Forced Migration Working Group

Online
31 May 2021 (15:00-16:30)


Agenda

1. Debrief and way forward on the 2021 UNHCR ExCom Conclusion
2. Climate Change, Disaster and Displacement
3. AoB
   - UNHCR-NGO Monthly Consultations
   - UNHCR-NGOs Regional Consultations in Europe
   - World Bank meetings

• Still full online Forced Migration Working Group meeting and it will continue at the moment as the new guidance from the Swiss authorities (issued end of May) are not yet completely conducive to a return to in-person meetings.

1. Debrief and way forward on the 2021 UNHCR ExCom Conclusion

• The 2021 ExCom Conclusion is on “Protection and Durable Solutions in the Context of a Public Health Emergency”. Very much influenced by the current pandemic but also looking forward.
• Debrief on the 10 May briefing organized by ICVA and UNHCR on 2021 ExCom Conclusion [brief notes shared ahead of this meeting]. Welcome your analysis of the briefing.
• The ExCom Rapporteur, Dr. Gregor Schotten from Germany and UNHCR has shown openness and interest in having a continued exchange with NGOs on the topic of the Conclusion and welcome NGOs inputs on the draft of the Conclusion. Is there is an appetite among NGOs to continue exchanging with the Rapporteur and ideas on actions that could be taken?
• One option is another meeting with the Rapporteur for NGOs to provide inputs and exchange on the zero draft once it is available. [Note that the zero draft was since then shared with NGOs who joined the 10 May briefing. It can be shared with other NGOs ‘on demand’. Please contact us if interested].
• Finally, there is the option of having an NGO statement on the Oral update on ExCom Conclusion(s) at the July Standing Committee. It could be framed around the six topics of the Conclusion: 1. Inclusive policies and access to health care; 2. International cooperation and responsibility/burden-sharing; 3. Fundamental protection and International Law: limitation of entry, of movements, of access to asylum; 4. Wider impact of public health emergency: in particular on vulnerable people, elderly people, persons with disabilities; 5. Durable Solutions; 6. Contributions of the people of concerns.
• We would, however, need a volunteer NGO to develop a draft.
• ExCom Conclusions have not been developed for some time (last was 2017); there is no guaranteed space for NGOs in the process. It is up to ExCom Rapporteur to engage with NGOs.
• In 2017, the ExCom Rapporteur was from Switzerland, and the topic was “Machine-readable travel documents”. There was one broad meeting and the a few NGOs were invited in-person to look at the draft of the ExCom Conclusion and exchanged with the Rapporteur.
• Traditionally at the closing of UNHCR-NGO Annual Conclusions, the ExCom Rapporteur intervened, and it was used as an opportunity for the Rapporteur to brief NGOs about the Conclusion process and the progress made. This year, the process is different, as there are Regional Consultations and no Annual Consultations. There are the monthly consultations, but it is not in the thinking for the moment to liaise with the rapporteur. It is not impossible, if you think useful, we could suggest that to UNHCR Partnership Section.
• Welcome your suggestions.

Women’s Refugee Commission
• In the past, NGOs were able to read the draft and present NGO comments around areas that could be improved and finally, there was an opportunity for States to ask questions to NGOs.
• The ExCom Conclusion is an important way of setting soft law and NGOs should be able to influence much more even though some States do not necessarily want it.
• WRC suggested to have a small group of NGOs to gather NGOs inputs on the zero draft.

ICVA
• We will follow-up with UNHCR to share the draft of the ExCom Conclusion to NGOs and see options to welcome comments. Once received we can discuss in a small group of NGOs.
• **UNHCR Standing Committee of July**: three NGO statements were circulated for the first round of inputs. The statements are on the Note on International Protection including Solutions, recent NGO inputs on trends on externalization in Europe would be useful in this statement. Related to the topic, shared the new annex to UNHCR note on the externalization of international protection. The second statement is on Statelessness; The third statement is on the Oral update on the preparations for the High-Level Officials Meeting. **We welcome your written inputs.**
• Recently, at a meeting between UNHCR and NGOs, the Director of UNHCR Bureau of Europe thanks the NGOs for the quality of the NGO statement on Europe delivered at March Standing Committee this year and insisted on the relevance and the complementarity of the NGO statements on Europe and other agenda items such as International Protection with UNHCR Bureau of Europe intervention during the Standing Committees.

2. Climate Change, Disaster and Displacement
• There is an increased level of NGO reports, activities around the issue. The 2021 IOM International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) was on Accelerating integrated action on sustainable development: migration, the environment and climate change; the newly released work plan for the UN Network on Migration includes a new Thematic ‘Priority’ on displacement and migration. We are also waiting for IOM launch of their Strategy on Migration, Environment, and Climate Change on the issue [since the meeting, IOM shared the draft on their website].
During the January 2021 UNHCR-NGO Monthly Consultations on operationalizing UNHCR Strategic Climate Action Framework, there was the idea of identifying NGO actors in regions that are already working on the topic and get suggestions on what would be the right template for action plans that should be developed at the regional level. The idea to develop action plans in 2021 from the regions will not take place before 2022 and one reason is that the Regional Bureaus did not plan for it for 2021.

In relation to that, the Regional Consultations this year will also focus on two common topics: on refugee inclusion, local integration and localization and climate action that can be linked with the UNHCR Strategic Climate Action Framework. It will be an opportunity to start the discussion, get suggestions on what the action plans should be, what could be the process in regions, etc. Andrew Harper’s teams might provide guidance to develop the sessions.

Welcome your views and sharing of information.

Act Alliance

- The Climate, Migration, and Displacement Platform (CMDP) is a collective of about 35 NGOs which came together during the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) negotiations, 3 years ago to make sure the language in the Compact would reflect the needs to address the impacts of climate change on migration.
- The launch of the IOM Strategy is pending. There was a process over the past year to work on it. The draft of the Strategy was shared with few States, UN agencies, NGOs.
- IOM seems to be positioning itself internally to signal that climate change needs to be mainstreamed throughout their policy and operations departments although various IOM Bureaus have not worked on the topic and some countries are more advanced than others.
- The other important aspect is to signal to Member States, including donors, that IOM is well placed to lead and to coordinate on this within the UN system.
- The original idea was to officially launch the IOM Strategy and then feed into the discussions however we don’t have insight information on why it has not been released yet. Maybe there was a delay especially because of the US position, but the expectation was that now potential obstacles in the Strategy might have been removed.
- IOM IDM last week was part of an attempt to discuss the issue with States and other stakeholders. It was a high-level participation and there was an attempt to broadcast information related to the topic, but did not give a sense that there were a lot of very concrete ideas or directions from States or other stakeholders.
- The UN Migration Network launched its new work plan for 2021-2022. It is the continuation from the previous years including the work on the GCM implementation. The whole work plan is a living document, work in progress.
- There is new work that will be undertaken on climate change. The three activity areas mentioned are 1) to develop practical guidance for COP 26. 2) to provide a forum for dialogue, practices, and collaboration 3) to join messaging among network members, collaborators on climate change and migration.
- A meeting was organized in April 2021 by UNFCCC, ILO, IOM and the UN Migration Network Secretariat on Climate Change and Migration with several NGOs.
- How formal this group will be, is still a bit up in the air. Previously there were working groups formed which then had regular meetings, but no indication yet or follow-up on this 1st formal meeting.
UNHCR was on the call, did not participate in the discussion but were listening. It is something for NGOs to keep an eye on in the development of common messages: UNHCR should have a more proactive approach to the Network, as an opportunity to make progress.

There were few concrete pieces of work discussed, including for example from the Platform on Disaster Displacement which is planning to do a mapping of how the implementation of the GCM is addressing various climate change issues.

ICVA

Wondering what the results and follow-up to the survey shared after the meeting on Climate Change and Migration organized in April 2021 are.

CMDP member (as exceptional invitee for this meeting)

Also wondering about the survey. ICVA, CMDP and a variety of other NGOs responded to the survey, but there is no feedback back yet.

The workstream is being led by the UNFCCC. Coco Warner from the UNFCCC Secretariat is taking the lead. She has been doing the presentations since December. IOM is the co-lead but out it is quite a complicated balancing act for them: IOM is coordinating for GCM implementation; IOM is an agency with a migration environment and climate change program and an institutional strategy coming up.

It seems there is a lot of efforts on the part of the agencies which work together around these issues in various institutional settings, at national and sometimes regional and then also at global level but not in any well-coordinated way.

Specifically, to the UN Migration Network there will be a focus on coherence with the work of the Task Force on Displacement and in the expert group work under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts.

There is an added value of progressing on the issue because a whole of government approach will be required at the national level and at all levels. Coordination across the different responsible ministries and work in the context of the UN Migration Network would bring in the government representatives into the conversation with their counterparts when the UNFCCC conversations are followed by different members of government.

There may be a will to reach different constituencies, getting beyond silos and working on common messages and approaches. There were also some references to that in some of the IOM IDM sessions but also in the opening session.

During the IDM, there was a lot of good but very abstract talk that is going to be extremely difficult to translate into practical action. The context for actions is so different.

On international migration policy, the most difficult at the moment are pathways or regular migration with the COVID-19 pandemic context and the already lack of political will.

Disappointing to note that the UNMN climate change and migration workstream mentions objective 2 which is addressing adverse drivers and objective 7 which is addressing and reducing vulnerabilities in migration but does not mention objective 5 which is about adapting more flexible pathways for regular migration opportunities.

FYI, the climate vulnerable forum countries have called – as well as a wide range of stakeholders – for a new UN a special rapporteur on climate change and human rights, given that the protection discussion is lacking, or it is not necessarily moving forward in some of the forms where climate and displacement and distress migration are being addressed. It would be interesting to know whether UNHCR has any position on this but also whether ICVA members
are part of the effort coming up in the 47th session of the Human Rights Council to further press for this mandate. See:

ICVA
- We haven’t seen any outcome for this IOM IDM? [since the meeting, IOM shared the outcome].
- Agree that there was a lack of concrete elements and suggestions during the IDM with a lot of good sentiments and principles but not too much on details and implementation.
- On UNNM, we could ask for a follow-up on the survey and reach out to some NGOs that were there and ask if they have information.

Act Alliance
- We expect to have a summarized IDM report. The discussions were abstract so not sure what the report will contain.

IDMC
- On the survey, we also filled it and we were wondering what happened to it. We reached out to IOM two weeks ago and heard back that they received 35 submissions; they are in the process of coordinating between IOM and UNFCCC to see how to best respond; and are looking through the submissions to see who wants to participate in each sub-working groups. We should expect to hear back from them soon. [Since then, the UNNM has indeed started contacting stakeholders who had filled the survey.]
- On the Task Force on Displacement, on which Refugees International is sitting, there seems to be a lot of overlap between the new thematic priority of the UNNM or what they suggest as the new thematic priority and the work already done under the Task Force on Displacement.

ICVA
- Welcome suggestions on the topic and elements not covered. We will also continue being engaged with UNHCR Framework as much as we can and share information also with NGOs.
- ICVA roots is as a humanitarian NGO networking so we try to navigate the links between human rights and humanitarian, but we do not have the capacity to be active on all those sides: however, interesting information on the HR Council and we will be happy to share more information with the group and see if there are any suggestions. Several of our members are involved in those processes. Open for them to provide elements they might have.
- During the last UNHCR-NGO Monthly Consultations, UNHCR flagged their new UNHCR’s Human Rights Engagement Strategy, there is a connection with the question and UNHCR engagement with human rights institutions.

3. AoB
- UNHCR-NGO Monthly Consultations. Next UNHCR-NGO Monthly Consultations is on 8 June on Child Protection, covering May Consultations that could not be planned due to a clash with the ICVA Annual Conference. The objectives are to enhance child protection programming, including
capacities and expertise in refugee settings in terms of staffing, skills development, technical guidance, funding, and overall prioritization of protection of children, and its implications on UNHCR-NGO relationships; related recommendations.

- June UNHCR-NGOs Monthly Consultation will be on **Wednesday 30 June** on the preparations of the High-Level Officials Meeting and the Global Refugee Forum follow-up at 15:00 (CEST). Discussions are ongoing UNHCR on the content.

- **UNHCR-NGOs Regional Consultations in Europe.** A save the dates to NGOs should come soon. The joint theme for the annual regional NGO consultations this year is around localization of humanitarian action and engagement with communities in the COVID-19 context and climate change-induced displacement.

- We started the process to exchange with ECRE and UNHCR Regional Bureau of Europe on the objectives, format, dates, participation, agenda. The exchange is also based on the series of meetings with NGOs organized since 2020 between ECRE, UNHCR Europe, ICVA.

- Beyond the save the dates that should come soon, we also hope more information will follow and we will share it with NGOs.

- The Regional Bureau for Europe suggested departing from the traditional one-off event format. Instead, it is envisaged to host a series of Consultations.

- **World Bank online meetings.** You might have followed the meeting organized with the World Bank in May and ICVA members on *inter alia* IDA19, the Refugee Review Policy Framework.

- A second meeting will be organized with World Bank-ICVA members meeting on the Bank approach to internal displacement on Tuesday 15 June 2021, 15:00 Geneva time.

- The recent [report from the World Bank](#) that is going to be discussed at the meeting of 15 June focused on displacement related to conflicts but explain a broader approach to support those displaced due to natural disasters and the effect of climate change.

- We have been approached by the World Bank Group-UNHCR Joint Data Center (JDC) to organize a meeting with them for the JDC present and discuss the JDC strategy and work program with civil society. You may remember they had a process to gather inputs on their draft strategy and the idea is now to present it to CSOs. Will inform you about the upcoming date and invitation [invitation shared to NGOs since the meeting. **Date of the meeting: 1 July / 14:30 CEST – 8:30 EDT**]