



Forced Displacement Working Group Meeting

Tuesday 31 January 14:00 – 16:00

ICVA's Conference Room, 26-28 Avenue Giuseppe-Motta

NGOs/ Present:

ACT Alliance; APRRN (dial-in); BADIL; Caritas Internationalis; DRC (dial-in); ICVA; IDC; Intersos; LWF (dial-in); Mercy Corps (dial-in); NRC

A/ ICVA's statement following the US President Executive Order

Background: ICVA's Board and Secretariat have decided to come out with a statement in reaction to the US Executive Order of 27 January 2017. It will not be a sign-on statement, but will be validated by the Board. Once finalized, it will be broadly shared through e-mails and social media. There already was internal brainstorm but ICVA is looking to hear feedback from ICVA's members on the process, as well as on the substance.

Reactions:

- All present NGOs were in favor of ICVA releasing a statement
- Quite a lot of NGOs are releasing their own statements, in partnership with their field partners or members (e.g., LWF, ACT Alliance, Mercy Corps)
- On the content:
 - o Important to put into context how damaging this decision is in terms of refugee protection and the dramatic change of the world. Lives are at stakes because of this decision; imposing unwarranted suffering to refugees and migrants.
 - o Reference to the Refugee Convention should be made; unprecedented to have the champion and guardian of the refugee regime go to such extent.
- On our collective NGO work:
 - o We should, as a group, document the deteriorating conditions until the ban is lifted. In any case, the number of resettlement places in the US will probably dramatically decreased.
 - ⇒ The solution aspect of our work will be dramatically impacted; This is what we need to keep working on
 - ⇒ Importance of collecting stories: APRRN is developing initiative to document impact of the US Executive Order on migrants/refugees in Asia and can make this information available if useful to other ICVA members.
 - o While we need to think of the impact beyond individuals, stories should also be collected to understand the major impact it has.
 - o We should use our network to leverage our voices.
 - o Given that this kind of policies & decisions might become the norm, NGOs should learn to anticipate them, get ready, in order to be on a front foot rather than in reaction mode.
 - ⇒ Need to push other MS to take their responsibilities & be vocal (so far, only Iceland put out a statement).
- On UNHCR's and other UN agencies' position:
 - o Should we approach some of the UN agencies so that they take some strong position?
 - o UNHCR released two statements in total – the second statement issued yesterday is a bit stronger but still not mentioning the Refugee Convention.

- ⇒ ICVA will give a heads up to UNHCR that a statement will be issued
- ⇒ NGOs could consider going to UNHCR to discuss about the:
 - Follow-up process
 - Initiating a discussion about the changing engagement of the US and the changing of the resettlement programmes
 - See if there is scope for complementary advocacy
 - Contingency planning/ Looking at a more practical side: There is a high number of chances that other countries could change their quotas; UNHCR will have to deal with all those people in need of resettlement.
 - Yet, we need keep the lead on this and not wait for UNHCR to move forward – need to be more forceful and focused.

B/ Exchange on the CRRF/Refugee Compact:

ICVA shared some information on updates and new opportunities for engagement since last FDWG meeting. ICVA kept pushing UNHCR to get some clarity on the overall CRRF – some informal and more formal discussions took place in January with members of the Task Team (Karen Gulick). There were finally some positive developments on how to ensure NGOs engagement through existing circles of discussions (Annual Consultations; bi-monthly Palais briefings; oral update on the CRRF at each Standing Committee and therefore, the possibility for NGOs to deliver a statement) and new ones:

- On the Task Team:
 - Increase of its capacity: Daniel Endres (Director), Johannes Tarvainen (Executive Assistant), Karen Gulick (Policy Officer), Marilyn Virrey-Raguin (Liaison officer), Anouk (Communication and Strategic Alliances), as well as a strong engagement of UNHCR Partnership Section w/ Johan Cels + someone from the WB who might potentially join the Task Team. Some donors seem also to be ready to second staff at the country level.
 - ⇒ “They are still building the plane while flying it”
 - Substantial work: The Task Team is planning to sit down internally, with other UNHCR staff, and go paragraph by paragraph through Annex I to analyze the content and unpack it in order to get an operational perspective. The Task Team was asked to be clearer on their timeline, on how they engage with other actors throughout the process.
- Update on the pilot approach and GCR:
 - ICVA asked for a briefing on the pilot missions; ICVA is trying to have the Task Team (potentially Karen Gulick) to come speak with NGOs during the FDWG.
 - Potentially Somalia could be a pilot, but taking a regional approach, i.e. looking at countries with Somali refugees
- Progress towards the creation of a UNHCR-NGOs ‘Reference Group’ on the GCR/CRRF:
 - Meeting last week w/ InterAction, IFRC, the Partnership Section and the Task Team
 - Membership: The Task Team would like to maximize the outreach, i.e. including ICVA, InterAction, IFRC, NGO Rapporteur for this year, regional networks, development actors (a kind of ‘ICVA for development NGOs’ if it exists), and human rights organizations. Suggestions on membership are welcome, especially with regard to regional networks, development NGOs and human rights organizations that ICVA could propose to UNHCR.
 - There is still a lack of clarity of links between global and local for this Reference Group
 - UNHCR takes the lead on developing the ToR and then will share for feedback: Main objectives still need to be agreed on.
 - Ideally, this would be a place to work jointly on the implementation and lessons learned from the pilots, look into other pilots, and disseminate information.
 - Initial feeling is UNHCR may see this group as a way to ‘sell the product’/advocate

for the CRRF – which is a risk. We need to ensure NGOs role go beyond this.
⇒ Need to push for content-oriented discussions.

Reactions:

- So far we are very much in a theoretical framework. It is difficult to engage and prioritize the CRRF/Compact as long as there is not more clarity on the overall effort and how/where NGOs can contribute. Few field NGO colleagues seem to have been contacted; there is no timeline defined. There is clear need to push UNHCR to start the process *in the field* immediately
 - ⇒ In Uganda, a Secretariat of the CRRF has been created and managed by the government
- UNHCR does not plan to change Annex 1, they may be trying to engage everyone at the last minute to avoid any modifications. Yet, it seems that they realize now that all stakeholders want to engage and may be changing their approach.
- On NGOs' engagement:
 - NGOs should be very much more engaged in the process. Similarly, we should get engaged on how we want them to prioritize the resources.
 - Clarifying entry points and opportunities for NGO engagement: will provide the mapping of Geneva-based events and opportunities; NGOs can follow-up on regional consultations (suggested at the Geneva briefing on 30 Jan)
 - Exchange of information on NGO activities (see for ex. the document on Child Rights in the Compacts) and various briefings that took place in Brussels, NY/Washington, Geneva. There was a Brussels briefing with thanks to ACT Alliance for sharing notes. There seem to be possibilities to engage with them beyond Geneva
- On linking the Migration and Refugee Compact: Why not to link them?
 - Some members consider that the Migration Compact is clearly going to happen (we need more worry about the content), while on UNHCR side, there seems that we can expect very few new aspects coming out of the Refugee Compact (only reaffirmation of established principles, law and practices).
 - ⇒ Why not, then, linking the 2 compacts, with the aim of lifting the Migration Compact to similar level of standards than the Refugee Compact?
 - Reaction from others: Migration Compact might be fundamentally blocked; UNHCR is taking the approach that refugees are not migrants. Also if you link it, whatever does not get achieved and secured at convention level will water down the protection level, while we should rather build on the protection level.
 - ⇒ NGOs could look into putting something on paper to analyze the real/factual linkages, without necessarily taking a stand on them. Could positively contribute to the conversation and those contrasted positions. ICVA could take the lead on this.

C/ Update on Annual Consultations:

Update on the organization process of the 2017 UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations.

- The final agenda should be ready by mid-February; the Task Team just joined the reflection on the agenda which led to some delays in finalizing the agenda.
- ICVA drafted NGO's objectives for the Annual Consultations – waiting for the agenda to be finalized before sharing the 2 pager on the objectives feedback.
- On the registration process: It will happen on a “first arrived first served” basis, and there will be a very strict limitation of number of participants per organization based on the experience of last year (many participants had to sit on the floor and complained; need to keep the participant number around 500 so that participation can be active and according to safety/security constraints).
 - ⇒ Do not wait the last minute to register
 - ⇒ Do not wait to share the info w/ your staff and members

Reactions:

- There are usually not enough places for large NGOs with staff willing to engage in a number of specific panels: What about the idea of having transferable badges?
 - o ICVA will look into this option with UNHCR Partnership Section and revert.
- There will be a large conference on Children on the Move close to the Annual Consultations.
 - ⇒ It would be helpful to share an annual calendar around June so that NGOs can plan their annual meeting around it.

D/ ExCom Conclusions and March StandCom statements:

Conclusions:

Notes and PowerPoints presentations from the briefing of Wed 25 January at UNHCR will be shared shortly. The main take-away is that ExCom MS did push strongly for the Conclusion on Resilience and Self-Reliance to be 'postponed' for after the adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees. Work in 2017 will therefore most probably focus on the Conclusion on Machine Readable Travel Documents. The 2017 ExCom Rapporteur and UNHCR are keen on having regular exchanges with NGOs along the year. ICVA will follow up with them on this.

UNHCR's Standing Committee on Operations:

- This is a great opportunity for NGOs to express their views on issues of concern and contribute to UNHCR's reviews of activities and programmes via delivery of joint NGO statements. This will communicate NGO views to UNHCR management as well as governments in UNHCR's Executive Committee on the following topics: Follow-Up to the High Commissioner's Dialogues on Protection (Children on the Move and other previous themes); Executive Committee Conclusions Process; the 5 regions; Emergency Preparedness; Strategic Partnerships, including coordination; Oral update on the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).
- ICVA is still looking for NGOs to take the lead on drafting some of the statements. IDC and ACT Alliance offer the possibility to support on the MENA (IDC and ACT Alliance) and Africa (IDC).

E/ Quick update on the FDWG Work Modalities:

- As requested at the December FDWG meeting, we shared with NGOs the updated mailing list of the FDGW. ICVA would appreciate NGOs to check this list and **come back by 15 February 2017 with any amendment related to your organization** (complementing or correcting information).
- ToRs of the FDWG will be slightly updated asap (e.g., taking into account that ICVA members often request for more than one NGO staff to be on the list).
- As part of its work on the CRRF/Refugee Compact, ICVA will also develop a specific mailing list on this topic, which will be used to share regular information to a broader audience. As a default position, we will include all FDWG members into this mailing list (but feel free to let us know should you not wish to be on this specific list).

F/ AOB:

- Upcoming consultations UNHCR is organizing in Geneva on returns of Afghans from Pakistan on 10 February – invitation have been sent by UNHCR.
- Quick briefing on recent Emergency Preparedness and Nansen Refugee Award events: the audio recording will soon be uploaded on ICVA website.

The next FDWG meeting will take place on **Tuesday 28 February 2017, at 2pm.**