Forced Migration Working Group  
Online  
25 August 2020 (14:00-15:45)


Agenda
1. Standing and Executive Committees
2. UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations in 2020
3. AoB including updates on UNHCR-WB Joint Data Center Strategic Advisory Council, UNHCR Bureau of Europe and the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement.

1. Standing Committee / Executive Committee
   • The next Standing Committee is on 16-17 September. Following the call for expressions of interest, NGOs proposed to lead the drafting of 2 statements, on the Grand Bargain and on integrity in UNHCR including, efforts to prevent and respond to PSEA which make sense with the previous years where there used to be NGO statements on those agenda items.
   • On the timeline, we circulated the draft statements for the first round and will circulate for inputs for a second round this Friday until the 4 September and we welcome your inputs.
   • The next Executive Committee is planned from 5 to 9 October. The call for expressions of interest suggested to coordinate 3 statements, General debate, International protection, and Programme budgets, management, financial control and administrative oversight.
   • NGOs suggested taking the lead on International protection agenda item. Intersos came swiftly to lead on drafting the statement on the topic.
   • The statement might be merged with the general debate or there could be 2 statements, one on the general debate and one on international protection.
   • The general debate agenda item is broad in scope and open. We asked for more information to UNHCR and were told there will not be a specific theme this year although youth and children is a topic that will be featured prominently. The UNICEF DG will make a video statement in the opening session. That means that there is room for manoeuvre, and it is possible to have a general debate statement focused on children and youth.
   • There is also the HC statement during ExCom and we can expect a review where we stand with the GCR and how its principles have helped shape the COVID response; as well as the protection, health and socio-economic impacts of the pandemic on forcibly displaced persons; and pragmatic approaches found by States, i.e. re-screening, quarantine, remote asylum interviews and the challenges to asylum, border closures, growing discrimination.
   • Welcome to send us inputs/suggestions that could be submitted as elements to be included in the HC’s statement. Do you have a specific lens to suggest, is there any missing elements?

Intersos
• What is meant by general debate and by merged statements? What kind of items could be included? It seems like it is up to us to choose a topic basically.
ICVA
- The general debate is usually a statement that at least partly replies to the HC statement.
- There could be one general debate statement if someone wants to take the lead and which could focus on children and youth as well as some of the elements of the HC statement and a statement on international protection itself.
- In the past few years, the statement on general debate was used to provide a perspective related to a high-level segment/event. There is such segment/event this year and this statement could be only focused on youth and children.

ICMC
- For the general debate, what may possibly be helpful is if the Initiative for Child Rights, which is a fantastic consortium of NGOs, could provide some brainstorming ideas. Can connect if needed.
- Is ExCom virtual?

Save the children
- Good suggestion. We should suggest the Initiative to provide input on this and happy to support contact with my colleague Daniela as co-chair of the Initiative.

ICVA
- For the ExCom in early-October, we received the invitation with details and some information on the agenda items. For the Standing Committee in mid-September, we have not received information.
- In principle ExCom will be partly in-person, partly online. Not sure yet about the Standing Committee.
- On a statement on general debate, we would need to know relatively quickly to make sure that we can respect to drafting timeline.

CARE
- How do we track the impact of NGO statements that we put forward to these UNHCR Standing and Executive Committees? We are producing very good statements, but wonder when it has been delivered, do we ever come back to statements we have submitted and follow-up and ask UNHCR what has been done?

Intersos
- On the idea of merging the statements, international protection is a big area and we are struggling with the pandemic, we have many challenges on protection and innovative approaches we are doing collectively as NGOs. Part of the thinking was to try to highlight it in the draft of the NGO statement.
- On children and youth, the Initiative for Child Rights are working on their advocacy plan, it would be worth considering having two statements, one which is focused on child rights and the another one on international protection.

ICVA
- On tracking the impact of the NGO statements, we do not have a scientific approach. It is very dependent on who is listening to the statements. Some UNHCR staff are very attentive
and then engage with us afterwards to compliment, ask questions and sometimes complain. Same from some States.
• After the delivery of the statements, we are always attentive to the answers to the points and what kind of answers are provided by UNHCR and Member States.
• When you have topics that are coming back regularly like international protection or the GCR, we make sure that there is a consistency in terms of what is said and asked and to bring up again. We also always refer drafters to previous drafts.
• Welcome reflection and proposals about how to do that better.
• Frankly, there is also a notion of ‘occupying the space’, e.g. having NGO voices on protection is really important. If there are Standing or Executive Committees where we do not have statements on those topics, we risk losing the space.

Save the children
• Sometimes the statements could be read as a long list of recommendations going in different directions.
• It is hard to measure but from experience, we could be more focused on one specific issue.
• It is also about giving visibility to the issues we put in the statement.

ICVA
• One issue in reviewing the statement process, e.g. we could re-think how we develop at least the first draft, should there be a drafting committee and then we open for inputs? That would allow us to have something more focused and tailored to a follow-up, while maintaining the nature of those documents as ‘NGO’ statements, not ICVA or ICVA members’ statement. Our mandate it to coordinate statement from the broad NGO community.
• For each Standing and Executive Committee, we could have a work plan over the year which would maybe help us to make connections, address the statements process as a continuum rather than one after the other.
• Happy to discuss on finding a way to have a more consistent, coherent, and maybe trackable or impactful way of drafting those statements in a specific meeting.

Intersos
• Agree. These statements are an opportunity to have more visibility on issues. so, I wonder if we could find the way to publish them more widely? E.g. on ReliefWeb?

Islamic Relief Worldwide
• Good idea. Having a plan of focused messaging over the course of the year. It would be good to have separate meeting maybe in November on what over the next 1-2 years we want to be focusing on and having dynamic discussions to broaden ideas, reach out to refugee led organizations, making sure that we are not only having like a more focused advocacy plan which we could maybe track against but also making sure to ensure a proper representation of diversity of views. Happy to support with ideas.

CARE
• Understand the need to balance between “voice”, visibility and results but worth perhaps discussing a bit more in the future?
ICVA

- We would like to continue brainstorming on the NGO ExCom side event of October.
- Initially, UNHCR told us there would not be any organized side event this year, except for NGOs. Now it seems pressure is increasing from UNHCR management to reconsider.
- ExCom Secretariat seems to be struggling on this and result is we are left a bit in the dark about modalities.
- But we know it will most probably be online only, and we (ICVA) have to deal with the platform, the invites, the interpretation, etc. not clear for us whether that would be broadly open or whether it would be reserved to ExCom participants (and if so, how?).
- We sent you the summary of parameters and possible themes for the side event.
- We need to identify with you the theme of focus and NGO(s) willing to further develop the concept, flyer and identify speakers.
- Have a pragmatic suggestion to make but first want to hear if there are reflections, suggestions.

CARE

- As mentioned in previous meeting, CARE is interested in climate change as a driver of displacement.

IDMC

- IDMC would be interested too in the topic.

Plan International

- Plan may be interested in collaborating on a side event but need to check internally.

ICVA

- Happy to look into the climate change theme. We will follow-up with CARE and IDMC, also checking with UNHCR that there could be a clash/overlap with a potential UNHCR/Andrew Harper’s side event.

2. UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations in 2020

- The HC Dialogue on Protection Challenges will focus on three sessions which are replicated for the annual consultations, i.e. Protection considerations, resilience and inclusion, and climate action with a different angle.
- **Where we stand on the agenda.** We had a short meeting yesterday with PCS and Andrew Harper’s team on the climate action session for the annual consultations.
- UNHCR is not going to share the UNHCR’s Strategic Framework on Climate Action in advance of this session because it is too early. The framework is at a stage of a draft and has apparently not even been shared internally at UNHCR yet. It is a disappointment as our expectation was to receive the framework in advance, get some information about the action plans and then have a concrete discussion with NGOs proposing to contribute or to develop action plans.
- What UNHCR is proposing now is to have a discussion around what NGOs would consider as the adequate role of UNHCR on Climate Action, its directions and actions and how it could work with NGOs on this.
UNHCR also proposed that the conclusions from this session could feed into the session on climate action during the HC Dialogue on Protection Challenges.

On the approach, the idea now is to have a panel with opening remarks from Andrew Harper then leading to 3-4 NGOs panelists. NGOs presentations will include good practices on what they are doing in the specific contexts especially from affected countries.

Then an exchange will be geared towards precisely addressing the question of what is or should be UNHCR role for climate action and interactions with NGOs.

There will be a partnership agreement side event as a follow-up of the two meetings that have taken place with Rob Hurt during the UNHCR-NGO weekly meetings.

We are doing more work that we usually do because normally there is a co-designing process where you have one NGO focal point and one UNHCR focal point working together to jointly develop the sessions. Unfortunately, we do not have time to go through this process this year.

**CARE**

- How do we avoid repetition and ensure complementarity?

**ICVA**

- To avoid repetition, we should avoid having the same speakers and the same elements discussed. Will need to see with you and IDMC on the ExCom side event to avoid repetition.
- Hope NGOs will receive updated information soon on the annual consultations.
- The concept note of the annual consultations was developed by ICVA and the partnership section and included some of your inputs.
- When we had asked you if you were interested in some of the sessions during previous meetings and you answered positively, and we forwarded the information to UNHCR.
- In early-July the concept note was finalized and then there was a huge delay as UNHCR management took weeks to give its views and then asked for changes, sometimes directly contradicting what the High Commissioner himself had said in writing.
- Finally, you got the invitation last week with the concept note.
- Additional information/parameters need to be defined and sent.
- We have three sessions, not like in previous years with more sessions.
- In terms of participation, it is limited to 200 individuals by invitation only. The idea is to have two staff registered.
- Invitations has been sent to those: who joined the UNHCR-NGO weekly meetings preparedness and response to COVID-19 and joined the previous annual consultations, with a balance between national and international NGOs, and a geographical scope although there is the idea to keep in mind that regional consultations might also happen, which is part of the justification of rationalization for the limited number of participants.
- The 200 participants include NGOs, big and small, national/international as well as Refugee-led organizations.
- Limitation is also based on the idea to have active participants rather than people who come to sit and listen.
- Encourage those invited to come and be prepared to speak and contribute to discussions.
- If some of you have not been invited or if you are unsure because it might not have come to you, we can try to look into it and help. Encourage you to coordinate internally to make sure that you have the two participants and not more.

**Notes for ICVA Members only – not to be circulated to other parties**
• In addition to the 200 participants, there will be UNHCR and ICVA as well as few observers, e.g. the usual observer participants from UN agencies.

Norwegian Refugee Council
• Participation is limited to two staff per organisations, even though there are a number of topics there are more than two topics being covered and are all quite different (partnership, climate change, protection, and resilience and inclusion). We would be happy not to have more than two people online in the consultation at any time, but is there any possibility of registering more than two people so that those who are responsible for the selected topics in our organizations are able to properly participate?

ICVA
• You need to see within your organization what are the most important topics to your organization and what you can cover the best strategically. Unless you decide to have a staff from the Europe region, try also to make sure that you can also have staff that will be able to join in the morning and in the afternoon.

Good Neighbors International
• Whether it would be possible to have a system of ‘transferable tickets’? Basically, we would still have only two staff per NGO online at any one point, but more would be registered, and the NGOs would be able to send their most relevant colleagues for each session.

ICVA
• One difficulty for the transferable ticket could be on the technical part and additional load on a small team for the organization. The idea though, was not really discussed before so we will convey to UNHCR, see what the possibilities are, and revert back to you asap.
• With the objective of having a discussion that leads to concrete outputs and results, engaging everyone not in the type of conferences that we have had for a few years, considering there will be regional consultations, we do not necessarily disagree with the idea of a smaller group.
• What is not exactly clear is the concept behind and the objectives.
• Initially the idea from UNHCR was to have 35 NGOs this year which we pushed back against and it might come back for the next years.
• For us the question is more that the number has to be linked to the objective and the concept of the consultations. We need to understand what is the UNHCR vision and expectations for those consultations and we still do not have a concrete answer to this.

Good Neighbors International
• Some NGOs could come in a learning mode, to learn more about the international context. Would it be feasible to have a webcast for people who want to just learn?
• This should not be extremely difficult from a technical point of view without simultaneous translation, e.g. UN webcast does not provide translation.

ICVA
• We need to follow-up with UNHCR. ICVA is not really in favor for webcast. For number of years, we pushed for a safe space for UNHCR and NGOs to exchange. Although it seems UNHCR is planning to have a webpage on the consultations that would be accessible with a
password. The issue is not with NGOs viewing the recording. The issue is other stakeholders watching the recording, e.g. Member States and other actors. Some NGOs from some contexts/countries may not feel free to speak as openly if they know it will be public.

- About the learning side, it is linked with the original concept of consultation. The objective is to have a concrete exchange, not a conference/learning moment. In a normal year, with more time during the event and to prepare, we might be able to combine with learning moments and moments for exchange. But this year, it is not possible.
- To be frank, we are not happy with the condition we are put in to deliver on expectations. We are satisfied with our collaboration with PCS so far but UNHCR management is really not making things easy. UNHCR management insists that we have to organize consultations that are interactive and lead to concrete outputs but they are responsible for huge delays which mean we do not have the time and tools to work properly. We agree with the objectives but are frustrated that we are not put in a position to deliver on them.
- Happy to look in the future at basically organizing a conference but that is something different.

**Lutheran World Federation**

- Do we have the schedule for the regional consultations?

**ICVA**

- We do not know how many regional consultations or when they will be organized, and on what topic.
- Here again, we face contradicting demands from UNHCR management, which would want to see a clear link between regional and global consultations, wants to see PCS and ICVA support the regional consultations, etc. but we have no visibility on whether, how, when those regional consultations may be organized. UNHCR decided to have a fully decentralized approach (i.e. it is up to the Regional Bureaus to decide) but then expects us to work out the coherence our of an incoherent system and process.
- We are happy to help connect the global and regional consultations but again, we are not in a position to do that. We don’t have the resources and cannot plan for this (e.g. when we start working on the next consultation, we do not know what the regional bureaus’ plans are).

**World Vision**

- Is there an outcomes report for the annual consultation?

**ICVA**

- Hoping to have summaries by sessions, then maybe a short report that could feed into the HC Dialogue. Need to think more and see what is doable. Happy to get suggestions.
- We will also quickly (in a week) develop a statement reporting on the consultations, which will be delivered at ExCom.

**ICMC**

- Do we have to sign up separately for the PPA session with Rob Hurt the day before?

**ICVA**

- Check on the invitation. The PPA session will be for implementing partners mainly.
• Rob Hurt will work with our colleague Jeremy Rempel on developing the session.

Act for Peace
• Do we assume the time is 11:00-14:00 (Gva time) both days for the sessions? Parallel sessions or sequential?

ICVA
• No, that would exclude the NGOs from the Americas. Tentatively, the PPA session will be on 28 Sept from 14:00 to 15:30. There will be sessions on 29 Sept from 11:00 to 16:00 and the 30 Sept will be from 11:00 until 14.30.
• Unfortunately, it means some sessions will not be at good times for people in the Americas or Asia, but this is unavoidable. The only option to avoid this would be to have parallel sessions, but it will not be the case as we do not have the resources for that.

Save the children
• How do we take it forward concretely for colleagues who will cover the various sessions? What is your suggestion for registration given the deadline is next Monday? Should we reach out UNHCR?

ICVA
• We will send an email to UNHCR and will come back to you this week. You could also contact UNHCR to raise any point you think necessary.

Good Neighbors International
• Using the Webex platform can allow to switch the ID.
• Totally agree about limiting the number of participants. I thought it was purely about logistics and now I realize that it looks into a more proper dialogue. It would be great if the reason behind limiting the number could be made more explicit.

3. AoB
International Rescue Committee
• UNHCR-WB Joint Data Center Strategic Advisor Council on 27 August 2020. The JDC is a joint work of the World Bank and UNHCR to improve data and evidence in support of forcibly displaced populations, based in Copenhagen.
• This year due to the pandemic, they are holding their second strategic Advisory Council meeting virtually.
• The strategic Advisory Council includes a number of stakeholders: academia, international organizations, civil society, governments.
• We have been following the JDC since its establishment, together with a few other NGOs and think tanks.
• This year, IRC (Farida) has been invited to speak on behalf of the strategic Advisory Council at the final session. I was hoping to provide inputs on behalf of NGOs. In fact, I have been asked to summarize the outcomes of the discussion that will be held on 27 August.
• The agenda, the zero-draft strategy, and the documentation have been circulated yesterday.
• I have a very limited time at the end of the day to summarize the discussion, but it is up to NGOs to raise a number of points and I hope whoever participates will raise the fact that we know very little about what is going on.
• The zero-draft strategy is very basic, basically there is nothing out there.
• There will be a management committee meeting of the JDC that includes the World Bank, UNHCR, Kenya, Uganda, Pakistan as refugees hosting countries, BPRM, the European Commission in October.
• Then in December, the strategy will be finalized but the strategic Advisory Council will not have an opportunity to discuss or to comment the strategy when it is finalized or revised so there is a great opportunity to join an interesting discussion on data and evidence on forcibly displaced populations but we need to be much more involved.

**ICVA**

• There is a need to be a bit more structured and to have an engagement continuity, we will raise it and I am sure others will do it also.
• There is not a lot of NGOs as participants of the meeting, might due to the holiday and no RLO listed, which was a point clearly raised at the first advisory council meeting, probably something to flag.
• **The High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement**, we will know more on the workplan in the next weeks.
• **UNHCR Bureau of Europe**, following the UNHCR, ECRE, and ICVA meeting on 6 July, it was decided to have quarterly meetings and the idea of having more targeted discussions came up. The first one is tomorrow around the recent legal developments in Hungary, with a small group of NGOs, looking for joint advocacy to develop, and monitoring. It is linked to the broader issue around access to Europe, to get connected better with UNHCR in Brussels. Organized by UNHCR, ECRE, and ICVA. Under Chatham house rules.
• Let us know if you want to engage in and should be part of the discussion.

**Women’s Refugee Commission**

• Sharing the information on The Sphere South Asia webinar on Leaving No One Behind: Inclusion in COVID-19 Responses this Thursday at 11:00 Geneva:
  
  https://spherestandards.org/event/sphere-covid-inclusion/