Forced Migration Working Group
Online
30 March 2021 (11:30-13:00)


Agenda
1. Discussion on Resettlement, the GCR Three-Year Strategy and the 2021 ATCR
2. Debriefing on the UNHCR 80th Standing Committee
3. AoB.

1. Discussion on Resettlement, the GCR Three-Year Strategy (3-YS) and the 2021 ATCR

RefugeePoint

- The 3-YS vision extends to 10 years until 2028 with three overall goals 1) grow resettlement
  2) advance complementary pathways and 3) promote a welcoming and inclusive society.
- The 3-YS envisions 1 million refugees benefiting from resettlement and 2 million refugees
  benefiting from complementary pathways over 10 years. The target for complementary
  pathways was set in proportion to the number of refugees we hope to see benefiting from
  resettlement. The Strategy envisions that the numbers would grow over 10 years.
- The Strategy is mentioned in the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and UNHCR was tasked
  to lead the Strategy but stresses they are not meant to be the only leader of the Strategy
  and is meant to be a multi-stakeholder process. The Strategy was developed over 2018-2019
  through a series of multi-stakeholder consultations and once adopted, all stakeholders
  agreed to and contributed to a Global Action Plan for its implementation. Updates are
  regularly submitted by those involved in the implementation and available here.
- The Strategy has a section on strategic approaches and tools for the three goals. There is an
  analysis of gaps, an analysis of strategic priorities and a section that re-summarizes the
  whole Strategy in terms of key contributions by various stakeholders.
- The Strategy’s target for 2019 was 60,000 refugees resettled and 63,000 did benefit from
  resettlement. The vision for 2020 was 70,000 refugees benefiting from resettlement but
  there were only 23,000 resettled refugees last year.
- Despite two years marked by the pandemic and Trump administration, it is still conceivable,
  in particular with the Biden administration, to meet the resettlement targets in 10 years.
- Complementary pathways are more complicated because there are no good methods for
  tracking complementary pathways beneficiaries. In past years, UNHCR and OECD produced
  together a report to assess the number of individuals from the seven largest refugee
  producing countries, who have benefitted from family reunification, employment and
  education visas to the OECD countries each year for the past several years. It is meant to be
  a proxy indicator for refugees benefiting from complementary pathways. It is not known
  that all of those individuals are in fact refugees, but it is presumed that many of them are.
- Based on that evaluation, in 2019 it was estimated that 156,000 refugees with 69% family
  unification, 18% education, and 13% economic mobility benefited from complementary
  pathways against the 3-YS target for that year of 120,000. Complementary Pathways for
  2020 are not known yet but the report will be released in the coming weeks.
- When looking at the 10-year period, it is possible to achieve the goal of 2 million refugees
  benefiting from complementary pathways, simply by improving our counting mechanism.

Notes for NGOs only – not to be circulated to other parties
ICVA

- Looking at the vision of the Strategy, beyond numerical objectives, improving the protection and quality of resettlement and complementary pathways is not enough emphasized. There is something to be said about the fact that the Strategy should not be only about numbers, but also about quality of durable solutions afforded to refugees.
- Those numbers are also an element of the indicators GCR framework.

International Catholic Migration Commission

- ATCR is co-chaired generally by a resettlement State and UNHCR. This year, ATCR is chaired by Switzerland. The NGO focal point is the Swiss Refugee Council which reached out to NGOs with a concept note and prepared a schedule of working groups on resettlement which took place earlier this month. There are working groups with technical conversations about various issues and then you have a bigger meeting in June.
- Refugee meaningful and robust participation has gathered momentum within the ATCR in the past years, under the leadership of the UK which was the 2019 chair and then the Canadians in 2020. Two refugee groups are in place, the refugee steering group is focused on international level and the refugee advisory group is focused on national level. The advising groups provide inputs to States. Refugee representatives are active in drafting, delivering statements and providing compelling testimonies. Since 2021, the refugee steering group are very engaged in advising UNHCR and the Swiss.
- Because of the challenges with COVID-19 and the slowdown/suspension of resettlement programs, the Swiss proposed the theme — every year there is a theme for ATCR — “Strengthening capacities to promote opportunities for refugees in unprecedented times”.
- The Swiss proposed 6 objectives for this year’s ATCR:
  1) exchange best practices and lessons learned with regard to resettlement processing and complementary pathways focusing on resettlement during a pandemic and in consideration of future possible disruptive events
  2) explore needs capacities of countries to strengthen their resettlement programs both in size and quality especially for the most vulnerable.
  3) take stock of the Three-Year Strategy.
  4) further enhance meaningful refugee participation.
  5) strengthen monitoring and evaluation experiences on reception and integration.
  6) review needs and capacities of relevant stakeholders involved in the complementary program pathways programs, design and implementation.
- This year in the working groups, we 1) discuss the 3-YS and progress made. 2) Discuss remote modalities for processing cases including remote interviewing and predeparture information with presentations e.g., from IOM, EASO, Switzerland, Italy, IRC. It seems that States are over positive about remote processing. 3) Studies were presented on the impact of government-led resettlement and community-based private sponsorship programs on refugee integration. 4) The Netherlands and Brazil, among others, presented their family reunification process. We saw some positives and negatives on those. Curious to hear the opinion of NGOs. E.g., Brazil was comparatively progressive with its family unification especially regarding its definition of family.
- Heard quite a bit from NGOs in the groups: we need to push States for justice, for higher and better-quality resettlement. 1.44 million people are urgently in need of resettlement.

International Rescue Committee

- If the vision of the Strategy is for ten years, why still call it Three-Year?
Act Alliance
- Are there still opportunities for new actors to engage in the ATCR process as we have had some inquiries from members?

Oxfam
- Any website on this year ATCR theme and objectives?
- Any plan to report on refugee participation to ATCR? Oxfam has made a pledge at the GRF in 2019 on refugees' meaningful participation. We would be happy to hear how progress made at the ATCR may be reported.

ICVA
- Are there ongoing discussions between some States and NGOs on this worrying aspect of accounting mechanism?

RefugePoint
- The GCR explicitly refers to a Three-Year Strategy and but soon into the development, all stakeholders realized that that timeframe was too short to be meaningful and that is why despite the need to call it a Three-Year Strategy we worked a 10-year vision into it.
- Improved counting is important and not necessarily a concern about the target number but cynical about the possibility that if programs do not grow, UNHCR will find a way to claim success anyway based on improved counting.

ICVA
- ICVA can share the concept note for this year ATCR [shared to NGOs since the meeting] and can put in touch NGOs interested with the NGO focal point.
- Two big categories of complementary pathways are the humanitarian pathways, e.g., humanitarian corridors and on the other side, the education and the work related, not exactly the same things although aggregated together in the targets and data.
- On the timeframe, an open question is what happens after the third year, what is going to be the frame of the activities, how will UNHCR engage? Maybe through CRISP Initiative.

Islamic Relief Worldwide
- Building inclusive society was almost entirely absent from the Global Refugee Forum in 2019. With the Burden- and Responsibility-sharing co-sponsorship group ahead of the GRF, it was hard to put on the table to address xenophobia, racism and discrimination, tackling those narratives.
- European context is getting worse on xenophobia, racism and discrimination.
- LWF and IRW hope to do a side event at the HLOM on theological approach to welcome inclusive society.
- In the Strategy around empowering engaging local authorities, etc. is it moving anywhere and if it is not why and what NGOs can do to keep it moving?
- Because part of the resettlement pillar is about finding more, new countries to resettle to, how can we make sure it is a key part of the engagement?

RefugePoint
- The theory of change is based on building better welcoming communities, it is how the Strategy is framed and how we lead to growing the numbers by engaging communities. The way it plays out more than any other way is the concept of sponsorship programs. There is a lot of energy around developing new sponsorship programs including within new countries.
• When it comes to new resettlement countries, actions unfold in conversations between UNHCR and other States, less with NGOs.
• There is an established core group of UNHCR-States-NGOs at the ATCR to discuss resettlement. On complementary pathways, the connections, the relationships, the focal points are unclear. The ATCR evolution in the future could be an ATCR growing with actors working on complementary pathways. The strict dichotomy between resettlement and complementary pathways is probably unhelpful to frame the conversations.
• We need to be mindful to preserve a space for need-based resettlement. Continue the resettlement community for truly needs based resettlement. Complementary pathways are given a lot of attention and some States emphasize programmes on integration criteria on languages and employability.

ICVA
• To IRW, on the elements on the EU Pact on asylum, integration, budget and dynamics to be developed, encourage to look at the latest Standing Committee NGO statement on Europe.
• There are elements from the Global Action Plan and all stakeholders have in plan to the contribution of the development of the Strategy, so there should be elements as well as in the mid-term progress report of last year.

International Catholic Migration Commission
• To IRW, share an example in Switzerland there is a great practice named Bridge Builders, a program started by an NGO. They select and train refugee volunteers to support newly arrived refugees in the community. They also provide training, e.g. to the police force.

Refugees International
• Certainly, the EU decision to extend its 2019 pledge through 2021 was disappointing in terms of resettlement. But separate from the proposed Pact – which does not seem to be going anywhere any time soon – the Commission also issued a European Skills Agenda, Action Plan for Integration & Inclusion, and dedicated funding in its long-term budget for promoting integration. While it seems artificial to separate an Integration & Inclusion plan from a Migration & Asylum agreement, the politicking around the latter may have stalled progress on the former. So at least there is money and support there – now Member States just need to take advantage of it.

2. Debriefing on the UNHCR 80th Standing Committee (23-25 March)
• See documents and UNHCR interventions on the StandCom website: https://www.unhcr.org/80th-meeting-of-the-standing-committee
• Thanks again all NGOs for the inputs received.
• The NGO statements were aligned on several aspects with UNHCR and some States positions or UNHCR were aligned with NGOs statements on several aspects, in particular on international protection and durable solutions in the context of public health emergencies, e.g. ensuring access to asylum and protection while protecting public health; ensuring humanitarian access; inclusion in vaccination plans. Also on strategic partnership including coordination, e.g. calling for strengthen partnership with national and local NGOs.
• On regional updates, the NGO statements are more vocal on targeting specific States where there are protection concerns, violation of rights, and harmful practices. One State was strongly offensive with one aspect of an NGO statement. China mentioned that “NGOs abused the platform of the standing committee to unreasonably accuse China and distort facts. China firmly opposes to that and that Hong Kong guarantees the legal rights of all the
refugees and immigrants these organisations are simply spreading rumors based on completely false information”.

- On the major points of this StandCom:
  - Shared concerns on access to international protection and durable solutions were highly indicated in statements/interventions made by UNHCR and a number of States and related to that, the COVID-19 pandemic was also one of the main angles. The impacts on the safety, rights and well-being of refugees and displaced population – in particular – children, girls and women were recurrent: a lot heard on GBV rise, impacts of school closures and caregiver stress on children’s resilience and development; the adaptation put in place over the year to respond to displaced population needs despite measures against the pandemic put in place; the confirmed inclusion of displaced population in current vaccination plans such as in Germany, Malawi, Rwanda, Jordan, Morocco, “many countries in Europe”, Switzerland and an aspect on the funding needs for this year.
  - Regional updates: we did not hear new developments on current emergencies and needs, the situation in Venezuela and neighboring countries, in Bangladesh, in Sahel, in Syria, in Yemen were highlighted. Unfortunately, we heard a lot on the loss of life and injuries among Rohingya refugees arising from the fires in Cox’s Bazar.
  - It was mentioned that the next international donors conference on displaced Venezuelans will be held in June, hosted by Canada.
  - Partnership with NGOs: Several States encouraged more advocacy from UNHCR in support of international and local NGOs to maintain their space and operating capacities and called on UNHCR to work more to enhance partnerships and funding with NGOs, particularly local and national NGOs (e.g. Ireland, Norway, US).
  - UNHCR Europe recognized NGOs’ important role in ensuring that effective response to new challenges during the past year. Also mentioned UNHCR virtual regional dialogues with NGOs on thematic issues last year and continuing this year.
  - Several States and UNHCR raised attention and appreciation on UNHCR engagement with NGOs through the weekly consultations on COVID-19 as well as the global annual consultations of last year, at least, mentioning the existing open communication between UNHCR and NGOs (e.g. Canada, EU, Switzerland).
  - Finally, several States commend NGOs chair in the clusters for example the protection cluster and ask UNHCR to continue to do so.
  - Budget and funding: messages were spread to increase contributions to bolster responsibility-sharing. Strong encouragement to donors and stakeholders to consider how they will support particularly new and additional needs related to COVID-19. Last year, they received the lowest proportion of unearmarked and flexible funding from government donors in the past decade, a trend not in line with the Grand Bargain.
  - Climate Change, environmental degradation and induced displacement were addressed several times at different levels from UNHCR and States, much more than in previous Standing Committees (e.g. by Raouf Mazou, Gillian Triggs, UNHCR Regional Directors of the three Bureaux in Africa, in all UNHCR’s papers on the regional updates, and several States – Burkina Faso, Rwanda, Mozambique, Africa Group, Sweden, Egypt, Mexico, UK).
  - Majority of interventions focused on how climate change has direct effects on displacement, high vulnerability faced by refugees to climate risks, and importance of addressing this issue as well as limited access to reliable, clean, and sustainable energy. UNHCR refers to its Strategic Framework for Climate Action and to their ongoing work to develop new finance mechanisms to scale up climate action work.

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The GRC implementation and pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum were not a priority of this StandCom for UNHCR and States.

UNHCR repeated that the three Support Platforms have gained significant momentum since their launch, but not clear what momentum they refer to. Might be related to some meetings among States and UNHCR that took place last year.

There will be agenda items on HLOM preparations on the agenda of the July and September StandCom, maybe GCR and GRF implementation will then be more discussed.

Again, Raouf Mazou announced the possibility to establish a Support Platform for the Central African Republic.

One information of the interest and requested by many of you, the US asked UNHCR to share the GCR indicators report in advance of the HLOM, by September.

Refugees International
- Is there a comprehensive list anywhere of which States have committed to vaccinating refugees (and where they fall on the priority list)? I know PICUM has done something like this for undocumented migrants in Europe, but I have not seen anything like it for refugees.

INTERSOS
- UNHCR apparently said there are 106 States that in their national vaccination plans they include refugees, but we are not aware of a public list of States.

ICVA
- [Since the meeting, UNHCR uploaded a dashboard on inclusion of persons of concern in national covid-19 vaccine rollout]

3. AoB
Plan International
- Flag that we and World Vision are finalizing a paper/submission to the High-Level Panel on IDPs around ‘Realizing National Accountability and International Responsibility’ for IDPs, resulting from different interviews and secondary analysis. It argues for a global perspective on IDPs with concrete proposals that can tackle current challenges, incentivize global responsibility-sharing and serve as a platform for empowering civil society and IDPs themselves to be part of long-term solutions.
- We will be sharing soon for endorsement, but if you would like to know more ahead do get in touch with enzo.tabetcruz@plan-international and nathan_mcgibney@wvi.org

ICVA
- Next UNHCR-NGO monthly consultation is around partnership agreements and flexibility on 31 March.
- The following one is planned on Wednesday 28 April (14:00-15:30 CET) around racism, xenophobia and discrimination. Our inclination is to have a meeting looking at what NGOs and UNHCR are doing to help refugees and displaced population from discrimination and xenophobia. UNCHR wants to add an element on addressing xenophobia, racism, discrimination in the workplace.
- For the upcoming themes, we will use to use suggestions based on the survey circulated to NGOs. On the survey results, prioritized themes were Solutions, International protection, the GRF, IDPs, Gender-based violence.
- On further suggestions, we received a vast majority focused on partnership flexibility and funding. Interested to have your reflections on those suggestions as UNHCR-NGOs monthly consultations are supposed to be a vector of those discussions (more about advancing protection and durable solutions broadly) and those aspects are also not Jerome/Loise’s
focus/expertise. It is probably indication of the time that funding and partnership issues are a big focus at the moment. Maybe also that Rob Hurt should organize more meetings of this type with a broader pool of NGOs.

- Remind that at ICVA, our colleagues Jeremy and Alon are dealing with the aspects of funding and partnerships.

**International Rescue Committee**

- Rob Hurt is absolutely an ally, he advances but then decisions are taken at HQ and in the field. What could be useful for the monthly consultation tomorrow is involving an additional staff at HQ or from Regional Bureau that can tell us what is happening in the field while reforms are taking forward at global level. Thought the monthly consultation would be useful to connect the dots.

**ICVA**

- Useful if those points can be raised at tomorrow’s monthly consultation.
- At national level, we hope UNHCR-NGO Consultations will play a role for those discussions. We advocated to UNHCR from our perspective each regional consultation should have a session on partnership.
- We still wait for the overall regional consultations theme to be decided by UNHCR Senior Management Team. But you might have seen already moving ahead for some regions.

**On potential advocacy around protection and durable solutions for the Western and the Central Mediterranean situation.** There was an NGO briefing organized by UNHCR in February around the launch on the recently released [UNHCR’s Updated Risk Mitigation Strategy and Appeal for the Western and Central Mediterranean situation](https://reliefweb.int/report/italy/unhcrs-updated-risk-mitigation-strategy-and-appeal-western-central-mediterranean-situation). ICVA asked to UNHCR what existing advocacy materials are available for NGOs on this situation to amplify/complement NGOs advocacy. UNHCR mentioned they might be able to share advocacy packages and they shared to ICVA a few documents already shared with you, e.g. in the European context, the [UNHCR Key Asks to the EU for 2021](https://reliefweb.int/report/europe/unhcr-key-asks-eu-2021) and [UNHCR recommendations to the EU Presidencies for 2021](https://reliefweb.int/report/europe/unhcr-recommendations-to-eu-presidencies-2021). And the two fact sheets on resettlement priorities and needs in mixed movement situation in Cameroon and Niger. So, mainly focused on resettlement and complementary pathways.

- UNHCR asked what would be the most useful for ICVA members to be developed. This represents an opportunity for NGOs to call on UNHCR to develop key priorities, if UNHCR effectively takes inputs into account. It is worth a try and that could be based for instances on what we mentioned during the briefing but there could be several other focuses and more targeted on improving:
  - Emergency Transit Mechanisms,
  - Rescue-at land borders and sea borders,
  - Resettlement and complementary pathways,
  - Services available to people on the routes, emergency shelters, quality referrals,
  - Identification, referrals and assistance along key routes,
  - Improving family reunification which seems very complicated and inexistent,
  - Realigning States responsibilities,
  - Developing humanitarian corridors; it could also focus on funding.

- Is there one aspect or a few aspects that UNHCR must focus on publicly, to the attention of States, one aspect that they do not cover publicly or that could complement your own advocacy?

- It should not be for the sake of having one more document, put online. We are talking about advocacy with clear objectives and a target audience.

*Notes for NGOs only – not to be circulated to other parties*
• We very much welcome your suggestions and ideas now or by e-mail.

International Catholic Migration Commission
• A good point about the family reunification, Emergency Transit Mechanisms, resettlement at the West and Central Mediterranean routes and the need for advocacy. Thanks for this.
• Family reunification Network has a secretariat at UNHCR and wonders if we could use the Network for advocacy at the Central Mediterranean?