

**ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NGOs**  
**14 – 16 JUNE 2017**  
International Conference Center Geneva

***DISCUSSION PAPER***

**Session title:** *Regional session MENA*

**Date:** *Thursday 15 June*

**Time/Room:** *10h30 – 13h00 – Room 3*

**Background:**

The Middle East and North Africa region is home to 5% of the total world population yet hosts almost 40% global displacement, with more than 20 million displaced persons, including 5 million Syrian refugees.

The comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF) is based on the principles of international cooperation and responsibility-sharing, which are a cornerstone for the response to the refugee crises in the MENA region. By their sheer magnitude and complexity, the crises in the region have challenged UN agencies and governments alike, forcing the international community to find comprehensive and innovative ways to respond to the growing needs of refugees and their hosting communities.

The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants notes that comprehensive refugee responses should embrace a multi-stakeholder, “whole-of-society” approach that involves “national and local authorities, international organizations, international financial institutions, regional organizations, regional coordination and partnership mechanisms, civil society partners, including faith-based organizations and academia, the private sector, media and the refugees themselves.”

The MENA region has embraced the “whole of society” approach and has been undertaking an array of initiatives which are aligned with the CRRF and global compact on refugees (GCR). A clear example is the MENA Civil Society Network for Displacement (MENA CSND). The MENA CSND aims to address the calls to strengthen the role of civil society in responding to the crisis by providing a platform for civil society stakeholders in MENA to strengthen and amplify their voices and actions in favour of the protection of displaced persons, and in support of host communities. Its members include representatives from national NGOs, foundations, media, academia and private sector.

The first part of the session will highlight the relevance of civil society’s active engagement in displacement related matters in the region, and will showcase the MENA CSND as an

inclusive platform for civil society's regional coordination. The second part of the session will zoom in on the role particular advocates of displaced persons in the region.

**Objectives of the session:**

The MENA session aims at:

- Providing a platform for a constructive discussion on the role of civil society in ensuring comprehensive responses in displacement related matters.
- Highlighting the MENA CSND as an inclusive platform in the region for civil society's regional coordination and engagement in displacement related matters.
- Discussing the role that non-traditional entities including media, academia and the private sector can play as an advocate of displaced persons in the region.
- Discussing regional good practices that could be considered when developing the CRRF and the programme of action of the global compact on refugees.

**Desired outcome of the session:**

The session discussions should feed into the planning process for the continued engagement of the MENA CSND in the design and response frameworks for refugee crises in the region, spotlighting and reinforcing good practices from ongoing crises in the region and with renewed focus on avenues for input into the global compact on refugees.

**Methodology:**

The session will be composed of 2 panel discussions, with the same moderator to ensure consistency and linkages, on a Davos-style stage arrangement, followed by questions and answers, including by using the pigeonhole methodology. Live social media coverage will be included. Languages will be English and Arabic.