

Wednesday, 25 June 2008
International Conference Centre Geneva

13h00 – 14h00 Room 3

Launch of the 2008 World Refugee Survey

Merrill Smith, US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
Gina Snyman, Lawyers for Human Rights
George Okoth-Obbo, Division of International Protection Services, UNHCR

World Refugee Survey 2008 evaluates and grades the treatment of refugees in the 60 countries hosting the largest populations at the end of 2007. It uses the standards of the 1951 Convention divided into five categories: Refoulement/Physical Protection, Detention/Access to Courts, Freedom of Movement and Residence, Right to Earn a Livelihood, and Public Relief and Education. The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants has produced the Survey for nearly 50 years and, this year, with the help of some 40 Research Partners, national human rights organizations in the refugee hosting countries as first hand reporters on the frontlines of the struggles for refugees and their rights. WRS08 also features "Taking Action" a summary of host community actions in solidarity with refugees in Israel, Turkey, Thailand, Tanzania, and elsewhere around the world.

13h00 – 14h00 Room 4

Demystifying UNHCR's ExCom Conclusions and the Role of NGOs''

Emina Tudakovic, Permanent Mission of Canada, Rapporteur for the ExCom Bureau
José Riera, Policy Development and Evaluation Service, UNHCR
Manisha Thomas, International Council of Voluntary Agencies

Ever wonder what UNHCR ExCom Conclusions are really about? Join us to discuss ExCom Conclusions, a recent review of the Conclusions, and then find out how NGOs can contribute to UNHCR's Executive Committee Conclusions process.

Thursday, 26 June 2008
International Conference Centre Geneva

8h00 – 9h00 Room 3

Ethical, consistent and fair treatment of refugees in accessing their rights

Emily Arnold-Fernandez, Asylum Access
Rachel Levitan, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly's Refugee Law Project
Zachary Lomo, University of Cambridge
Salima Namusobya, Refugee Law Project
Richard Stainsby, Status Determination & Protection Information Section, UNHCR

Much attention has been paid to how to establish accountability for severe abuse and misconduct against refugees, but there has not been much attention paid to how to ensure fairness in the routine but high stakes decisions made everyday about the lives of refugees. UNHCR and NGOs often make decisions about the management of camps and eligibility for services and refugee status that in principle should be made by governments. But unlike democratic governments, there are often no clear rules about how UNHCR and NGO decision-makers should explain their actions to refugee. NGOs providing services too often operate outside established systems of professional regulation (i.e. for lawyers, doctors and social workers). This panel will explore some of the 'trouble' cases and consider how principles of transparency and administrative justice should be applied by UNHCR and NGOs. It will draw on recent efforts by UNHCR and NGOs to improve fairness of refugee status determination and to develop a code of legal ethics for other refugee cases than RSD for which the Nairobi Code is an example.

Expectation

Greater awareness of how rights of refugees are violated in both urban and camp situations

13h00 – 14h00 Room 3

Implementation of the 2006 ExCom Conclusion on the protection of Women and Girls at Risk
International Working Group Strategy Meeting

Linda Bartolomei, Centre for Refugee Research
Luisa Cremonese, Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality, UNHCR
Liliane Lukoki, African Women's Advocacy Unit
Nava Malula, Australian National Committee on Refugee Women
Eileen Pittaway, Asia Pacific Women's Watch
Judy Wakahiu, Refugee Consortium Kenya

The aim of the Working Group is to effectively monitor, advocate and provide support for the implementation of the 2006 Conclusion on the Protection of Women and Girls at Risk.

The aim is to be supported by a range of activities, including:

Advocacy and lobbying of governments, donors and NGOs with a mandate to implement the Conclusion.

Influence domestic policy and law leading to more effective practice for the protection of forcibly displaced women and girls.

Measurement and dissemination of implementation strategies leading to protection.

Establish access to web-based resources to assist stakeholders in the implementation of the Conclusion.

Provide an annual update at ExCom, PreExCom and the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement on the progress of the implementation of the Conclusion.

Assist in supporting sensitivity and awareness raising across stakeholder organisations.

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13h00 – 14h00 Room 4

Exchange of views on the Principles of Partnership: What do they mean and how useful are they?

Ed Schenkenberg, International Council of Voluntary Agencies

Background:

The Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP) brings together the three families of the humanitarian community – NGOs, the Red Cross/ Red Crescent movement, and UN and other inter-governmental organizations – on an equal footing – with the overall goal of enhancing the effectiveness of humanitarian action. This is premised on the belief that no humanitarian agency can cover all humanitarian needs alone and that collaboration is, therefore, not an option, but a necessity. The organizations participating in the GHP seek to improve humanitarian response by strengthening partnerships at the global and field levels based on five Principles of Partnership (PoP) - namely equality, transparency, result-oriented approach, responsibility, and complementarity. The PoP were endorsed by 40 leaders of humanitarian organizations at the first meeting of the GHP in Geneva in July 2007. Together with many NGOs, UNHCR is committed to these principles and, to ensure and enhance their application, is taking stock of its approach to partnership, as well as considering how to support the GHP process most effectively.

Expectations:

This side meeting aims to listen to NGOs' views on and experience with the PoP. It will also serve as a briefing on the GHP process, recent regional workshops and the forthcoming Annual GHP meeting on 1-2 July. Envisaged as an open and frank brainstorming session, it will provide an opportunity to receive feedback from UNHCR's partners and a first-hand view and field-perspective on the PoP. Questions of interest also relate to what activities the PoP are already applied to; where this could be improved; relationships among and between partner organisations; general expectations in relation to partnership.

Friday, 27 June 2008
Palais des Nations Geneva

8h30 – 10h00 Room XXII

Protection of unaccompanied children

Msgr. Robert J. Vitillo, Caritas Internationalis
Vincent Sebukyu Bamwenga, Caritas Uganda
George Joseph, Caritas Europa
Peter Verhaeghe, Caritas Europa

Bearing in mind the best interests of the child principle, on this side event Caritas Internationalis looks at the issue of protection of unaccompanied children in first country of asylum and in case of resettlement when protection is not guaranteed in the first country of asylum. Our purpose is to share our experience in preparing resettlement in countries of destination by presenting current practices and possibilities in European countries (e.g. Caritas Sweden & Belgium-legal guardians' system; Caritas Austria & Belgium-reception expertise and capacity), identify protection gaps and discuss together appropriate recommendations in this field.

8h30 – 10h00 Room XXIII

A heavy burden: IDPs in Georgia

Christophe Beau, Acting Head of IDMC
Udo Janz, Deputy Director for Europe, UNHCR
Anne-Sophie Lois, Acting Head of Communications, IDMC, Norwegian Refugee Council
Lika Margania, IDP Educator, Norwegian Refugee Council Georgia
Siobhan Warrington, Oral Testimony Director, Panos London

When did you last listen to a displaced person and grasp the impact of Displacement? On this side event the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) invites you to learn more about the protracted displacement situation in Georgia, durable solutions and to listen to IDPs recount what it means to be displaced, what problems they are facing and what they want for the future. The book "*A Heavy Burden, Internally Displaced in Georgia: Stories of People from Abkhazia and South Ossetia*" will be presented together with the IDP Voices project. More information is available at www.idpvoices.org