Forced Migration Working Group
ICVA’s Conference Room, 26-28 Avenue Giuseppe-Motta
30 October 2019 (14:00-15:30)

Participants: APRRN (online), Act Alliance (online), Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation (online), FM4 Paso Libre, Foundation for Rural Development (online), Good Neighbors International, International Catholic Migration Commission, International Rescue Committee, Intersos, Japan Platform (online), Mercy Hands for Humanitarian Aid (online), Norwegian Refugee Council, Oxfam (online), Plan international (online), RefugePoint (online), Save the children (online), Women’s Refugee Commission (online).

Agenda:
1. Debrief on the Venezuela Solidarity Conference.
2. Debrief and exchange on UNHCR Executive Committee 2019.
3. Standing agenda item on Global Refugee Forum (GRF) and related preparations and activities.
4. AoB.

1. Debrief on the Venezuela Solidarity Conference.

ICVA
- The Conference was co-hosted by the European Union, UNHCR and IOM in Brussels on 28 and 29 October with the objectives to 1) raise awareness on the humanitarian crisis, 2) Show and call for solidarity, meaning financial and technical supports for Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) countries and Venezuela.
- Day one was focused on two panels with a topic on perspectives from the region, challenges and opportunities and a topic on response strategies and priorities for external support, following by the official opening of the conference.
- Day two was focused on remarks and interventions from LAC countries, as well as international finance institutions.
- ICVA participated in the Conference with two additional seats for ICVA members that hosted RET LAC and FM4 Paso Libre.
- There was significant participation from Member States and NGOs’, UN Agencies, development banks. Speakers panels with a High-Level presence (UNHCR Representant, IOM Director, the Joint UNHCR-IOM Representative, European Union (EU) Vice-president of the Commission, Ministers from LAC countries).
- During the conference was highlighted:
  - The humanitarian crisis and a focus with the facts that the Venezuelan crisis is the second biggest displacement in the world with 4,5 million displaced persons. Alarming projected number of 6,5 million displaced in the coming months and indicators on the political, social and economic situation in Venezuela shows that the displacement will not decrease.
- The magnitude of the displacement has an impact on the stability of the region and huge impacts on the budget plans, the institutions, the infrastructures and the peaceful life inside the society of LAC countries.
- Call from LAC countries and NGOs on Education, Health and Protection needs; human trafficking and sexual and gender-based violence are a big concern at the borders and inside the countries.
- The need to tackle xenophobia and discrimination.
- The need to work on refugees and migrant’s integration in the reception countries, including access to documentation, registration, temporary residence card, training, education, jobs access.
- The political dimension of some interventions, particularly Member States, referred to the root causes of the displacement that are found in Venezuela political regime.
- On the outcomes of the conference, 120 million euros was pledged by different donors including Member States during the conference even if it was not a Pledging Conference.
  - ICVA, InterAction and Voice coordinated a Joint NGO statement. The NGOs’ networks requested for a slot to read the statement and it was granted. The statement was the first one to be read from the intervention from the floor. The statement was very well received during the conference and some NGOs referred to this joint statement in their own statement.
  - A version is available in Spanish and English languages.
  - There are more than thirty diverse NGOs’, not only members of NGOs’ networks, who have signed on the statement.
  - ICVA compiled a number of notes of the Conference and we will have a follow-up meeting with InterAction and Voice to debrief and discuss next steps.
  - ICVA will flag to UNHCR and IOM the Joint NGO statement and will inform them that for next year to be informed in advance for the 2020 pledging conference.
  - Question mark: the connections between the Venezuela Conference, the Global Refugee Forum (GRF), including the Support Platforms, 2020 Venezuela Pledging Conference, the Quito process.

**FM4 Paso libre**
- Significative presence of the private sector.
- Points raised on the need to work on development and not only on the humanitarian side.
- Importance to pay attention to the Quito process and be aware of the different documents released during the Quito process, the documents released could be an advocacy tool. FM4 Paso Libre is working on it.

**Intersos**
- Intersos attended the Conference and added that EU commits to launch a “Group of friends of Quito process”.

**Act alliance**
• Act alliance has some members in LAC countries. Some issues to sign-on with some members operating inside Venezuela, plus it was a rushing process to provide inputs.
• Danger that 2020 Pledging Conference is donor-driven and not focused on the root causes.
• Was the Conference useful for NGOs’?

ICVA
• NGOs’ will have to link the Conference with the different up-coming conferences, events and meetings.
• When you look at NGOs’ signs-on, the majority are not ICVA members. NGOs based in Venezuela wherein a position to say they were aware of the possible consequences before signed-on.
• Was the Conference or the Joint statement useful for NGOs’? Might be both.
• How this Conference came about in a short time was not clear.
• Which countries have pledged? Canada, Italy, Japan, Spain, South Korea, Switzerland, United States and additional countries committed to pledges.

Women’s Refugee Commission
• A concern for WRC to sign-on on the call on the statement for Clusters to be enhanced and WRC have a problem with that because Clusters are for IDPs’ and it undermine the 1951 Convention and UNHCR refugee mandate.

ICVA
• Not sure that the reference is in the 1951 Convention rather than UNHCR’s statute.
• A lot of confusion between NGOs’, why it is not named Cluster and not Sectors.
• Confused on refugees and migrants’ terms used in the draft joint NGO statement and no time for a second round for NGOs’ to provide inputs, unfortunately.

Intersos
• The root causes of displacement are clear. During the Conference some States mentioned Maduro’s regime, some NGOs’ thought it was better to step behind, plus, fact that some NGOs’ are operating inside Venezuela.

ICVA
• Changes have been made to talk about the root causes but not openly and directly as in the first draft.
• Difficulty with the sign-on process. Sometimes, a non-branded sign-on process is better.

ICMC
• When the next pledging Conference will happen? In February 2020?
• How it effects UNHCR regionalization?
Remind the statement on regionalization delivered at the Standing Committee; there were questions on the place of the Bureau at the heart of the crisis, in Venezuela and UNHCR said would be better to not put on ‘the fire’ the new UNHCR Bureau.

**Caritas**
- Caritas was present with Caritas national Director of Venezuela.
- At the Conference, notice, surprisingly, the lack of Venezuelan NGOs’.
- On the Quito Process in Bogotá, do you know how much space NGOs’ have to be involved in?

**FM4 Paso Libre**
- Only States are part of the Quito Process. FM4 Paso Libre can ask some national NGOs’ in the region their perspectives on the space for NGOs’.

**ICVA**
- Caritas Venezuela was the only Venezuelan NGO present at the Conference.
- For political reasons, the space was limited.
- ICVA will follow-up with UNHCR.

2. **Debrief and exchange on UNHCR Executive Committee 2019.**

**UNHCR and Climate Change/Disaster Displacement positioning**
- Following the last Executive Committee (ExCom), an emphasis was put on UNHCR position and activity on climate change, particularly referring to the statement of Filippo Grandi during ExCom with the arguments that refugees can be affected by climate change, that UNHCR can provide support to forcibly displaced, linked to climate change, especially under protection expertise.
- Plus, UNHCR is working on sustainable strategy. How hosting refugees in camps or not in camps can be more ecological-friendly?
- We also learned that there has been a Special Adviser on climate change appointed at UNHCR, Mr. Andrew Harper, currently Head of the Division of Programme Support and Management, to provide strategic guidance, oversight and expertise to shape UNHCR’s climate change agenda, and represent UNHCR in external platforms and strategic discussions. The Special Advisor will drive UNHCR’s engagement on climate change, coordinate relevant initiatives across the organization, and serve as a global advocate for UNHCR’s work in this area. It will have a dedicated capacity for this purpose.
- Mr. Andrew Harper will work closely with the reconfigured DRS, the Division of International Protection, the Division of Operations, the Division of Emergency, Security and Supply, the Division of External Relations and the Regional Bureaux and country operations.

**UNHCR HQ review and changes in the Divisions.**
• **Statement of Kelly Clements** during the 70th Standing Committee announcing the creation of a new Division of Strategic Planning and Results as of 1 January 2020, bringing together programme, budget, programme partnership and results-based management. This new division will be headed by Ms. Ritu Shroff, currently Head of the Evaluation Service. As Director of the new Division, she will report to the Deputy High Commissioner.

• The Division of Resilience and Solutions will be merged with some technical services, that will support the operationalization of governance, risk and compliance objectives. This will integrate functions that currently reside within the Division of Resilience and Solutions and the technical support functions currently in the Division of Programme Support and Management, into a reconfigured DRS.

• Will be important for NGOs to follow-up, link with climate change, partnership, resilience, programme and GRF.

**Act Alliance**

• Act Alliance has been engaged with UNCHR on climate change, referring to September 2019 Climate Change Summit.

• No focus on climate change for the GRF.

• Act Alliance highlighted UNHCR process especially at the Climate Change Summit to address with some States on the impact of climate change.

• How climate change topic was presented? It is an awareness, an important topic for UNHCR? Where does it come from?

**ICVA**

• Where Climate Change topic comes from? Filippo Grandi made the link with the Climate Change Summit with its statement during ExCom, and UNHCR’s work is deeper than that. Reminded you [UNHCR’s report on climate change and displacement in the context of nexus](https://www.unhcr.org), that address how and where refugee law is applicable for climate displaced people, with some contexts as Kenya has been highlighted.

• UNHCR appointed a Special Adviser on Climate Change.

• UNHCR has a link with the Platform on Disaster Displacement

• There is a small link with the GRF.

• UNHCR issued a [note on climate change in the GCR](https://www.unhcr.org).  

• Questions remain on where does it going to be to lead? NGOs can keep an eye on it and get prepared to think on how to interact with that.

3. **Standing agenda item on Global Refugee Forum and related preparations and activities.**

• NGOs reflections, analysis and reactions on the end of the co-sponsoring meetings. It seems that it was not planned by UNHCR. According to UNHCR GRF team, there were not so much concrete actions with the co-sponsoring meetings with no areas of pledging and the will to moving forward to something else. Smaller States were complaining on the number of meetings too.
• The decision to stop the co-sponsoring meetings leaves the actors in the dark on how to exchanges in the future. Meaning that NGOs need to think about what we should do to replace the co-sponsoring meetings? What we could suggest to UNHCR?
• On Spotlight Sessions and other events, UNHCR has not shared the template with proposals, so making judgement and having feedback only with the speakers list and a title is complicated.
• At the third Protection capacity co-sponsoring meeting in September, UNHCR encouraged NGO networks to support UNHCR in support the pre-selection of an NGO speaker on the High-Level Panel on Protection capacity. ICVA was requested by ICVA members to gather the interest of the NGOs’. ICVA did not pre-select NGOs’ but call for expression of interest and put NGOs’ interests in one document and shared it with UNHCR.

Good Neighbors International
• From the co-sponsoring theme in Jobs and Livelihoods, sixty-five applications were received for Spotlight Sessions but only seven slots will be selected, five slots for the Speakers Corner and two for the Market places.
• UNHCR contacted several stakeholders to merge the sessions. The GRF coordination team will finalize the selection of the proposal by the end of next week.
• GNI asked UNHCR to share a list of pledges. UNHCR Focal Points of each co-sponsoring meeting groups will ask UNHCR GRF team.
• The number of Market Places is limited compare to the number of NGOs’ proposal. Suggested to argue with UNHCR to enlarge the slots for Market places.

ICVA
• On the Market places, we can suggest enlarging the slots.
• We will see more information during the refugee week, before the GRF, let’s see for NGOs’ what it means.
• Also, a number of NGOs’ are asking what to do events in parallel to the GRF.
• Badge concerns. UN badge will not give access to all the sessions, a specific badge for the conference will be issued.

Norwegian Refugee Council
• Official invitation is for two delegates.
• UNHCR said that there will be flexible regarding the size.
• Is there a registration limit? Is there a review process?
• On pledges that have been made. Can we see the pledges made, sign-on? It will help to reinforced mutual reinforcing pledges.

ICVA
• Pledges are not public, there were supposed to be online.
• 30 November is the deadline to send pledges to UNHCR to be showcased during the Forum. So, UNHCR has one month to do the matching.

Act Alliance
• Disenchanted with the process. It raised expectations with the co-sponsoring meetings and ideas, pledges, stakeholders to come together; what will happen afterward?

ICVA
• Plus, with the end of the co-sponsoring meeting group, what does it mean in terms of follow-up?

Norwegian Refugee Council
• No more than five, six Member States official co-sponsors. So, in terms of which NGOs you will be approached is limited, in reference to what UNHCR said ‘you can reach out States’.
• Everyone is at the stage to figure out where are the pledges now.

ICVA
• We can organize some meetings. For instance, on Solutions, a meeting with Member States to discuss about pledges matching, options on what UNHCR could do, hopefully, the third preparatory meeting on 14th November will be a source of information.
• Suggest NGOs to indicate the pledges they want to commit, if they are looking for partners in the Annex of the NGO statement that will be read at the Third preparatory meeting and coordinated by ICVA.

Good Neighbors International
• ILO mentioned they have a lot of best practices but are not yet at the stage to pledge. Pledges will come even after 14th November.
• Is there a contact with UNHCR to discuss on the Spotlight Sessions and other events?

Norwegian Refugee Council
• Know that Oxfam has received request by UNHCR about merging events.

RefugePoint
• We have not been approached.

ICVA
• Would be good to raise the issue next week at the co-sponsoring meeting on Solutions on what do we do with co-sponsorship meeting stopping?
• Yesterday there was a GRF meeting in Uganda refereeing to pledges. ICVA tries to have more information from UNHCR and local NGOs’.

Norwegian Refugee Council
• The workshop in Uganda was awareness raising not focused on the content.

Good Neighbors International
• GNI was contacted by the Dutch Government on Jobs and livelihoods to try to look at something beyond GRF. Do not know if it is linked with UNHCR?
Norwegian Refugee Council
- CRRF meeting sooner it seems that Kenya might not attend.

APRRN
- Invitation sent for the Third Preparatory meeting?

ICVA
- Not yet.