

ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NGOs
3 – 5 JULY 2012 - International Conference Center Geneva

BACKGROUND PAPER

Operational Focus: Implementing partnership – A Framework for establishing and maintaining UNHCR partnerships

Wednesday 4 July 2012, 14h30 – 18h30 – Room 3

Since UNHCR was established more than 60 years ago, it has been working in close partnership with NGOs to protect and assist refugees. One major manifestation of these partnerships is through programs facilitated by UNHCR and implemented by NGO partners. In 2010, UNHCR channeled nearly 30% of its \$1.9 billion budget through 685 NGOs, including 533 national NGOs. UNHCR is reviewing the whole framework of cooperation with implementing partners, including the types and formats of agreement between UNHCR and NGOs, the terminology used, the mechanisms for joint management of agreements, joint monitoring of projects and mutual establishment and review of partnership. UNHCR is committed to improve the current procedures with the aim to assist in the establishment and maintenance of implementing partnerships with NGO partners.

This dialogue on how implementing partnerships are established and maintained is not merely technical. Partnership dynamics among UNHCR and NGOs have always been influenced by the manner in which UNHCR and NGO field offices engage with one another in implementing projects. A new framework for engagement could present significant new opportunities as well as challenges for UNHCR and its NGO partners in serving refugees together.

This session will brief and, through breakout sessions, solicit feedback from NGOs on UNHCR's ongoing efforts to strengthen its partnerships with NGOs through consultations with stakeholders and establishment of a support service, Implementing Partnership Management Service (IPMS) and, in particular, working through a Field Reference Group of Implementing Partners and UNHCR colleagues to draft Standard Operating Procedures to establishing and maintain implementing partnerships with NGO partners.

The draft Standard Operating Procedures for establishing and maintaining partnerships, along with the draft Implementing Partnership Agreement, will be shared in advance with NGO Consultation participants, who are strongly encouraged to read the materials prior to the session.

Moderator: Mark HETFIELD, *Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society*

Speaker(s): Walter BRILL, *International Catholic Migration Commission*

Steve CORLISS, *Director of Division of Programme Support and Management, UNHCR*

Fatima SHERIF-NOR, *Acting Head, Implementing Partnership Management Service, UNHCR*

Kenneth HANSEN, *Greek Council for Refugees*

The session will open with a 75 minute panel (14:30 – 15:45) consisting of:

- Introductions, Mark Hetfield (HIAS, Moderator) (5 minutes)
- Opening Statement by Steve Corliss (UNHCR), describing the landscape which led to the initiative for the launch of the review of the Framework(7-10 minutes)
- Comments by Walter Brill (ICMC) for an International NGO Perspective on UNHCR's Framework for Implementing with Partner's Initiative in the context of the challenges and opportunities faced by partners in their relationship with UNHCR (7-10 minutes)
- Briefing by Fatima Sherif-Nor (UNHCR) on the work of the Reference Group, the current state of the draft Standard Operating Procedures for the establishment and maintenance of implementing partnerships, and Next Steps (10-15 minutes)
- Comments by Kenneth Hansen, (Greek Council for Refugees) on the work of the Reference Group (10-15 minutes)
- Q and A (moderated by Mark Hetfield) (20 minutes) for the purpose of preparing for the break-out sessions by clarifying the UNHCR initiative, the draft SOPs and Implementing Partnership Agreement and the work of the Reference Group

Breakout Session (3 Groups by region, with French, Spanish and English interpretation available). Following the introduction of the break-out sessions and the beginning of the discussion (15:45 – 16:15) the groups will disperse for a coffee break (16:15-16:45), and then resume in the same room for an hour of discussion on the following four main questions (16:45-17:45).

- From the NGO perspective, is there a need for a framework for the establishment and maintenance of NGO partnerships?
- What are those needs and what should the goals be, from the NGO perspective, of such a new framework?
- Comments to the draft SOPs and Implementing Partnership Agreements (based on prior readings of those documents)
- Recommendations for next steps in the development of the new framework

Reconvene in Large Session 17:45-18:30: The breakout groups will then reconvene in the main meeting room, with the three rapporteurs summarizing the three discussions (as best they can, given that there will be no time to finalize their notes), an opportunity for clarifications from the floor, and then an opportunity for comments/suggestions/next steps by the original panel