Forced Migration Working Group  
ICVA’s Conference Room, 26-28 Avenue Giuseppe-Motta Geneva,  
29 January 2019 (11:00-12:30)

Participants: Action Against Hunger (online); APPRN (online); Act for Peace (online); ACT Alliance; Christian Aid (online); DRC (online); IDMC; ICMC; IRC; INTERSOS; JRS (online); Korean NGO Council for Overseas Development (online); NRC; Oxfam; Oxfam Intermon (online); RefugePoint; SSI (online); WRC (online).

Agenda:
1. UNHCR updated IDP policy (to prepare before meeting with UNHCR on 31 Jan).
2. Opportunities for NGO engagement with the Global Refugee Forum.
3. Discussion on the FMWG potential ways to work on ‘migrants in vulnerable situations’, including e.g. intersections between forced migration and climate justice advocacy in 2019.
4. AoB including validation of the updated ToRs of the FMWG.

1. IDP policy discussion
   • With regard to feedback on the UNHCR IDP policy, UNHCR is keen on receiving broader inputs, particularly on partnership issues and how NGOs would be interested in collaborating with regard to the IDP policy.
   • The policy is predictable; there is no revolution. It is better in the sense that the policy de-links funding with mandate.
   • But it could have still taken advantage of a real absence of UN leadership on IDP issues in order to explore the relationship with UN agencies and NGOs. This is not to say that the policy should reproduce the refugee model.
   • In IDP situations, NGOs have a prominent role. NGOs can take a number of initiatives. The whole handling of IDP issues from a UN perspective needs to create more space for NGOs.
   • NGOs need to be more aggressive. There is much more independent funding in IDP situations. Need to make sure that NGOs have parallel leadership rather than being viewed as mere implementers.
   • Pleasantly surprised to see references to the GCR. At one point, this policy will be shared with Member States. Wondering how some States will react to this.
   • However, the policy does not make clear the link of IDPs with GCR. This is a policy that has to be future-proof. So, name-checking is a risk, because in two years there will be new things and then it will have to be reviewed again.
   • There is a clear link between the GCR and IDPs through the spectrum of displacement. This could be discussed during the meeting with UNHCR on the IDP policy.
   • There is a lack of references to the evolution of regionalisation in the document, despite the fact that regions will play an important role.
   • Similarly, there is not much on the evolution of the role of RC/HC in the document.
   • There are no references to the Principles of Partnership either. Will signal this to UNHCR as in the past two Annual Consultations too, the High Commissioner did not refer to PoPs.
   • There is some confusion. If this is a policy document, then it is different from a managerial document. And if one goes towards managerial, need to mention the UN reforms.
• The policy document seems internally directed. It looks at where we are now.
• There are States engaging with IDPs; looking at this UNHCR may be expecting to use this document for advocacy with States. In such a case, what will be the role of NGOs in that. Need to discuss this on Thursday with UNHCR.
• At the GCR Formal Consultations, there were some States that were vocal about IDPs and maybe this is a nod to them as many of them were donor States.
• It took some time for UNHCR to give the green light to share the policy with NGOs. There were some internal discussions. But not sure what were the sticking points.
• Somewhat surprising to see the funding aspect for IDP operations put upfront in way that may appear as if UNHCR is asking for funds.
• The policy refers to solutions and not durable solutions, and when they talk about solutions they are talking about returns. This could be a continuation from the Compact. This is something that should be raised with UNHCR.
• Solutions vs durable solutions is not a major issue. Need to have transitional solutions and not just wait for durable solutions.
• The disasters question is not clear in the policy. It is there, which is good, but there is lack of clarity on how UNHCR will engage. This needs clarification. What will UNHCR leadership role entail? Does it mean that UNHCR will be active in the disaster risk reduction space?
• There is no reference to the Joint OCHA and UNHCR Note on Mixed situations. That also brings into question the status of the Refugee Coordination Model and the division of the task between UNHCR and OCHA.
• Need to clarify what the role of UNHCR has vis-à-vis other actors.
• Concerned that this policy will supersede a number of other policy documents.
• The policy document only talks about humanitarian protection at the expense of general protection.
• There is no mention of AGD policy and how displacement affects women disproportionately.
• In terms of data, the policy does not mention data disaggregated by age, diversity and disability.
• Moreover, there is little mention of working with local women actors.
• Understand that UNHCR has not referred much to the UN reforms. But worry how this aspect is getting lost.
• No mention of SGBV guidelines either and how this policy will align with SGBV mainstreaming policy.
• This may have been because UNHCR has not yet done internal consultations. For example, UNHCR gender focal points have not seen the draft.
• There is also little mention of the rights of IDPs.
• Has UNHCR said anything about when the policy will be adopted? Where do these discussions fit in the process?
• What is the goal of the IDP policy other than just having another piece of paper?
• UNHCR is discussing with the Global Protection Cluster and is also having similar conversations with members of InterAction (8 February in Washington D.C). The policy however has not yet been discussed with Member States.
• Would be useful to ask why there has been a delay in releasing the IDP policy.
High level IDP panel

- Where are we with the High-Level Panel on IDPs? Sense that some States are rolling their eyes at having another panel and questioning the strategy behind it.
- There was a meeting on the Nansen Initiative and the Swiss and Norway missions were present. Raised the issue of High-Level Panel on IDPs with them. A letter was sent to the UNSG last year to finally discuss IDPs at a similar global level than the Compact.
- Norway said that there was a reply from the SG to signatories of the letter noting that there should be an agreement on this approach, but that more State engagement was needed behind the project.
- Sense that there is a different position between Norway and Switzerland. Switzerland might be interested in having a related conversation at Geneva level, while Norway noted the importance of leaving that conversation in New York for the moment, although did not clarify the nature of the conversation.
- Discussions seem to be process-focused. ToRs for the High-Level panel are being developed. This is with the OCHA office now.
- There is still confusion in New York about who is doing what. From OCHA’s point of view, States that are pushing for the panel need to get broader buy-in. There is some confusion too on who will do the work.
- In Geneva, Switzerland and Norway are good entry points. And Switzerland seems willing to discuss with NGOs to keep this on the agenda.

2. NGO engagement with the Global Refugee Forum

ICVA overview

- The Global Refugee Forum is the big thing that will happen in Geneva this year. The Forum is also closely related to other elements of the Compact, for example, the three-year resettlement strategy, Support Platforms and others.
- ICVA shared notes from the UNHCR briefing on the Global Compact on Refugees (17 Dec.) and one element of the briefing focused on the plans for the Global Refugee Forum.
- UNHCR shared some information about the objectives of the Forum. The Forum will also look at the resettlement strategy and the Asylum Capacity Support Group.
- The Forum will also focus on showcasing good practices; the idea is not only showcasing of practices, but also using it to generate pledges and commitments down the line for the second Forum. So, there is that link.
- What does this mean for NGOs? How can NGOs engage and contribute to the process?
- UNHCR has discussed with other NGO networks. UNHCR is trying to find a formula that tries to square the circles. The Compact says that the Forum is Ministerial level and multi-stakeholder at the same time, so UNHCR is trying to see how they can engage with all stakeholders while keeping the Forum a Ministerial level gathering.

Opportunities for NGO engagement

- UNHCR Standing Committee meetings: dates for the meetings are now online, and are also included in the calendar of main events shared by ICVA. The March SCom will take place from 5-7.
- In each of the SCom meetings this year, there will be an update on the GCR, which means an opportunity to make a statement on the Compact more broadly and the Global Refugee Forum in particular.
This is an important opportunity for engagement; if no NGO comes forward to prepare a draft statement, ICVA will take the lead in drafting.

Recognise that these are opportunities only for statements; these are useful but NGO community needs more than that.

Ms. Perven Ali now works on the GCR, and she is willing to continue regular meetings with NGOs; ICVA is discussing to organise a meeting in late February.

There might also be a briefing around the March Standing Committee for Member States.

The plan for the moment is to have a pledging template by the end of February. So, there might be a briefing or discussion around that time linked to the pledging template.

**Annual Consultations:** One of the big moments for NGO engagement will be the week of the Annual Consultations (1-5 July).

For three main reasons. First: **Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement** will take place on 1-2 July. This is a moment when the three-year resettlement strategy will be discussed. At the moment, it is not clear what will be discussed; whether they will present the strategy.

The second is the **Refugee Status Determination** (RSD) retreat, which will involve NGOs that engage in RSD and probably others. The retreat might discuss the Asylum Capacity Support Group. Will need to clarify the nature of conversation that will take place. What kind of conversation will take place needs to be clarified.

The third is the 2019 **Annual Consultation** itself. The theme this year will be, “Partnerships and data: improving evidence-based responses”. Although the news is not yet definitive, UNHCR and ICVA have started discussing how to carve some time to discuss the Global Refugee Forum with NGOs at the Consultations for half a day or a day.

UNHCR is still having discussions internally on this. UNHCR Partnership Section and Ms. Perven’s team seem OK with this idea.

UNHCR might be looking at more than just briefing and would expect to explore how NGOs can contribute to the Forum.

ICVA will keep NGOs informed about how the day/half-day will be organised.

ICVA will also organise regular meetings; and NGOs too might have their own initiatives.

At UNHCR, there seems to be interest in taking the conversation out of Geneva, especially to the regional level.

Several events planned in relation to the AU 2019 Year of Refugees, Returnees, and IDPs. There will be a series of six consultations, some on the Kampala Convention and one related to the Compact; and in November there will be the usual Humanitarian Symposium. There will be opportunities for engagement.

In other regions, things need to be still defined.

If NGOs have thinking and capacity on engagement, please do share with UNHCR.

Volker Türk will share details about the Global Refugee Forum with the UNHCR Country Representatives. There will be activities in a number of countries, focusing on examples of how countries can approach the Forum.

There could be space for NGOs to contribute too either by highlighting gaps or generating proposals for commitment.

ICVA will also release a Briefing Paper detailing opportunities for engagement. This has taken more time than expected as there are still many moving pieces. There will be a webinar too based on the Explainer paper.

**Discussion**
GP20 is another moving piece. The data workstream is hosting a regional consultation in Dakar. They badge it as GP20 and also link it to AU ECOWAS exchange. As such, useful to see what GP20 is planning in order to explore how these could tie into the various GCR-related events.

Process question with regard to UNHCR’s creative role on the Global Refugee Forum: How much is UNHCR being pushed by States?

The impression we got from Norway and Switzerland is that they knew less than us. The big question will be who the co-host(s) will be and what will be their role. But no indication of which countries are being considered.

Surprised by the low level of seniority in the process involved. This was a surprise. Mr. Volker Türk and Ms. Ellen Hansen are still in the picture. And the ExCom Secretariat will be involved too. Wondering if Mr. Daniel Endres will play a role.

We have had discussions with UNHCR on workstreams similar to those on the migration side. We were being told that UNHCR is working internally and the way they have been engaging with stakeholders is by breaking down the number of stakeholders. However, it is important to have both: collective conversations and breaking out.

We have big markers leading to the first Global Refugee Forum, but wondering if there have been discussions about following up on thematic conversations. Useful for NGO networks to know how we can engage with our membership.

Although this is not directly relevant, there will be a meeting of the academic network and some of those NGOs involved in research could be concerned by that. This will be in July.

The academic network is steered by Ms. Madeline Garlick, and Ms. Rachel Criswell is the focal point for faith-based organisations.

But there are elements like the Support Platforms which seem to be lacking entry point and not clear if there is a coherent approach.

This is perhaps linked to the regionalisation and the CRRF status. Need to ask clarity and contact points, for example, the new organisational chart. Can we extract information at this stage otherwise it is unnecessarily difficult to plan ahead.

For UNHCR, the Forum is very important, and want to get it right. But not necessarily to go for the big bang as UNHCR is mindful of the limitations.

Regionalisation is proving disruptive. There were many decisions by the High Commissioner last week; there was the Senior Management Team meeting. ICVA has been asked not to disseminate information it received in December as the HC decisions changed many aspects. UNHCR open to having another exchange with NGOs on regionalisation towards March.

Should not be worried to have someone junior dealing with the day-to-day business of the Global Refugee Forum. Ms. Perveen Ali is highly competent and reports directly to Mr. Türk, who is in control of the process and fully trusts Ms. Ali. Would rather take this as a positive sign. That is a signal that Mr. Türk wants to be closely involved with the Forum.

Besides, Ms. Ali is someone we can talk to, and if she can connect NGOs directly to Mr. Türk, it is a good thing.

Pledges at the Global Refugee Forum

Are we still talking about pledges being open to all stakeholders? If civil society can make pledges, then we can shape the agenda better.

Pledges are open to all stakeholders and UNHCR is looking at how they can have conversations with all stakeholders. They are interested to see how NGOs can bring
something to the table and what would be the process for it. There should be space for individual NGOs to make pledges or for NGOs to pair with others to make pledges.

- Question is how to make that happen knowing that the Global Refugee Forum is Ministerial level. They might create two tiers of pledges.
- Surprised that UNHCR is only budgeting two days for the Global Refugee Forum as UNHCR needs to balance the Ministerial format with meaningful space for all stakeholders. That is why the process from now until December will be important.
- NGOs should be strategic in approaching pledges; don’t what to have huge amount of pledges. Need to reflect on what are the main topics NGOs would want to pledge on. NGOs also need to consider what can be done with regard to advocacy.
- One way to be strategic would be to propose group pledges and explore which States can include those in their own pledges.
- However, NGOs should be cautious in approaching pledges so as to avoid being questioned later. NGOs are not at the same level with States and should be wary of giving the impression that NGOs may replace States’ responsibility and get them ‘off the hook’.
- On the other hand, there is a space at the Forum and NGOs need to make use of it. But agree on the need to have few impactful and coordinated pledges. NGOs should try to have a coordinated and coherent approach, rather than rush to individual pledges.
- Thematic approaches can be useful, for example, pledges around education. There is thinking on regional approaches too; the template should help structure our strategies.
- At the same time, NGOs need to preserve their advocacy space. They should be able to point to certain areas where NGOs don’t see progress.
- UNHCR commissioned a lessons learned paper to examine other pledging processes in order to decide how to move ahead on the GRF? Has someone seen a copy of the study?
- ICVA will try to get a copy of the lessons learnt study. To develop it, interviews were held with the US administration and NGOs among others.
- OCHA did something similar on lessons learnt and this is a public document.

3. FMWG potential ways to work on ‘migrants in vulnerable situations’

- ICVA now has a new three-year strategy based on discussions and surveys with members.
- There were suggestions to add something on migration, but not to delete anything. Decision was to make the group evolve, allowing for consideration of the migration portfolio, for example, adding migrants in vulnerable situation.
- ICVA’s work has traditionally been mainly focused on refugees and IDPs and less on statelessness. How do we integrate this element of work within the Working Group? This should also lead to some concrete activities that we do collectively, or we keep the group informed.
- ICVA can look at discussions with OHCHR and how we can work on that. This also ties into ICVA’s work with IOM and in particular Ignacio’s work on the Migration Compact.
- Could also be linked to climate and disaster displacement: ICVA is on the advisory committee of the Platform for Disaster Displacement and we can have more interactions with them.
- We won’t be able to do everything though, or not on our own.
- FMWG can be a good sounding board and help bridge conversations with the Action Committee on those issues.
• The UN Migration Network will also have a meeting on how to organise themselves and how to enable civil society participation.
• There are spaces there, and looking at migration, it will be important to have inputs from FMWG group. For example, on protection-related issues where there is not one definition. Important to follow how both Compacts will address protection issues.
• The way GCM approaches protection is robust and they will be open to discussing that. The first Migration Review Forum will be convened in 2022.
• Another important element will be to see how to get NGOs working on climate advocacy and displacement closer together. And we could sort of walk through to see how we can increase and enhance communication on that.
• There will be a UN Climate Change Conference (COP) this year, and there will be a special commitment on climate. There will also be the High-Level Political Forum on the SDGs, and this year there will be a focus on climate and displacement. Some NGOs are working with their New York office to see how to have a stronger message on climate. There are a couple of events foreseen.
• There is a Disaster Risk Platform meeting in May. Useful to share timelines to see if there is something specific that can lead to advocacy on GCR.
• Also looking at UNHCR’s IDP policy, it is not clear about UNHCR’s role in disasters, which may be a way of keeping open UNCHR’s potential engagement on disasters.
• The evolution to the FMWG reflects a reality and is important in terms of implementation of the two Compacts and their complementarity, in order to ensure that gaps are filled.
• Regional initiatives linked to the Compact are particularly relevant in Asia. As such, the group could play an important bridging role and also provide an opportunity to follow wider development in the migration space.
• While Jerome and Arjun will remain focused on the GCR, there can be strengthened efforts to exchange better particularly on issues related to complementarity between the two Compacts, with inputs from members and other ICVA staff. ICVA can help connect dots.
• On climate change, ICVA shared a UNHCR study on international protection in the context of nexus dynamics. ICVA could potentially organise an exchange with the author to discuss the study further.
• ICVA would request members to bring suggestions to help structure the work of the FMWG on this new dimension covering ‘migrants in vulnerable situations’. ICVA will engage where it can add value.

4. AOB
• ICVA shared the updated ToR of the FMWG with track changes. Please come back to Jerome Elie (jerome.elie@icvanetwork.org) in case of red flags.
• There are a number of documents that are accessible to members on the ICVA website. If you have a problem accessing these, please contact Fiona Wilke (fiona.wilke@icvanetwork.org).
• ICVA will regularly update the calendar of main events and request members to also feed into it if you think of some relevant events.
• Lastly, for ICVA members of the group, please have a look at representatives of your organisations who are on ICVA’s mailing list and let us know of any relevant changes regarding your organisation. (jerome.elie@icvanetwork.org)