

2021 UNHCR-ICVA Monthly Consultations with NGOs

Information Note

Background

Following-up on the model of weekly/monthly NGO Consultations on the COVID-19 response held in 2020, and in lieu of the usual UNHCR-NGO Global Consultations, the UNHCR Partnership and Coordination Service (UNHCR/PCS) and ICVA will co-organize a series of Monthly Consultations with NGOs in 2021.

Objectives and approach

The overall objective of those monthly Consultations is to **support an enabling environment for NGOs and UNHCR to exchange on operational, policy and advocacy priorities in a safe space.**

Going beyond the information-sharing focus and the usual panel and Q&A format, the perspectives provided by participants aim to **strengthen the policymaking processes at the stages of conception, drafting, impact assessment, decision-making**, as well as **monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation**, when appropriate. It is also aimed to have some impact through manageable and prioritized follow-up action points.

The aim of the Consultations is to:

- **Lead to concrete and lively exchanges between UNHCR and NGOs**, sometimes inclusive of other actors;
- **Link to ongoing policy and strategy developments** (e.g. UNHCR policies developed/reviewed in 2021 and which would benefit from NGO inputs);
- **Link to major global initiatives and processes** (e.g. related to the Global Refugee Forum follow-up);
- **Link to operational aspects**, particularly in engaging NGOs in the operationalization of specific policies and strategies or in discussing – at global level – coordination and implementing partnerships issues;
- **Connect to past discussions** such as those organized in 2020 around the COVID-19 situation;
- **Lead to collective recommendations** and/or follow-up actions.

Participation criteria

In keeping with the longstanding participation approach applicable to the UNHCR-NGO Global Consultations, NGOs who wish to attend and contribute to those consultations should meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Be an **implementing partner of UNHCR in 2020/2021**
- Be an **NGO collaborating with UNHCR (including operational partners and Refugee Led-Organizations)** with a demonstrated interest in the solution to the problem of refugees, internally displaced persons and/or statelessness and/or in the themes of the consultations;
- Be a **member of ICVA**
- Have **consultative status with ECOSOC** (UN Economic and Social Council) **with a demonstrated interest** in the solution to the problem of refugees, internally displaced persons and/or statelessness and/or in the themes of the consultations;

Depending on the topic, other actors (e.g. academia representatives, sports associations, etc.) may be allowed to join as observer for specific sessions.

If your NGO fulfils one or more criteria above, kindly send an email explaining why you wish to attend and contribute to the UNHCR-NGO Monthly Consultations to: partnership@unhcr.org. The email subject must include "Participation in UNHCR-NGO Monthly Consultations_ Name of Organization".

How are the themes selected?

The above elements will guide ICVA and UNHCR/PCS to select the theme discussed each month. Flexibility will also be kept, to ensure the capacity to adapt and address issues that may emerge along the year and/or organize follow-up sessions, when necessary, on topics already addressed. Finally, the process of selecting and prioritizing the monthly themes will be informed by exchanges with and suggestions from NGO and UNHCR staff, as well as past and future surveys related to the consultations.

Speakers/panellists:

Each consultation will include speakers from UNHCR and NGOs including, when relevant, Refugee-Led Organizations (RLOs), Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) and Women-Led Organizations (WLOs). Depending on the topic and objective of each Consultation, representatives from other UN agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement and academia can also be invited to speak.

Speakers are selected jointly by UNHCR/PCS and ICVA, paying particular attention to ensuring a gender balance, regional representation and suitable expertise.

How to make the most of your participation:

In light of the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the intended global reach of the monthly Consultations, the meetings will be held virtually until further public health notice. Once possible, a hybrid format may be put in place.

The Consultations involve seeking the opinions and analysis of participants, which means that efforts will be made to ensure proper time is allocated to exchanges. Interested participants will be **strongly encouraged** to be involved in the formulation of objectives, policies and approaches, and will have the opportunity to express their views, and share their experience, documents and good practices through direct oral intervention or through the chat box. In addition to UNHCR speaker in each Consultation, relevant UNHCR staff also participate and can exchange with NGOs.

UNHCR and NGOs will be **strongly encouraged** to provide inputs in advance of each consultation before the consultations while registering and/or during the consultation. In doing so, UNHCR and NGOs participants will be **invited** to share documents, remarks and analysis, raise questions, point to gaps and challenges, and make proposals.

To ensure effective exchanges and concrete outcomes through the online interface, there will be a flexible limit of **2-3 participating staff** per international and national NGOs including FBOs, RLOs, WLOs, depending on capacity. Furthermore, the virtual nature of the NGO Consultations providing more opportunities for participation, local NGOs and RLOs following the participation criteria are particularly encouraged to register.

Frequency and duration

- Ten consultations will be held between January and December 2021.
- The duration of each consultation is 1 hour and 30 minutes, usually organized on Wednesdays, from 14:00 Geneva time.

Format

The first part of each consultation will consist in introducing concepts, information and objectives through either traditional but short presentations or through interview-style dialogue between the moderator and panellists.

Keeping in mind the objective of improving the interactive format, a structured exchange with the audience will then take place, geared towards gathering inputs, commitments, and concrete action/follow-up points. This exchange should last for at least 40-45 minutes.

Moderated alternatively by UNHCR/PCS or ICVA, the consultations will end with a summary of the main follow-up and action points coming up from the consultation, presented by the moderator.

Interpretation

No interpretation will be provided during those Consultations.

Follow-up

UNHCR/PCS and ICVA will work to prioritize identified action points and recommendations emerging from each Monthly Consultations. Some will be directly followed-up by UNHCR/PCS and ICVA (jointly or individually), some will be the responsibility of UNHCR and NGO participants, in which case the role of UNHCR/PCS and ICVA will be to help in coordinating efforts and maintaining momentum.

Contact

If you have any question or wish to receive more information about the UNHCR-ICVA Monthly NGO Consultations, please contact partnership@unhcr.org and secretariat@icvanetwork.org.

Prepared by ICVA and UNHCR/PCS. Last updated: 15 April 2021