

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

REGIONAL SESSION

BACKGROUND PAPER

Americas Regional session

**”With our own hands”
Women’s furtherance of protection in the Americas**

Wednesday 18 June 2014, 09h00 – 13h00 – Room 3

As statistics often report, women and girls are disproportionately affected by forced displacement and statelessness. The Americas is regrettably no exception to this trend. Women and girls of concern to UNHCR are subject to discrimination, violence and abuses before, during and after displacement. Gender persecution, domestic violence, survival sex, human trafficking, social isolation and harassment are only few of a hideous catalogue of individual or group violations that women have to unreasonably bear. Nevertheless, past or actual trauma and mistreatments and daily challenges do not hinder women’s own resilience and response to protection needs. To the contrary, they prompt coping mechanisms and protection networks to face these gaps, which enable looking forward towards solutions.

This session aims at presenting and discussing women’s protection responses and remedies to the scourge of forced displacement and statelessness as well as difficulties encountered as refugees, IDPs and stateless persons in the Americas. How do women react to the peculiar challenges they meet? What is the contribution that UNHCR and the civil society can bring to attend their specific protection needs? What successful stories and/or good practices can be replicated elsewhere to strengthen protection for women and girls in the Americas? What lessons learnt (positive and negative) should be taken into account when considering the adoption of protection responses for women and girls? These and similar questions will guide reflections and provide a background for presenting best practices to overcome protection gaps.

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Part I – Panel discussion on women’s protection networks | 9.00 – 10.45

Moderator: Stefano Feliciani, UNHCR, Senior Protection Officer (SGBV), Panama

*** Opening remarks**

Marta Juarez | UNHCR, Director Américas Bureau

- * **Internal displacement and conflict: How do women respond**
Claudia Mejía | SISMA Mujeres, Colombia
- * **The gender dimension of statelessness**
Cristina Francisca Luis | Movimiento de Mujeres Dominico-Haitiana (MUDHA), Dominican Republic
- * **Unaccompanied and separated girls travelling from Central America and Mexico**
Esmeralda Lopez | United States Committee for Refugees and Migrants (USCRI), United States

Part II – Market place discussions on women as actors for integration towards comprehensive solutions strategies | 11.15 – 13.00

Moderator: Karina Sarmiento, Asylum Access, Ecuador

- * **The experience of the ‘Arpilleras’ in Ecuador**
Amparo Peñaherrera | Federación de Mujeres de Sucumbíos, Ecuador
- * **The regional experience of HIAS: working to empower women**
Enrique Burbinski | HIAS Regional Director for Latin America
- * **Safe house shelters: ‘Las Monarcas’ in Mexico**
Diana Martinez | Sin Fronteras, Mexico
- * **The experience of refugee women in the Southern border of Mexico**
Diego Lorente | Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Matias de Cordova, México
- * **The experience of Integral Justice in Ibarra – Ecuador**
Luz Mery Mesa | Refugee leader, Ecuador