

NGO Statement: virtual ExCom briefing on UNHCR's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

3 June, 15:00 - 17:00 (as delivered)

- The [UN Secretary General highlighted today](#) that refugees continue to face serious **threats to their health, livelihoods and rights**.
- Countries like Yemen are severely affected; Venezuelans are particularly at risk; and there are confirmed cases among refugees in places like Bangladesh.
- More than ever then, **strong partnerships are needed** and NGOs wish, again, to commend UNHCR for fostering an **open and regular dialogue**, allowing to address crucial parameters of our cooperation.
- This, however, needs to go hand in hand with **adequate resources** made available at the **right time** and where they are **most needed – on the ground**. We therefore highlight the following:
 1. Most NGOs still face major funding challenges and indicate having **received little additional funding from UNHCR** so far. A **transparent and accountable** process should be put in place to clarify **how much of GHRP funding reaches partners**. Could UNHCR also indicate how much it is planning to allocate to NGOs, including National NGOs?
 2. NGOs are also **concerned by the results of recent pledging conferences**: Despite the impact of COVID-19, pledges at yesterday's **Yemen conference fell far short** of what is needed, while a large part of funds pledged at the **Venezuela conference were loans rather than grants**.
- Funding will be crucial to launching additional COVID interventions. As mentioned in a recent [UNHCR paper on the Global Compact](#), it is also vital to **keep regular programming on track**. NGOs welcome the three key principles prioritized in this paper (responsibility-sharing, protection, and inclusion) and **hope to see Durable Solutions included in an updated version**.
- We reaffirm **the importance of working on solutions**, also keeping regular programming on track in this area and maintaining stakeholder engagement. In particular, all efforts must be made to **ensure resettlement and complementary pathways resume normal processing** as soon as possible.
- Finally, we reiterate **protection concerns** linked to border closures, suspended asylum procedures and GBV risks.
- A detailed version of this statement is available on icvanetwork.org
- Thank you.