ICVA 2015 Annual Conference: Principles of Partnership: On March 9th in Geneva, Switzerland, the 2015 ICVA Annual Conference gathered members and partners to discuss the value and implementation of the Principles of Partnership (PoP) in the lead up to the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) and beyond - and to generate ideas to further transform the PoP into reality on the ground. The conference, attended by over 160 participants, reflected on the rationale of the PoP’s inception in 2007; took stock of the current state of partnerships within the humanitarian sector; and discussed how to further strengthen partnerships between NGOs and humanitarian actors. Please click here to access the Annual Conference report.

ICVA 16th General Assembly: Held on 10 March in Geneva, the ICVA 16th General Assembly was a success. A new Board was elected and we are pleased to welcome Dr Faizal Perdaus from Mercy Malaysia as the new ICVA Chair. A full list of the ICVA Board can be found here. The 2015-2018 Strategy was approved at the General Assembly, setting the network in a very positive direction for what it hopes to accomplish in the future. Photographs of the event can be viewed here. For more information about ICVA updates and how to engage with ICVA, Members can read the recent letter from the Executive Director.

Forced Displacement

1. ICVA and UNHCR advance planning for the UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations: NGO partners are invited to the 1-3 July 2015 UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations in Geneva. Under the overarching theme of “Solutions”, sessions will focus on alternatives to camps, climate change, community-based protection, education, emergencies, IDPs, partnership, protection at sea, resettlement, statelessness, the World Humanitarian Summit, youth and the geographical regions. For more information about the sessions please contact the NGO Focal Points. For more information about the agenda and logistics please visit www.unhcr.org/ngo-consultations/ or contact secretariat@icvanetwork.org and interagency@unhcr.org. The registration deadline is 22 May. We thank all NGOs who submitted proposals for the Consultations; the high number of ideas received was unprecedented.
2. UNHCR senior team changes: in February the following appointments at UNHCR were announced: Volker Türk, was named UNHCR’s new Assistant High Commissioner (AHC) for Protection, and George Okoth-Obbo, was named UNHCR’s AHC for Operations. The official UN press announcement is available here. Carol Batchelor (UNHCR’s Representative in Turkey) will take up the post of the Director of DIP, and Valentine Tapsoba (UNHCR’s Representative in Ethiopia) will assume leadership of the Africa Bureau. ICVA will be watching closely as other leadership changes emerge, including the planned departure in June of the Deputy High Commissioner.

3. Supporting collective NGO advocacy in Asia: In 2013 and 2014, ICVA member Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN) conducted a series of national consultations to understand the coping strategies of urban refugees in Asia, which highlighted key entry points for collective NGO advocacy at the national level as a way of mitigating the risks associated with urban refugees’ survival mechanisms. Building on this initiative, APRRN and International Detention Coalition (IDC), also a member of ICVA, hosted roundtable discussions in Indonesia and Thailand with government officials, international organizations, and NGOs working on forced migration to explore solutions to end immigration detention of children. The roundtable discussion in Nepal will be held in March with a focus on livelihood opportunities for urban refugees. For more information, please contact APRRN or the Asia Hub.

4. NGOs Deliver Strong Statements at the UNHCR Standing Committee meeting on Operations: We thank all the NGO representatives who volunteered to draft and deliver the joint NGO statements at the 3-5 March Standing Committee meeting (SCOM). NGOs delivered seven statements on: The Conclusion process, partnerships, and on operations in Africa, the Americas, the Asia Pacific Region, Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa. The statements are available here. Several governments and UNHCR representatives provided positive feedback, and questions for follow-up on the statements. During the meeting, UNHCR disclosed that due to un-precedent needs and currency fluctuations, the organisation is facing a “severe budget situation”. UNHCR estimates 200 million decrease in purchasing power in 2015. This is affecting directly UNHCR (and partners) operations.

NGOs who would like to help with statements for the 24-26 June UNHCR Standing Committee meeting on protection are encouraged to contact Cecilia Roselli at cecilia.roselli@icvanetwork.org or Louisa Shea at louisa.shea@icvanetwork.org.

5. UNHCR-DRC Investigation Specialist Roster (ISR): On behalf of UNHCR, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) administers the roster of specialists available on short notice to investigate allegations of staff misconduct. In order to ensure that allegations are expeditiously pursued, the roster is available to UNHCR, NGOs, and UNHCR NGO implementing partners. More information is available on the DRC website.

6. UNHCR Partner Portal Workshop. UNHCR presented its new Partners Portal to NGO partners at a workshop in Istanbul, Turkey on 11-13 March. The Partner Portal is a tool to enhance project-related interaction and communication between UNHCR and partners. It will be the central repository for historical project 9. Advocating for policies that ensure better partnership approaches for NGOs

Humanitarian Coordination

10. EDG/Donor Meeting with HCs from Syria/ Iraq Crisis

11. EDG Humanitarian Coordinators Appraisals

12. IASC Working Group

13. Key recommendations from INGOs working in Sierra Leone


Humanitarian Financing

15. Improve NGO understanding of humanitarian financing mechanisms

16. Date for the next meeting of the OCHA-NGO Platform on Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs)

17. Study on assessing capacity of potential implementing partners

18. OCHA launches Harmonized Guidelines on Country-Based Pooled Funds

19. UNICEF advances plans to roll-out new Programme Cooperation Agreement (PCA) package

20. SG High Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing

New and Noteworthy

collaboration between UNHCR and partners, and will include information on Calls for Expressions of Interest, Concept Notes, and agreed projects. The workshop provided a step-by-step approach for partners to register and establish their organizational profile, and offered the opportunity to discuss with partners other issues of concern such as the new procurement guidance and the related pre-qualification process.

7. Refugee Coordination Model: UNHCR has released Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the Refugee Response Coordination. The document provides more information about the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) and the joint ‘UNHCR-OCHA Note on Mixed Situations: Coordination’, issued in April 2014 and aims to simplify and clarify their coordination arrangements – watch this space on how this may achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness.

8. World Humanitarian Summit: We are pleased to share updated WHS related content on the WHS section of the ICVA website. Here you will find an overall background, a list of key dates, considerations for NGO engagement in WHS processes, and a summary analysis of emerging issues pertaining to the NGO community. The ICVA website also acts as a platform for NGO positions related to the WHS with the ICVA secretariat. These will be posted on the website.

9. Advocating for policies that ensure better partnership approaches for NGOs: ICVA’s Asia Regional Representative has been invited by the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) to join an informal advisory group to provide assistance to the civil society consultations for the WHS Pacific consultations. ICVA Asia is also working with IOM and OCHA to develop the civil society and affected communities’ engagement as a member of the Regional Steering Group for WHS South and West Asia consultations.

10. EDG/Donor Meeting with HCs from Syria/Iraq Crisis: In Geneva on 18 February, the Emergency Directors Group (EDG) members and 15 donor representations met the UN humanitarian leadership regarding the Syria / Iraq crisis. NGO representation included IRC, CARE, CAFOD, DRC and ICVA. Some key points raised included: too much time spent on structure and coordination; need to focus more on operations; good cluster leadership will be essential going forward; and need to improve protection and related monitoring. Main areas of discussion raised by the donors included: the importance of Kuwait III; ensuring the whole of Syria crisis coordination works; the importance of increased transparency and information regarding pooled funds.

On 19 February, ICVA hosted a meeting with NGOs and the humanitarian coordinators (HCs) from Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon, along with the regional HC for a more in-depth discussion.

11. EDG Humanitarian Coordinators Appraisals: On 17 February, the Emergency Directors Groups (EDG) provided input
into the annual performance review of 28 Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) who were in post during 2014 for more than six months. The appraisals incorporated a total of 145 respondents (MENA 22 responses, Africa 77 and Asia 45). While the overall performance of a HC is determined by the ERC, the appraisal process provides an important perspective, acknowledging operations in which RC/HCs have provided space and opportunities for engagement with NGOs in planning and decision-making. Thank you to all those who actively participated in the HC Appraisal confidential survey.

12. **IASC Working Group:** The IASC Working Group met in Rome on 10 and 11 March. The agenda is attached and a list of background documents is available [here](#). Throughout the Working Group discussions, ICVA was represented by NRC, IRC and CAFOD. A final report will be shared with members shortly.

13. **Key recommendations from INGOs working in Sierra Leone:** On 3 March, 2015, the European Union and key partners held a High Level International Conference on Ebola. This conference took stock of the fight against the outbreak, coordinated further action for the eradication of the disease, and discussed the recovery process in the most affected countries. Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia have been greatly affected by the virus. However, the number of newly detected cases of the Ebola virus has dropped sharply in recent weeks.

Prior to this meeting, INGOs working in West Africa wrote a briefing paper under the title “Ebola, from emergency to recovery”, calling for substantial investment in financial and technical resources to support Governments to rebuild and transform essential services, while maintaining the focus on reaching the goal of zero.


15. **Improve NGO understanding of humanitarian financing mechanisms:** The ICVA Asia regional representative attended the START Network inception meeting to launch a pilot project on country-based pooled funds for Pakistan and the Philippines. The ICVA Asia regional representative specifically contributed to the external stakeholders panel discussion on pooled funding and surge capacity. For more information, please contact the Asia Hub.

16. **ICVA and OCHA set the date for the next meeting of the OCHA-NGO Platform on Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs):** The next meeting of the OCHA-NGO Platform on CBPFs will be held in Geneva, either on 15 or 16 June 2015, on the margins of the ECOSOC Humanitarian Segment. Participants will discuss: OCHA’s new harmonized CBPF guidelines (see item below), OCHA’s proposed new fund for NGOs, the World Humanitarian Summit, and the results of a forthcoming ICVA-commissioned review of partner capacity assessment methodologies. If you are interested to learn more
or get involved, please contact Cecilia Roselli at Cecilia.Roselli@icvanetwork.org and Julia Gietmann at gietmann@un.org.

17. ICVA together with OCHA-FCS has commissioned a study on how donors, UN agencies, funds, and international NGOs assess the capacity of potential implementing partners. The objective is to map existing methodologies and produce actionable recommendations towards the development of a harmonized and efficient approach to partner capacity assessments. The terms of reference have been shared with the IASC HFTT and a consultant was recruited in February. A Steering Group composed by ICVA, OCHA-FSC, the German mission in Geneva, UN agencies and NGOs will supervise the process. Results will be presented to the IASC HFTT and to the Pool Funds Working Group, scheduled for June.

18. OCHA launches Harmonized Guidelines on Country-Based Pooled Funds: New global guidelines for CBPFs were released by USG/ERC Valerie Amos in February, including a Policy Instruction and an Operational Handbook. The Policy Instruction sets out principles, objectives, governance and management arrangements for CBPFs, whilst the Operational Handbook provides technical guidance, tools and templates used in the management of CBPFs.

The guidelines are intended to harmonize the functioning of, and consolidate pre-existing management guidelines for Emergency Response Funds (ERFs) and Common Humanitarian Funds (CHFs) into a single CBPF framework, and outline several new initiatives, including the alignment of CBPFs in supporting the Humanitarian Programme Cycle and the introduction of an accountability framework. For more information, visit here. ICVA members are keenly interested to learn more about OCHA's plans to rollout the guidance, particularly regarding training for OCHA and NGO staff.

19. UNICEF advances plans to roll-out new Programme Cooperation Agreement (PCA) package: UNICEF is also in the process of updating its approach to implementing projects through civil society organisations (CSOs). ICVA thanks its members who provided feedback on UNICEF’s proposed approach – including the draft 2015 guidance for CSOs partnering with UNICEF, the draft 2015 PCA template, and the draft 2015 programme document (the sole mechanism for budgeting and releasing funds). The final package will take effect in April 2015. Plans to rollout the new PCA are currently on-going. A face-to-face training will be held in Geneva on 14 April hosted by ICVA. Program and Finance participants from partner organisations are invited to attend. Regional face-to-face trainings are also scheduled in Dakar, Amman and Bangkok (dates to be confirmed). For registering and information contact Cecilia Roselli at cecilia.roselli@icvanetwork.org

20. SG High Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing: The UN Secretary General has convened a High-Level Panel that will explore ways to address the gap between growing humanitarian needs and the resources available to meet those needs. The panel will comprise a group of senior leaders looking at the
problem from different perspectives and suggesting creative solutions for change. In support to the Panel, a Secretariat has been created. The secretariat will have six members, including Ms Belanger and Tensai Asfaw from OCHA, David Matern from WFP, and seconded staff from UNICEF, UNHCR, and Denmark. Kristalina Georgieva, EU Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources and former EU Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid, and Crisis Response, has agreed to be co-chair. The panel is expected to present its findings in 6-8 months.

**New and Noteworthy**

21. **Building a Better Response**
   Announce dates for integrated learning workshop series: The Building a Better Response (BBR) project has launched a series of integrated learning workshops to strengthen NGO capacity on the international humanitarian architecture. These 3-day workshops for NGO staff will build on the BBR e-learning course ([www.BuildingABetterResponse.org](http://www.BuildingABetterResponse.org)) to improve understanding of the international coordination system and help participants identify where they can take action and engage directly within the system. For more information about the BBR project and the workshops please visit [www.internationalmedicalcorps.org/bbr](http://www.internationalmedicalcorps.org/bbr). See this short video about the e-learning.

22. **ICVA Secretariat updates**

   - Melissa Pitotti, Senior Policy Officer (Forced Displacement and Humanitarian Financing), had a baby boy at the beginning of March. She is enjoying her maternity leave, while her portfolios are well managed by Cecilia Roselli through July.
   - We are delighted to welcome Raphael Gorgeu to the team as Senior Policy Officer covering the focus areas of humanitarian coordination and partnerships.
   - Raphael will be working closely with James Schell, who some of you will have had the pleasure to meet at the Annual Conference. James will be leading on the NGO Coordination Resource Centre and supporting the work of the programme team.
   - We also say a sad goodbye to Tanya Wood, Director of Policy and Partnerships, who is leaving ICVA after three years to take up the leadership of the International Leprosy Federation here in Geneva. We will be recruiting to this position in the comings months.

**Upcoming Events**

7-9 April: Building a Better Response (BBR) Workshop Panama City, Panama
15 April: IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team Meeting
15-17 April: Building a Better Response (BBR) Workshop, Jakarta, Indonesia
28-30 April: Building a Better Response (BBR) Workshop Johannesburg, South Africa
27-29 May: Building a Better Response (BBR) Workshop Toronto, Canada
6-7 May: ICVA Secretariat to participate in UNHCR Network Organizations Meeting (Istanbul)
5 or 16 June: OCHA-NGO Platform on Country-Based Pooled
Funds (Geneva)

17-19 June: ECOSOC Humanitarian Segment (Geneva)
24-26 June: UNHCR Standing Committee Meeting on Protection
29 June – 1 July: Annual Tripartite Consultations on Refugee Resettlement (Geneva)
1-3 July: UNHCR NGO Annual Consultations 2015 (Geneva)
21-22 September: UNHCR Standing Committee Meeting on Budget
5-9 October: UNHCR Executive Committee Meeting
16-17 December: UNHCR High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges

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