



Forced Displacement Working Group
ICVA's Conference Room, 26-28 Avenue Giuseppe-Motta
13 September 2018 (11:30-13:00)

Participants: Action Contre le Faim (online); Caritas International (online); International Catholic Migration Commission; International Displacement Monitoring Centre; International Rescue Committee (online); INTERSOS; Jesuit Refugee Service; Norwegian Refugee Council (online); Plan International (online); Save the Children.

Agenda:

1. **UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations:** feedback on the 2018 Consultations and views on the way forward.
2. **Global Compact on Refugees:** discuss the next stages of ICVA engagement with the GCR process (until adoption and in preparation for/during implementation).
3. **AOB**

1. UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations

ICVA overview

- This discussion aims to collect feedback and impressions on what NGOs thought about this year's Consultations.
- Idea is also to look beyond and reflect on the theme of next year. UNHCR will organise a meeting with NGOs at the ExCom on 2nd October to discuss the theme and suggestions for improvements for next year's Annual Consultations.
- This is a good moment to reflect if Annual Consultations need to evolve as several changes are underway within the UNHCR Partnership Section including the merger of the Partnership Section with UNHCR's Inter-Agency Coordination Services and staff turnover.
- Some options are already being explored, for example, linking the Annual Consultations to the regions. This, for instance, is already happening in Europe, where UNHCR, along with ECRE, organises Consultations.
- At ICVA, we see a discrepancy between the original concept and how the Annual Consultations are evolving.
- In our mind, the original concept was to have a safe space for NGOs to discuss partnership and operational issues with UNHCR.
- Annual Consultations remain an important space for NGOs to interact with UNHCR.
- But, in recent years, the Consultations have evolved. The Consultations have become bigger and broader, with a range of multi-stakeholders getting increasingly involved including the World Bank, refugees, academia and sometimes even Member States being involved as participants.
- The Annual Consultations have recently also been geared towards visibility. Social media coverage is now seen as a measure of success by many and we also see the presence of high-level journalists.
- Linked to this phenomenon is the decreasing space for operational discussions.
- ICVA is pushing back against this tendency. We have, for example, received suggestions to include more the Member States but this has remained an important red line for us so far, in order to ensure consultations remain a safe space where NGOs feel free to express themselves.

- However, recently sessions have been livestreamed, and are also covered by tweets, so is the idea of safe space still valid in this context?
- Would like to get ICVA membership's view whether ICVA should continue to fight for NGO space on this specific case or follow the trend.
- We see a risk that the Consultations become more of a Whole-of-Society event, further blurring the difference with the High Commissioner's Protection Dialogue. But maybe this is what both UNHCR and NGOs want in the end.
- If we agree that this is not the way to go, what should we do? Is there a method to revert to a real UNHCR-NGO consultation on partnership/operational issues within the format of such a big global event? Do we need to come back to a smaller event?
- Against this background, what do you think should be the role of ICVA?

Discussion

- Over the years, many have been less and less impressed with the Consultations. The Consultations are sometimes getting 'hijacked' by groups that come from countries hosting small refugee populations, but which practice repulsive refugee policies.
- These groups have been taking a lot of space and, as a result, bigger issues such as partnership agreement and lack of funding get side-lined. These issues need to be talked about, so need to keep pushing back on this trend.
- UNHCR Regional Bureau presentations used to talk more about partnership and practical issues on the ground. This has become less in recent Consultations.
- One idea could be to find new spaces for engagement in order to have more targeted discussions. There may be a need to address critical issues in smaller platforms. For example, this year's Statelessness retreat was a good example of targeted and focused discussions. Could this be a model for other themes?
- For some NGOs, who have their own annual bilateral consultations with UNHCR, it is hard to find added value in the Annual Consultations. These are more networking opportunities.
- But not all NGOs have the possibility to bilaterally engage with UNHCR. So, we could envisage Annual Consultations with a smaller number of NGOs, mainly gathering those NGOs with lower exposure to UNHCR, so they can raise issues that concern them.
- Networking can be a positive element. But the question is if this is enough to justify holding Consultations.
- NGO Rapporteur's report is presented at ExCom as an NGO product ('on behalf of NGOs').
- At ICVA, we have tried to ensure that what is presented as an NGO product remains an NGO report but do face situations where UNHCR requests elements be added to the report.
- But perhaps we need to reflect on whether the current reporting system is appropriate. Is it correct to have one side only reporting on a bilateral exchange? Maybe the report should be more of a joint exercise or again, would this mean reducing NGO space?
- We encourage you to provide feedback on the Annual Consultations to UNHCR and join the meeting on 2 October. It is important for UNHCR to hear concerns directly from NGOs (not just from ICVA) or to hear your positive feedback as well.
- Believe that consultations are still useful. It depends on how much NGOs invest in it.
- But we should avoid going into a divide and rule engagement. Important to work together and don't see the need to have separate consultations. That is not a healthy and productive way of working.

- UNHCR is not sure if they can reach out to everyone and UNHCR sometimes gives the impression it believes ICVA can reach out to everyone.
- We may disagree with the way in which we do it, but better to stay within and fight than be outside and fight.
- It would be good to see ICVA coordinating NGOs more.
- This is something that will be discussed within ICVA. ICVA is working on its membership strategy. The added element is Annual Consultations are not limited to ICVA members.
- To increase engagement with national NGOs, ICVA regional representatives can help to an extent.
- ICVA's approach is not to speak for NGOs, but create space for NGOs so NGOs are able to exchange directly with UNHCR.
- Expected to meet UNHCR for next year's Annual Consultations planning. While do not expect radical changes for the next year, it would still be useful if NGOs could share reflections on the Consultations.

2. Global Compact on Refugees

ICVA overview

- ICVA will continue to work on the GCR, but would also like to look deeply at other topics, e.g. IDPs.
- Facilitated a meeting of ICVA members with UNHCR in order to feed into UNHCR's new policy on IDPs. Notes from the meeting will be shared asap.
- Another way to engage with IDPs is GP20, in particular thanks to ICVA Board Member, Jane Backhurst (Christian Aid).
- For some time, there has been no FDWG meetings. As it was not manageable to have too many meetings during the GCR Formal Consultations, ICVA's approach was to limit itself to the GCR related discussions which was open to all NGOs, even sometimes going beyond NGOs to include academics, refugees and trade unions.
- Now the idea is to come to the FDWG group, comprising of ICVA members, though we do not want to necessarily exclude others fully. We will have various level of engagements giving space to non-ICVA members sometimes to join (e.g. meetings we organize with UNHCR will remain broadly open; ICVA work on Standing and Executive Committees, Annual Consultations, and HC Dialogue remain open to all NGOs).
- FDWG is open to any staff of ICVA members. Your colleagues who were part of GCR discussions, but not necessarily on the limited FDWG mailing list, may wish to join the FDWG. If you would like to add them to the group, please let us know.

Work in the pipeline

- NGO meeting with Sweden on the Omnibus Resolution on 24 September.
- Omnibus Resolution discussions will start at the end of September, earlier than expected this year. There will be a pause in the discussions during ExCom and then resume to end in late October.
- In the past, Omnibus Resolutions have covered a vast range of issues, so the meeting could also include IDPs and statelessness.
- Meeting open to only those in Geneva since it will be at the mission premises (no online connection option).

- ICVA intends to release – towards the end of the year – a GCR explainer paper aiming at highlighting what are the likely implications of the GCR for NGOs. The plan is to share a draft with the FDWG in advance (probably in November) to inform the finalization of the paper.
- Next meeting with UNHCR on the GCR will take place on 26 September.
- An NGO side event will be organised at the ExCom on 4 October between 9-10 am. The topic will be GCR. There will be three presentations, one will be on the Global Refugee Forum, what kind of things NGOs can bring to the table (beyond statements). Second presentation will be on linking the GCR with the CRRF. The third presentation will focus on what NGOs can bring to the three-year resettlement.
- ICVA’s Director of Policy, Melissa Pitotti, will moderate the event. ExCom schedule is available [online](#).
- ICVA will be working on the High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges to promote NGO engagement on the panels.
- The theme this year is “[protection and solutions in urban settings: the role of cities](#)”. Will convene again the Friends of the Dialogue and want to discuss with ICVA Members about the paper NGOs usually produce.

Discussion

- The annex to the High Commissioner’s report is [online](#) on the ODS system, now available in all six UN languages.
- UNHCR is still concerned how the Omnibus resolution negotiations will go, particularly because of staff changes in various missions. Sees ExCom as opportunity to situate how those Mission’s staff will approach the GCR.
- UNHCR is organising a side-event on 24 September in New York at the side-lines of UNGA. Some NGOs are looking at coordinating statement. Don’t expect UNHCR to reveal more details about the Global Refugee Forum or other GCR mechanisms.
- Attendance is by invitation only. If there are NGOs taking the lead in drafting statements, ICVA is happy to support by circulating the statements to the FDWG.
- The group of five NGOs (DRC, NRC, Oxfam, Save the Children, IRC) will develop a statement, which in principle, will be open for sign on by other NGOs.
- It seems statements will also be coordinated with InterAction and other US-based NGOs.
- Do we have doubts that the GCR will go through?
- Would be surprising, but there are some contentious issues like the indicators. Some States are pushing for an intergovernmental process. Some refuse an intergovernmental process.
- Many elements to engage on the GCR. ICVA will probably be more focused on the Global Refugee Forum. See a natural role as this will take place in Geneva next year.
- Would be interested to have views of how ICVA can work with NGOs. Members can be propositional. Much thinking will be required.

3. AOB

CRRF

- CRRF remains an important part of the Global Compact.
- The Global Compact’s Programme of Action (PoA) is all about implementing CRRF and the Global Refugee Forum is the means to mobilise funding/support to implement the PoA.

- ICVA will continue to work on the CRRF, and ICVA's regional representatives will remain engaged.
- ICVA has been engaged on the UNHCR's Solidarity Approach for the People of Rakhine State. UNHCR will organise a meeting in Bangkok on 19 October on the Solidarity Approach.
- ICVA will also organise two Whole-of-Society workshops before May 2019. Already organised workshops in Central America, Bangkok and Nairobi.
- Welcome suggestions on where we can organise these two workshops. One option could be Afghanistan, security permitting.
- In Afghanistan, NGOs were not consulted about the roll-out of the CRRF, and discovered the news online. But UNHCR has expressed willingness to engage with NGOs.
- Will link with initiatives in UNHCR on IDP issues. The Division of Resilience and Solutions is also talking about IDPs.

Changes at UNHCR

- Would be useful to have an updated organigram from UNHCR to know who is doing what.
- Several staff changes foreseen in the UNHCR Partnership Section from now until the end of the year.
- There are also others important changes coming (e.g. Rosella Pagliuchi-Lor, Director, Division of External Relations is moving to London; Johan Cels, ExCom Secretary moving to Myanmar).
- It would be good to organise a meeting with the UNHCR Partnership Section on update on the changes.

Next steps

- NGOs could share reflections with ICVA on the UNHCR-NGO Consultations to feed into next year's planning.
- Plan a meeting with the UNHCR Partnership Section to update on staff changes at UNHCR.