

## 2018 UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations: Putting People First

### Concept Note on Expected Outcomes

At a critical juncture in forced displacement trends, UNHCR highlighted in its [Strategic Directions for 2017-2021](#) the priority of “putting people first” to ensure refugees, the internally displaced, and stateless people can “find protection from harm; live peacefully; learn, work and flourish as contributing members of the communities where they live; and find longer term solutions that enable them to build a secure future”. This will particularly be achieved through “strengthening and diversifying partnerships” and building on “an appetite for new approaches” reflected in recent high-level initiatives such as the New York Declaration, the World Humanitarian Summit and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### Overall Expected Outcomes of the Annual Consultations

Each year, NGOs come to the Annual Consultations willing to:

- *Share information, views and analysis:* The Annual Consultations are a unique forum for sharing feedback, information and experience as well as raise awareness on emerging issues. They serve to identify gaps in refugee protection and reflect on how those can be addressed through efficient partnerships. Ultimately, NGOs hope to influence UNHCR policies, processes, and programmes.
- *Discuss partnership issues:* The Annual Consultations are catalytic in forming and strengthening partnerships between UNHCR and NGOs, contributing to better transparency and accountability for both sides. Exchanges allow bringing to the fore partnership difficulties and needs for remedial action; identifying opportunities to improve the application of principles of partnership in practice. The Annual Consultations also enhance mutual understanding among UNHCR and partners.
- *Explore further complementarities and engage in regular strategic discussions:* The Annual Consultations allow UNHCR and NGOs to identify common priorities in operational activities and advocacy. They are a basis to build networks for policy discussions, design comprehensive protection and solutions as well as develop joint/complementary advocacy approaches.
- *Arrange face-to-face meetings:* The Annual Consultations are a unique occasion for NGOs to meet Geneva-based UNHCR staff, including UNHCR senior managers, to discuss and highlight issues of concern. The Annual Consultations are also the occasion to get to know, and consult with, other NGOs in very different settings and learn from them, discuss common issues, share good practices.

### Specific objectives for the 2018 Annual Consultations on Putting People First

Over the past years, renewed attention has been devoted to ensuring that humanitarian action is as close as possible to the people we serve. From the IASC Principals endorsement of the Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations, to the Participation Revolution and the World Humanitarian Summit, the emphasis has been enabling people to be the central drivers of their resilience. Similarly, through the SDGs, the international community has also put the dignity of the individual front and centre, with the pledge to leave no one behind. In working with refugees, the internally displaced, and stateless people

UNHCR and its partner NGOs are answerable to them and strive to ensure their voices, perspectives and priorities are heard and acted on.

The 2018 UNHCR Annual Consultations with Non-Governmental Organizations will aim to contribute collectively to “putting people first” by looking at how UNHCR and NGOs can best work in partnership to achieve this major objective. The Annual Consultations will take stock of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) roll-out, drawing lessons learned for improved comprehensive, predictable and inclusive refugee response based on UNHCR’s traditional relationship with NGOs and their key role in the execution of UNHCR’s mandate. The Consultations will provide space for meaningful consultations, using a more participatory (less panel-oriented) approach to elaborate on emerging trends such as working with and for refugee leadership, national system strengthening, age, gender and diversity, self-reliance and economic inclusion. Internal displacement, and the opportunities UNHCR and NGOs can pursue to advance protection, prevention and solutions for IDPs, will receive special attention because 2018 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. More specifically, discussions will consider:

- *What is new about the CRRF?* With the benefit of about 18 months of gradual CRRF roll-out in two regions, good practices and lessons learnt can be examined. Looking particularly at how NGOs, UNHCR and partnerships contribute to putting people first in the CRRF roll-out, including in terms of accountability, the first day of the UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations will focus debates and analyses on:
  - Regional specificities and lessons learnt;
  - Addressing statelessness through this new response framework;
  - Partnership dimensions in implementing new approaches to refugee response;
  - Ensuring accountability and measuring the impact of the CRRF.
  
- *How to sustain the positive dimensions of emerging trends?* Since the World Humanitarian Summit, the international community has agreed to develop new approaches largely geared towards generating a participation revolution, with humanitarian action designed and implemented much closer to affected populations. To help sustain this momentum, UNHCR and NGO staff members will discuss and strategize, in groups, around:
  - Working for and with Refugee Leadership;
  - National Systems strengthening;
  - Age, Gender and Diversity;
  - Self-reliance and economic inclusion.
  
- *How can NGOs and UNHCR build on the momentum of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement to advance protection, prevention and solutions for internally displaced persons (IDPS)?* Over the past two years, international attention has been mobilized by the New York Declaration and the call for the development of two global compacts, one on refugees, and the other for safe, orderly migration. These, only marginally considered internal displacement since their focus was on large movements of refugees and migrants. In the context of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Guiding Principles, the UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations will aim to bring renewed attention and focus to the plight of the internally displaced, taking into account that “Ensuring that internally displaced persons are included at the outset in the design, planning and implementation of actions and decisions directed

towards them must be at the heart of responses by national Governments, local authorities and all humanitarian, development and other relevant actors”.<sup>1</sup>

Debate and discuss opportunities to:

- Facilitating and strengthening IDP participation and engagement;
- Promote and support national responsibility in preventing, responding to and finding solutions for internal displacement through the development and implementation of laws and policies;
- Strengthen the evidenced base on internal displacement through the collection and sharing of quality data;
- Drive solutions for IDPs, including through determined efforts to prevent and resolve protracted displacement.

It is expected that the 2018 Annual Consultations will result in exchanges of good practices and understanding of how UNHCR and NGOs can, in partnership, continue to put refugees, stateless persons and internally displaced people at the center of their work, for improved impact, sustainability and accountability.

*19 February 2018*

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, A/72/202, 24 July 2017, para. 11: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IDPersons/A-72-202.pdf>