacements and/or with grants, donations and other funding sources. It also partners with selected value added service providers in a position to leverage this newly available affordable connectivity to bring work opportunities via Impact Outsourcing, educational and health applications, financial inclusion to the unbanked and multiple other development opportunities to populations previously limited in their access to the latest online services available in more developed countries. Marcelo Garcia is one of the two co-founders of BroadLights based at the Impact Hub in Geneva. It is supported by a global network of volunteers - more details available in the following article: [www.cofmag.com/broadlights-ideas-connect-world](http://www.cofmag.com/broadlights-ideas-connect-world)
- **Imogen Foulkes, BBC (Moderator)** - BBC’s Correspondent in Geneva since 2004. Prior to that she worked for Swiss Radio International, and for Scottish Television. She has travelled widely as part of her work, and has reported on a variety of humanitarian crises and post-conflict situations, such as Bosnia, Kosovo, South Ossetia, Kyrgyzstan, and Haiti.