

**ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NGOs
17 – 19 JUNE 2014 - International Conference Center Geneva**

THEMATIC SESSION

BACKGROUND PAPER

**Achieving self-reliance:
paving the way for safe, lawful and sustainable livelihoods**

Tuesday 17 June, 14h30 – 16h15 – Room 4

Session Description

As the average time in displacement grows, so does the need for the refugee-serving community to address the routine exclusion of displaced persons from safe and sustainable livelihoods. Without a legal right to work, access to formal markets, financial products and development opportunities, refugees and other persons of concern are unable to rebuild their lives in exile. Although employment rights are clearly articulated in the 1951 Refugee Convention and other international legal instruments, access to safe and lawful livelihood opportunities for displaced persons are, in practice, either extremely limited or denied altogether. As a result, the displaced are forced to find work in the unregulated informal sector, exposing them to a range of protections risks and rights violations.

Rights respecting livelihood-interventions provide the basis for self-reliance, durable solutions and the fulfillment of human rights; a truly comprehensive response to displacement must, therefore, call upon interventions that will serve the livelihood needs and labor rights of the displaced.

This session will seek to enhance our understanding of the challenges preventing access to safe and sustainable livelihoods, with special focus on the distinct barriers preventing women's meaningful participation in livelihoods and self-reliance. The discussion will advance best practices in advocacy and programming, exploring practical, market-oriented approaches that link livelihoods and self-reliance with the issues of rights and protection. Positive examples of women's leadership and inclusion in livelihood advocacy and programming will receive special comment.

The session will be broken into three parts: a panel discussion, break-out sessions in which participants will be asked to exchange insights regarding the various dimensions of livelihood programming, and a question and answer session.

Moderator:

Dr. Alexander Betts, *Associate Professor of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies, University of Oxford*

Speakers:

Betsy Lippman, *Chief, Operations Solutions and Transitions Section, Division of Programme Support and Management, UNHCR*

Jessica Therkelsen, *Global Policy Director, Asylum Access*

Dr. Faith Nibbs, *Project Director, Forced Migration Innovation Project*