I would like to thank UNHCR in particularly the partnership section, Inter Agency Unit and ICVA for giving me the opportunity of being the Rapporteur for the UNHCR NGO Consultations 2015. I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to focal points, session rapporteurs, vice rapporteur & interns for their meaningful contributions. It is an honor for a person from a national Pakistani NGO to represent at such a huge platform. A special thanks to the NGO’s for their vibrant & interactive discussion on such a dynamic topic “In pursuit of solutions”. This year 290 NGO’s from 90 countries with 500 plus participants were part of Consultations, this is record breaking.

The moment of truth has arrived as stated by the High Commissioner at the opening plenary session. Just because something is not broken it does not mean that it needs not to be fixed. The solution is not to wait until the system is broken but it’s to act now. If we look at the image that is representing this year’s NGO consultation which is an open lock; we have 3 keys NGOS, Person of concerns and UNHCR and the Person of concerns are the bridge between the NGOs and UNCHR. If we have the courage and take greater risks, we are a powerful force for change if we work together.

In 2014, 42,500 persons were displaced per day. Old conflicts don’t die and we cannot resolve new conflicts in a timely manner. We need to create more strategic partnerships that will bring relief and development solutions. The focus should remain on solutions and right based approach. Needs are increasing dramatically, resources are decreasing. Partnerships will be useful for interventions to be strategic. Humanitarian assistance is only meaningful if accompanied by a rights-based approach.

We are currently working in the traditional 3 durable solutions, which we clearly see have challenges in their execution; in the last 3 days we have also looked at the broader approaches to solutions, including how to empower people of concern through partnerships with host communities, governments, and civil society, national and international NGOs. We have heard clearly and loudly from the case studies shared that the more we are inclusive in our solutions by involving the Person of Concerns, the greater our success will be.

As the Rapporteur it is important that I report back to all the colleagues what happened in 3 days but it is difficult to report on every session, so I am going to focus on main issues, keeping in mind the topic “solutions”. Whatever is shared today can be considered the key points and the rest can be easily read through the final report.
Solutions:

1. When we think of solutions we have to start rethinking our problems from our current perspectives to reflect a more universal point of view. We have heard over the last 3 days that we have to change the way we work, it is no longer business as usual. We have to look at the different ways in which specific communities around the world are addressing the many challenges that they are faced with. We have learnt from shared case studies that it is critical to empower the Person of Concerns to be part and parcel of the solutions we are seeking to provide. We have to work with host communities who in many cases are also lacking resources but have generously accepted to host Person of Concerns.

2. One of the most talked about sessions during these 3 days, was the one on Youth. This was the only panel that had all refugees and if we want to hear the voices of people of concern, we need more Person of concern on the table to have this discussion; we need to systematically incorporate them in all our conversations. This session had four powerful testimonies discussing the importance of education, integration by learning languages resettlement with mentors or members from the same community who have had similar shared experiences. It placed more emphasis on working with youth in displacement settings, providing them with opportunities to work with and within their communities with other young people, especially as peer support workers and mentors. We also learnt that primary education is not sufficient enough nor is lower-level secondary education: we also need the option to provide vocational training for the youth. The need is to provide vocational schools for the economic and social empowerment of the refugees, and prepare them with skills. Education promotes self-reliance. It breaks the cycle of dependency.

3. As part of solutions, we have discussed the need for the Humanitarian development equation to be reformulated. This reformulation has to start with ensuring we plan for development at the beginning of a crisis, looking at new partners such as the World Bank or the use of the private sector for sustainable solutions. Policy for alternatives to camps was launched in July 2014 – departure from previous practice of encampment. If this policy is truly implemented in next 5-10 years we would have a different landscape in refugee protection. Engaging host community is essential as well as engaging with private sector. The policy arrives a bit late but “the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago the second best time is now”.

4. We have been discussing the Human rights based approach but let’s have the courage to discuss the politics around why some of these conflicts are occurring. Protection at sea starts and ends with protection at land. To ensure that there are speedy and real-time operational responses, data sharing on mixed migration movements by sea between agencies needs to be strengthened. Existing Task Forces on the national and regional level are an excellent platform to allow for this exchange of information to happen. Although mixed migration is complex and the context is highly sensitive, finding solutions for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants requires disaggregated data that captures the protection needs of different groups, including women and children. It also requires a people centered approach that highlights the individual. Climate change is also taking place and many of the displaced are not being recognized as refugees. Due to migration that is taking place across borders it is important to recognize these displaced
as refugees who require protection and resources. A solution is to have a dignified migration of people if we know climate change is going to affect them.

5. Working together in protection is the way forward and more cooperation is needed. Protection is a priority during displacement of IDPs and we need to listen to all the actors from host communities, to the IDPs themselves, to civil society, national and INGOs to ensure a holistic response to the displacement. When displacement takes place we need to ensure we are creating links for the entire humanitarian response from protection to education to health. We need to ensure that IDPs remain visible on the global agenda via advocacy and that we have a legal framework to ensure the safety and rights of the IDPs within their national borders.

6. UNHCR had 908 partners in 2014 of which 543 were national NGOs and only 175 INGOs – As quoted by Nan from ICVA during the plenary session, she stated “let us finally truly move from the rhetoric about national NGO as equal actors to concrete demonstration of their role as decision makers.”

7. Last solution is the opportunity provided to us by the World Humanitarian Summit to provide creative and innovative solution for our many challenges. For this to occur we need to ensure that it is not the lowest common denominator that drives this agenda. World Humanitarian Summit is an opportunity to reshape the humanitarian system, develop new partnerships, and bring a variety of stakeholders including local and national actors, the private sector, UN agencies, member states and national and international civil society organizations together.

Let us be bold, let us be courageous let’s start changing our narrative so that we can move some of these solutions forward.

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