

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

International Conference Center Geneva

***DISCUSSION PAPER***

**Session title:**      *“Putting People First in MENA”*

**Date:**                      Wednesday 27 June

**Time/Room:**            14h00 – 16h00 – Room 4

**Background:**

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is facing a complex set of inter-related and dynamic challenges including the biggest displacement crisis since World War II. While representing 5% of the world’s population, the MENA region accounts for 38% of global displacement, with most countries in the region being affected either as countries of origin, transit or destination.

At a time when discussions on the future of engagement on displacement issues are taking place, following the September 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and looking towards the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), the voice of civil society remains critical. In the New York Declaration, Member States stresses that comprehensive refugee responses should involve a multi-stakeholder, “whole-of-society” approach that involves civil society partners, including NGOs, community and faith based organizations, academia, media and the private sector among others. Furthermore, such approach to refugee response aims to involve national and local authorities, international organizations, international financial institutions, regional organizations, regional coordination and partnership mechanisms, civil society partners in the design and implementation of refugee response plans.

The MENA region has been ahead of the curve in relation to many dimensions of the 4 pillars (I. reception and admission, II. support for immediate and ongoing needs, III. support for host countries and communities, IV. durable solutions) of the CRRF. The MENA session will highlight good practices and regional approaches to refugee response in addition to examples of how such approaches embody the

concept of “putting people first”, and bring our operations closer our persons of concern through enhanced communication with communities. The regional linkage to community-based protection will be highlighted by panelists and speakers.

The first hour of the MENA session will highlight the relevance of civil society’s active engagement in displacement related matters in the region, and will also showcase the MENA CSND as an inclusive platform for regional coordination that is inclusive of various actors from among academia, private sector, faith-based organizations, media, social influencers, and persons of concern. Additionally, the session will zoom in on the role particular advocates of displaced persons in the region can play in the design and implementation of response strategies that are closer to the grassroots needs and priorities. The first half of the session will be initiated by opening remarks from the MENA Director, issuing a challenge to participants centered on the session’s theme.

The second hour will address durable solutions and complementary pathways in the MENA region through an interactive debate.

### **Objectives of the session:**

The MENA session aims at:

- Providing an update on regional progress and good practices on the implementation of the comprehensive approaches highlighted in the CRRF
- Highlighting the MENA CSND as an inclusive platform in the region for civil society’s regional coordination and engagement in displacement related matters.
- Addressing spectrum of traditional durable solutions and consider wider aspects of solutions (ex. prevention, root causes, greater inclusion in and support for host communities) from a regional perspective. This includes ongoing multi-stakeholder initiatives that address solutions.
- Fostering constructive dialogue on community-based protection as a key regional approach and priority

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

- Awareness-raising and advocacy around the CRRF in MENA
- Collection of good practices from various actors and stakeholders in the region
- Recommendations on how a ‘whole-of-society’ approach can positively impact finding durable solutions
- Building upon and strengthening regional synergies among different stakeholders
- Identifying the ongoing approaches and practices in the region that truly embody the concept of “putting people first”

## **Methodology:**

### Hour 1: Whole-of-Society:

- The session will begin with a 'TED Talk' formatted introduction followed by the regional leadership providing 10 minutes on key trends in the region that should inform the dialogue during the session. There will be an additional two carefully prepared, dynamic speeches on whole-of-society (i.e. ideas worth spreading). Throughout the sessions, participants will be encouraged to type/vote for questions to the speakers in pigeonhole. The final 15 minutes of the session will be spent answering the most referenced questions.

### Hour 2: Solutions in the MENA region:

- Remarks will address solutions through the consultation theme of 'putting people first'. The well-established body of civil society practitioners will have time to address the challenge question being proposed by the Director followed by a debate. Here each speaker would take 5 minutes to answer the challenge question from the Director then respond to a question (pigeonhole or live) from the audience. No power point presentations or formal speeches would be used. The panel will include a gender balance and, in the spirit of 'putting people first', should ideally include persons of concern along with NGO and UNHCR panelists. The session would include a wide-range of speakers including one inspirational 'TED Talk' intervention to close the session.