Forced Displacement

1. The Long March Towards a Global Compact on Refugees (GCR): December saw a flurry of activities related to the GCR.

   - Brainstorming on a Global Refugee Response Group/Platform: At a stakeholder meeting on 11 December, ICVA and other NGOs contributed to a discussion on the proposal to create a “Global Refugee Response Group” or “Platform.” This proposed group or platform was suggested during earlier UNHCR thematic discussions and previewed during a 7 December NGO–State discussion. Melissa Pitotti, ICVA’s Acting Interim Executive Director, delivered opening remarks, highlighting ideas from NGOs regarding key elements this structure should consider in order for it to ensure comprehensive, predictable, equitable and sustainable responses to displacement crises. ICVA will remain engaged in the discussion.

   - UNHCR High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges: On 12-13 December the High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges, Towards a Global Compact on Refugees, took place in Geneva. The Dialogue was dedicated to a “stocktaking” on the CRRF consultations held throughout the year. The discussions will serve as the basis of UNHCR’s “zero draft” of a “programme of action” to inform the formal consultations with States that will begin in mid-February 2018. ICVA supported NGO participation to the event, and coordinated NGO Key messages. The High Commissioner announced that NGOs would observe next year’s Formal Consultations.[MP3]

   - NGO Meeting with A. Aleinikoff: On Thursday 14 December, ICVA hosted a meeting between NGOs and Mr. T. Alexander Aleinikoff, former Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees (2010-15) and Director of the Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility (New York). This meeting was the opportunity to brainstorm on the results of the High Commissioner’s Dialogue, the process forward for the Global Compact on Refugees, the idea of Global Refugee Response Group/Platform, and NGOs’ suggestions related to Responsibility Sharing. Notes will be made available to members only online.
Humanitarian Financing

2. **2018 Requirements Set a New Record:** On 4 December OCHA launched its *Global Humanitarian Overview for 2018*, which says it will cost $22.5 billion to help 90.9 million people in need. The cost of the response plans sets a new record, about 1% higher than the start of 2017. At the time of writing, only $25.4 million had been received (or 0.1%) – with Myanmar receiving the most. At the GHO’s launch event in Geneva, the new Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock highlighted some operations where the needs had decreased (e.g. Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Iraq, Mali and Ukraine) and some where they had increased (e.g. Burundi, Cameroon, CAR, DRC, Libya, Somalia and Sudan). But the world’s worst humanitarian crises will likely remain in Nigeria, South Sudan, the Syria region and Yemen. Lowcock urged donors to fund the UN’s Country-Based Pooled Funds and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). At the launch event Save the Children’s CEO Helle Thorning-Schmidt made a strong case for investing in education.

3. **Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs):** ARDD (Jordan), Oxfam GB, Save the Children, World Vision and ICVA actively contributed to the 14 December meeting of the Pooled Fund Working Group (PFWG) meeting held in New York. The PFWG brings together donors, UN agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders twice a year to take a look at the functioning of the UN-managed CBPFs. Meeting topics included Syria, Yemen, the oPt, DRC, Iraq, resource mobilisation, OCHA’s change management process, the OCHA-NGO Dialogue Platform, the IASC HFTT, the Grand Bargain reporting workstream, the CBPF monitoring toolkit, and the roll-out of the Common Performance Framework. Although donor contributions to the CBPFs have broken an all-time record ($809 million in 2017), the UN wants 15% of all Humanitarian Response Plan funding to be channelled through CBPFs, or at least $2 billion a year. ICVA thanked OCHA for participating in the Grand Bargain’s 8+3 reporting pilot and for commissioning a study on how to make partner capacity assessments more interoperable at the country level (in line with *Less Paper More Aid*). To fulfill other aspects of the Grand Bargain’s localisation workstream, more should be done to making the funds more accessible and collectively find ways to support partner capacity.

4. **Less Paper More Aid Continues:** On 5 December, the Donor Conditions Task Force met for a day-long workshop in Oxford, UK. With 12 participants representing a range of NGO and network partners, the workshop focused on how to further develop the linkages between Grand Bargain workstreams focused on donor conditions – namely, transparency, reducing management costs, multi-year planning and funding, reducing earmarking, and harmonising and simplifying reporting. Humentum, BOND UK, and Development Initiatives were all present for the workshop, which enabled the group to have a positive discussion on the IATI component of transparency, including laying the groundwork for improved capacity support for NGOs seeking to report using the IATI standard. NRC and World Vision presented discussion points on multi-year funding and financial costing that fed in to a discussion on the need to consider joint pilot opportunities in 2018. The face-to-face meeting helped to improve the dynamics of the group as we plan virtual engagements through the next year.

Organisations with an interest in learning more about Less Paper More Aid or participating in the Donor Conditions Task Force should contact Jeremy Rempel, Coordinator for Less Paper More Aid: jeremy.rempel@icvantework.org.

5. **Opportunity:** After more than three years of service, the co-chairs of the IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team (ICVA and OCHA-CERF) have decided to open the co-chairmanship of the Team for expressions of interests. New co-chairs will be selected through consensus during the upcoming HFTT retreat in January. Ideally, there should be balance between NGOs and the UN. Co-chairing organisations will also have to provide secretariat support to the Team. In order to facilitate the discussion, organisations are invited to send expressions of interest to the co-chairs (with copy to buczekm@un.org) by COB, Friday, 5 January.
Humanitarian Coordination

6. The IASC Principals Meet Under a New Format: The Chair of ICVA's Board, Dr. Faizal Perdaus attended the in-person IASC Principals meeting on 4 December in Geneva, accompanied for part of the meeting by ICVA a.i. Executive Director Melissa Pitotti. The agenda included: 1) the financing of the humanitarian system and how to address the growing funding gap when needs keep increasing and to strengthen the humanitarian appeals system. 2) the L2/L3 system and whether it remains fit-for-purpose in the current operating environment; 3) the validation of the IASC infectious diseases outbreak activation protocol through a health epidemic simulation; and 4) options to strengthen the IASC structures beneath the IASC Principals. The first two agenda items were held under a relatively new format: “Principals only.” Because no note-takers or “Plus 1s” were allowed in the room for the “Principals-only” sessions of the meeting, we are unable to share with our members a full read-out of the meeting. It appears the only major decisions taken at the meeting were to take a fresh look at the L2/L3 system distinguishing between chronic and sudden-onset emergencies and to establish a “Deputies Forum” for information sharing. The key messages produced by the IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team for consideration under agenda item #1 were not considered. Many thanks to the members who contributed to preparations for this meeting.

7. IASC Emergency Directors Group (EDG): On 15 December 2017, the IASC EDG discussed the Peer2Peer Support (P2PS, formerly STAIT) mechanisms, following the departure of key P2PS personnel and in relation of the significant changes that may occur within the future configuration of OCHA and IASC bodies. In general, the work of the P2PS has been very much appreciated, as it is unique in how it engages with and supports in-country humanitarian leadership. The EDG considered different options for the structure of the P2PS project going forward. A final decision will be taken by the ERC.

Humanitarian Partnership

8. Localisation in Action in Asia Dialogue: ICVA, ADRRN and partners in Bangkok organized the 13 December “Localisation in Action in Asia Dialogue,” which brought together almost 100 humanitarian partners who are taking concrete steps to strengthen local humanitarian action in the Asia region. The rapid, real-time analysis called, “When the Rubber hits the Road” was launched during the event. The report explores local leadership in the first 100 days of the humanitarian response to the Rohingya crisis. The research was conducted by NIRAPAD Network from Bangladesh and Humanitarian Advisory Group, as part of the Humanitarian Horizons Practice Paper Series.

9. Getting to Know You: The World Bank and NGOs: ICVA and the World Bank organized an 11 December workshop focusing on the World Bank’s engagement in refugee contexts. It was an opportunity to look at the World Bank’s rationale and approach to engage in this field of work, its financing instruments, but also its partnership efforts in working with other actors, including UNHCR, other Multilateral Development Banks and the NGO community. This workshop was meant to be the beginning of a longer conversation that ICVA will support, including through the publication of a briefing paper, a webinar, and ICVA’s annual conference. ICVA appreciates the workshop presentation made by ACF to provide an important NGO lens on the common challenges we face.

10. The World Humanitarian Summit, Revisited: The UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mark Lowcock launched the first Annual Synthesis Report on the Progress since the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 at OCHA’s Global Humanitarian Policy Forum in New York on 13 December 2017. In the first self-reports against the commitments, 142 stakeholders described the efforts they made from June to December 2016 to realize this ambitious vision. You can find the full report "No Time to Retreat" and the
Executive Summary on the ICVA website. The reporting period on the WHS commitments for 2017 will be from 8 January to 2 April 2018 (3 months). All reports must be submitted through the online reporting portal. A Word template is available to serve as a tool to coordinate inputs but the information must be transferred and submitted through the reporting portal. Only primary focal points can access the reporting portal using their email address as the username. You can find more guidance on reporting and more information on the Platform for Action, Commitments and Transformations. For issues related to self-reporting please contact pact@un.org. For technical difficulties related to logging-on to PACT or retrieving your password, please contact pact-IT-support@un.org.

Humanitarian Learning Stream

11. During the course of 2017, ICVA held with PHAP two series of webinars on Humanitarian Financing and Humanitarian Coordination, and its own regional webinar on Understanding ASEAN: the role of the AHA centre. As of December 2017, over 8,600 recordings have been viewed on the Humanitarian Financing series and over 3,800 recordings have been viewed on the Humanitarian Coordination series. Look out for the next ICVA-PHAP learning series in the first quarter of 2018 on “Demystifying the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus.” This will be a good complement to ICVA’s 20 March Annual Conference on “Navigating the Nexus: NGO Perspectives.”

New and Noteworthy

12. International actors need to improve how they engage with civil society: A new report Partnerships in Conflict: How violent conflict impacts local civil society and how international partners respond from OXFAM and International Alert, summarises findings of new research on the impact of violent conflict on civil society organisations and the implications for international actors who partner with them.

Forthcoming Events

ICVA Meetings and Events

March 20, 2018: ICVA Annual Conference, Geneva
March 21, 2018: ICVA 17th General Assembly, Geneva

Other Meetings and Events:

2018
January 18-20: Forum Espace Humanitaire, Annecy
January 24-25: IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team Retreat
February 5-9: Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week, Geneva
February 6-9: Asia Resilience Conference in Bali, Indonesia
March 6-7: IASC Working Group Meeting
March 6-8: UNHCR 71st Meeting Standing Committee, Geneva
May 31: IASC Principals Meeting
June 20: World Refugee Day
June 19-21: UNHCR 72nd Standing Committee meeting
June 25-29: UNHCR NGO Annual Consultations, Geneva
August 19: World Humanitarian Day
September 19: Second anniversary of the adoption of the New York Declaration
October 8-9: IASC Working Group meeting
October: UNHCR Executive Committee Meeting, Geneva