

**UNHCR ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NGOS
27 – 29 JUNE 2018**

International Conference Center Geneva

DISCUSSION PAPER

Session title: Addressing statelessness through a “whole-of-society approach”

Date: Wednesday 27 June

Time/Room: 16h30 – 18h30 – Room 5/6

Background:

The session will begin by looking at a recent break-through on statelessness. As ‘putting people first’ is the overarching theme of the consultations, we will hear first from a representative from the Makonde tribe of Kenya – one of the most recent stateless minority groups to have acquired citizenship. This discussion will explore how to forge strong relationships with community-led groups who can play a central role in resolution of their statelessness.

The second will continue with the presentation of two new tools supporting advocacy and action to prevent statelessness. A representative Open Society Justice Initiative (OSJI) will present a new practitioner’s guide on community-based programmes to support access to citizenship documentation and other forms of proof of legal identity. This guide is the result of collaboration between Namati, the Open Society Justice Initiative, UNHCR and a range of grassroots and paralegal organizations working to assist stateless and at-risk populations acquire citizenship and related documentation. The European Network on Statelessness (ENS) will also demonstrate its recently launched Statelessness Index, a comparative online tool that assesses European countries’ laws, policies and practice against international norms and good practice in the areas of the protection of stateless people and the prevention and reduction of statelessness. The Index can support a range of actors in identifying legal gaps that could lead to statelessness.

Participants will also be invited to identify opportunities for joint action in the run-up to UNHCR's High Level Event on Statelessness in 2019.

Objectives of the session:

This session will explore a "whole-of-society" approach can:

- Ensure that stateless persons and community-organized groups play a prominent role in shaping an effective response to statelessness;
- Utilize new tools to prevent and resolve statelessness.

Desired outcome of the session:

The session will enable participants to identify concrete ways in which action on statelessness can be strengthened through a whole-of-society approach.