

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

International Conference Center Geneva

***DISCUSSION PAPER***

**Session title:** *Asia Regional session*

**Date:** 27 June

**Time/Room:** 14h00 – 16h00 – Room 2

**Background and link to the theme**

The Asia and Pacific region is home to approximately 3.7 million refugees, 2.4 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 1.6 million stateless people. Only 20 of the 45 countries and territories in the region have acceded to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Despite a long-standing tradition of hospitality towards displaced people across the region, in recent times there has also been a reduction in protection space, a decrease in the number of resettlement places, and voluntary repatriation has remained challenging due to ongoing conflicts, violence and instability. Against this backdrop, creative and innovative solutions for people of concern in the region must be explored that include a 'whole of society' approach driven by people of concern themselves.

Lastly, the theme "Putting People First" reminds us that persons of concern, must be at the centre of solutions as well as the whole-of-society approach with their meaningful engagement and involvement in planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

It remains clear: the best way to address complex, escalating challenges in the region with limited resources is through effective multi-actor coordination and collaboration.

This session, facilitated in an interactive manner, will explore challenges and good practices for such approaches. The content of the session will be guided by two main questions:

1. How can we put (the voices of) refugees at the centre of discussions about their lives?
2. Solutions from the perspectives of refugees: what is the role of civil society?

### **Objectives of the session**

The session pursues the following objectives:

- Provide an overview of the latest developments in the region
- Highlight some innovative and creative solutions to address challenges on the ground
- Identify strategies how we can put refugees at the centre of discussions around solutions
- Identify examples where a 'whole of society' approach has worked and discuss further opportunities

### **Desired outcome of the session**

The desired outcomes of the session are:

- Identification of new innovative ways of providing solutions and strategies that put refugees at the centre of solutions
- Concrete recommendations on how a 'whole of society' approach can be scaled up and furthered in Asia

### **Methodology**

1. Opening remarks by the Bureau Director; setting the stage; giving a regional overview.
2. Followed by an invitation to the audience to watch video recording of refugees, bringing them to the centre of the discussions.

For the video recording, refugees were guided by the following questions:

- How can UNHCR can raise the refugees' concerns and advocate more effectively on their behalf?
- How can NGOs and partners address refugee concerns, advocate more effectively with governments and mobilise civil society?

3. A live connection with Pakistan throughout the first part of the session, the panel from Pakistan consisting of an afghan refugee, one member of the Pakistani host community and two UNHCR staff (national and international) will be part of the live discussions in the room, ask questions, provide answers and insights into their challenges and share their experience regarding some innovative tools they use to enhance communications eco-systems. Then the floor is open for interaction in the room/Q&A.

4. External speakers; (academia) who will share his perspectives and talk about the resilience of refugees and host community, and (private sector) will share their experience working with UNHCR with multi-faced interventions such as gift-in-kind, refugee employment, financial contribution to UNHCR livelihood programme, sensitization/awareness raising of refugee issues at various platform including schools, staff deployment to UNHCR field offices.

5. The final part of this session will be devoted to Q&A and pigeonhole, which would allow us to have some desired outcomes and some recommendations to move forward in the region.