



# Translating commitments to action

ICVA Annual Conference  
26 March 2019, Geneva

#ICVAConference2019

## CONCEPT NOTE

The current environment in which NGOs and other humanitarian actors operate is fundamentally changing. In many parts of the world where humanitarians are working, respect for humanitarian principles is eroding and so too is the NGOs space to operate. The pressure for humanitarians to align with development and peace priorities are mounting. How many commitments have been made through the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, through the Grand Bargain, the Localization discussions, the New York Declaration and the UN reform processes, among others? As NGOs compete for scarce resources, schisms in the community have intensified, particularly related to the localization discussion. These trends require safe spaces for diverse NGOs to come together to discuss their differences, learn from one another, share solutions and help one another. Now it's time to take a hard look at how and what we, as an NGO community, should be doing to translate these commitments into action while putting people at the centre. ICVA's 2019 Annual Conference will provide a space (*convene*) to ICVA members and stakeholders to:

1. Analyze organisational and country-specific experiences of what change is required – technical, political and cultural. Identify what changes have already been made by organisations since these commitments were made and how they have been and/or are implemented (*analyzing and explaining*)
2. Explore what form of support is required to NGOs to spur these changes to translate commitments into actions, and for those who have made changes, what they would require to further improve practices and processes (*support*)
3. Consider ways for NGOs to best connect to initiatives in-line with the focus areas of ICVA's Strategic Plan 2019-2021:
  - a. Forced Migration (GCR + CRRF + GCM),
  - b. Humanitarian Coordination (IASC + NGO Fora),
  - c. Humanitarian Financing (Grand Bargain + Less Paper More Aid) and
  - d. Navigating Change, Cross Cutting Issues (Nexus + Localization + Safeguarding and protecting affected persons) and other stakeholders and networks (*connecting*)
4. Facilitate NGOs to have increased opportunities to contribute and influence policy changes and practices at global level (*influencing and advocating*)

### Approach

This interactive conference will build on positive work in the field, stimulate thinking, explore the changing roles of humanitarian actors and review change execution to narrow the gap between commitments and action. Speakers will be selected based on their relevant field experience. The Annual Conference and additional meetings on 27 and 28 March will give an opportunity for participants to interact, share and engage with Geneva-based influencers, governments and policy-makers.

### Objectives

The conference aims to provide participants:

- A better understanding of *what type of change is required* to translate commitments to action,
- Awareness regarding *what type of change and how it is already taking place* within the NGO community,
- Suggestions on *how the NGO community can prioritize changes* at the technical, political and cultural level and *what form of support is required* to make these changes a reality,
- *Implications for the humanitarian community* when making these changes and *how to adapt and manage* when translating commitments into action.

The conference's outcome document will capture key learning from the event and look at opportunities for future collaboration, including incorporating outcomes into a learning stream in 2019.

**Background** ICVA's briefing papers on the [New Way of Working](#), the path towards a [Global Compact on Refugees](#), the [Grand Bargain](#), the [World Bank](#), on [Localization](#) and [Civil Society Space Scoping study](#) and ALNAP's [Transforming Change report](#) will be useful pre-reading materials in advance of the conference.

**Registration** for the Annual Conference will be open from mid-September 2018. Please visit <https://www.icvanetwork.org/icva-annual-conference-2019> for more information.

