

**Report of the NGO Rapporteur, Dr. Aslam Daud on
Agenda item 7: Review of the Annual Consultations with NGOs**

Excellencies;

Distinguished delegates,

Fellow NGOs and UNHCR Colleagues,

The UNHCR was created almost 70 years ago to be the leading refugee rights, protection and advocacy organization in the global community. This July, “Working Together, Better” was the theme of the 2019 Annual UNHCR Partner Consultations. This meeting gathered 453 participants from almost 243 organizations and 76 countries in Geneva.

The consultations’ theme focused on stronger partnerships and finding better solutions and ways of doing things.

Today, it is my privilege to report to you the three core focus areas of this year’s consultations.

1. **Data Evidence** – the need for enhancing data collection, protection and it being readily accessible when making informed decisions regarding programs and policies
2. **Regionalization** – the need to move resources and capacities as close as possible to the field
3. **Global Refugee Forum** – its role in broadening support for refugees and internally displaced people.

Data and Evidence

While displacement situations in the world are different, there are several commonalities when it comes to good practices to collect, analyse and use data for responses to situations involving refugees and IDPs. Across the board, a shared conceptual framework and understanding is needed.

Working together better in a humanitarian response means that we need to quickly understand how to work well with data and evidence. Often, we find too much data collected which is never used or, we find data overlapping with others – resulting in inadequate data management.

One of the key recommendations suggested was the use of regional level dialogue meetings where collective outcomes from data and evidence would be presented and discussed.

As affected communities are directly impacted from the collective outcomes, there is a need for humanitarian organizations and beneficiaries to understand the importance of data protection. The NGOs stressed the need for tools that improve all aspects of data security.

In addition, the consultations brought forward the need to actively share and include affected communities throughout the programme cycle. One of the key recommendations is the importance of meaningful and impactful community engagement. This is critical in bringing the perspective of refugees and IDPs throughout the programme cycle.

Regionalization

UNHCR is in the midst of a far-reaching transformation for renewal and reform – regionalization and decentralization. This transformation will leave us in a better position to respond to new crises, save lives, and help displaced communities globally.

The urgency for regionalization and decentralization is paramount. With an increase in global refugee movements, finding solutions for millions of refugees will require greater collaboration with all parties involved. Regionalization must be accompanied by transferring or delegation of power to a lower level such as country offices, regional bureaus and regional headquarters. As such, this will allow offices to engage more directly with refugees, through field offices.

While NGOs acknowledge the need for regionalization and decentralization, they raised concerns about how large-scale emergencies will be addressed if efforts are further divided.

One of the key recommendations is the ability of UNHCR Regional bureaus being better equipped to given political, institutional and population outlook. This recommendation can be further supported with the importance of NGOs' active participation in helping to carry out partnership efforts.

Global Refugee Forum

With tens of millions of people affected by war, conflict and persecution, the Global Refugee Forum is an opportunity for countries to come together and strengthen the international response. First of its kind, it follows the new Global Compact on Refugees framework which seeks to improve the global refugee situations by providing stronger support to the countries and communities welcoming refugees with the means to become more self-reliant.

The Global Refugee Forum will focus on the following six areas: arrangements for responsibility sharing; education; jobs and livelihood; energy and infrastructure; solutions including repatriation, local integration, and resettlement; and enhancing efforts to strengthen protection capacity of member states.

There is a significant need to strengthen our collective response to refugee situations. Presently, 40-50 member states would actually support these efforts of broadening our support for refugees. The urgency for this initiative is needed now. NGOs and UNHCR agreed on the need to move away from refugee camps in isolation and integrate refugees to live with host communities. As many models were discussed, it is clear that UNHCR and NGOs have a collaborative role in increasing the amount of engagement by the private sector.

The Global Refugee Forum will focus on developing solutions to ease pressures on host countries; enhance refugee self-reliance; expand access to third-country solutions; and support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

Other Themes

The need to have quality education available to refugees is paramount. While there was an acknowledgement of challenges presented during the consultations, it was also noted that refugees can provide invaluable perspective and should inform education programming. Thus, the need for refugees to have a voice in decision-making processes.

UNHCR discussed the importance of NGOs strengthening and creating new partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders in the private sector while upholding humanitarian principles.

While NGOs can work with stakeholders, it is imperative for UNHCR to collaborate with governments to ensure long-term sustainability of programs (such as refugee self-reliance) with a language that lay-people, including refugees, can understand. UNHCR is asked to ensure the cooperation of host community members when providing refugees access to local markets and industries which can aid in long-term sustainability.

UNHCR and NGOs must adopt a strength-based approach where refugee leadership, the involvement of youth, and refugee-led initiatives are promoted and implemented.

The Global Refugee Forum cannot be implemented without resources: human and financial. One innovative way to broaden the support of refugees and host communities is Islamic Social Finance with a focus on Zakat. Creating a connection of mutual trust and transparency is important for donors who strive to make a positive impact for refugee and host communities. NGOs commended the idea of Islamic social finance, but highlighted UNHCR's need to be wary of its potential for creating competition and threaten ISF dependent faith-based organizations.

With some refugee camps still around for 20 years, it is important for UNHCR to rethink and strategize energy and infrastructure support to refugee and host communities. These camps are meant to be a place of refuge, and thus require significant social cohesion. In order to garner global support for these changes, it is imperative for the public to engage in dialogue with governments and the private sector.

An important conversation on preventing sexual misconduct and protection rights was held between NGOs and UNHCR. It was recommended that all organizations must demonstrate a clear commitment, with concrete messages that clearly spell out consequences of sexual misconduct in the organization's Code of Conduct. Some of the recommendations include developing strategies to challenge the norms, and raise awareness about sexual misconduct. All stakeholders must establish reporting and process for addressing grievances.

A discussion on protecting the rights in Mixed Movements addressed where the need to create a space for migrants, refugees, and civil society to bring their expertise on very specific issues is required. It is important that States find meaning in both compacts and apply them into their national framework.

The relationship between UNHCR and NGOs is honest and collaborative with the single goal of “working together better” for refugees and IDPs. We must continue to draw on our commonalities to achieve humanitarian progress globally.

Working together better is not just a theme for consultation but it is an ongoing journey of putting ‘humanity’ first – efficiently, effectively and continuously improving on how things are done.

I invite you to read the full report that has detailed recommendations. It is now available online through UNHCR and ICVA websites. Printed copies are also available in this room.

Thank you,

Dr. Aslam Daud, Humanity First Canada
NGO Rapporteur UNHCR Annual Consultations with NGOs