

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE  
HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME  
67th Session  
October 2016

**NGO Statement on the 2016 Annual Partners Consultation  
Agenda Item 7**

**Preamble**

Thank you Mister Chair.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, fellow colleagues,

The purpose of our efforts at the UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations this year was to give voice to Youth. So I will begin my statement today by quoting the words of a Ugandan youth delegate Maria Alessi, who said ' Let us harness the power of over half the world's population: young people. Dynamic, powerful, we adapt to change; we are like chameleons in this world.'<sup>1</sup>

Why are we talking about youth? The September report on the Global Refugee Youth Consultations sums it up beautifully, "Seldom consulted, frequently overlooked, and often unable to fully participate in decision-making, the talents, energy, and potential of Refugee Youth—young people aged 15-24 years old—remain largely untapped. This must change. Refugee Youth want the same things young people everywhere want: to be consulted, to be listened to, to contribute, to engage, and to be part of solutions. They want opportunities, education, employment, and inclusion."<sup>2</sup>

To examine these issues more closely, the Consultation which took place in Geneva in June provided an opportunity for 30 youth delegates to meet with 520 representatives from 200 organizations in 87 countries to discuss this year's theme, "**Youth – the future is now.**"

Bringing a youth focus to the 3 days of Consultations in many ways changed the dynamics from previous years. Refugee and stateless young people participated as speakers and moderators in the majority of the regional and thematic sessions.

The Consultations were a milestone in a year that celebrated youth.

1. It took place immediately after the World Humanitarian Summit where the Global Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action was signed.

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<sup>1</sup> Alessi, Maria. Concluding Speech at 2016 UNHCR Annual Partner's Consultation. 17 June 2016.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AkcRIA8GJPo>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/youth/resources/1385-gryc-final-report-sept-2016>

2. It took place just after UNHCR and WRC's Global Refugee Youth Consultations were concluded in Geneva and while UNHCR ExCom members negotiated a Conclusion on Youth.
3. It was followed by the 19 September Summit on Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants and 20 September Leaders' Summit.
4. And it set the stage for youth engagement in the upcoming High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection, focusing on Children on the Move, to be held in December.

There is significant alignment between the Core Actions for Refugee Youth from the Global Refugee Youth Consultations; the key actions from the Global Compact; and the Call to Action that emerged from the Annual Consultations. In all of these summaries **ACTION** was a key descriptor. If 2016 was the year to listen, 2017 is the **Year to Act!**

Moving forward, UNHCR, NGOs and Members States should take into account the **overarching calls to action** that have come out of the NGO Consultations<sup>3</sup>.

1. Establish a working definition of "youth" standardized among all UN agencies and partners and collect disaggregated data on youth,
2. Work with states to implement the UNHCR ExCom conclusion on youth,
3. Include youth in policy and program development, implementation, and evaluation in a transparent and accountable manner,
4. Engage youth with rights-based programming that meets their diverse needs,
5. Adopt inclusive approaches that lead to greater power sharing among various stakeholders, and
6. Transform the humanitarian ecosystem of response to be a better fit for persons of concern and deliver resources and services to those best suited to respond.

## **Data**

At the Consultations youth posed the question 'How can we work and progress together if we are invisible?' ...How are we going to programme for the protection needs put forth in the panels when we lack critical data? We do not have enough information. Data is context. We cannot pledge to leave no one behind if we don't know who is currently is left behind.

We urge Member States and UNHCR to generate and use age- and sex- disaggregated data pertaining to adolescents and youth in humanitarian settings. Together, we should more accurately track and report on the resources allocated to young people in humanitarian contexts.<sup>4</sup>

## **Documentation & Protection**

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<sup>3</sup> Please find the complete list in the Executive Summary

<sup>4</sup> Action 4&5 of Global Compact for Youth in Humanitarian Action <http://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/CompactforYoungPeopleinHumanitarianAction-FINAL-EDITED-VERSION.pdf>

During the Consultations we heard moving testimony from Zhirair Chichian, on the personal challenges and risks he faced as a stateless young person. We also heard updates on the #iBelong campaign. From these presentations it was once again clear that identity documents are essential to day-to-day life and central to protection. Concerns on documentation were raised not only by stateless young people, but across the populations of concern represented at the meetings.

Millions of youth are suffering protection violations connected to documentation challenges now. We call on governments to issue official identification documents in a timely and systematic manner.

We encourage you to read the Executive Summary of the Annual Consultations report for additional recommendations regarding learning, employment opportunities and psychosocial and mental health services.

### **Resources**

None of these recommended actions can be implemented without resources: human and financial. At the September 21-22 UNHCR Standing Committee meeting UNHCR warned states it continues to face significant funding shortfalls. Investing in the needs and contributions of young people will necessitate trade-offs impacting other aspects of programming.

UNHCR's hundreds of NGO partners are counting on predictable, adequate, and accessible funding to carry out quality programming advancing protection, assistance and durable solutions for UNHCR's persons of concern. How will we work together to address and mitigate the impact of these shortfalls?

We call on member states to take seriously their commitment in the New York Declaration to "mobilize adequate financial and other resources to cover humanitarian needs identified" and "provide resources in a prompt, predictable, consistent and flexible manner, including through wider partnerships involving... civil society."

In conclusion, how will we ensure that the input from 2016 leads to **Action**, not just more conversation? NGOs and youth are expecting a departure from business as usual. We are expecting 2017 to be a Year of Action.

I will end my remarks with a definition. Resilience: "A dynamic process of positive adaptation in responses to significant adversity." We live in difficult and complicated times. Partnership is more important than ever. Partnership with youth. Partnership with NGOs. Partnership with UNHCR and other UN agencies. Partnership with member states. Partnership with refugees, IDPs, stateless and others.

Now is the time for action. Let's work together to ensure the future is a resilient one.

Thank you.