

AGENDA OF SIDE MEETINGS
Annual Consultations with Non-Governmental Organizations
29 June – 1 July 2009
Palais des Nations Geneva
Switzerland

Monday 29 June 2009
Palais des Nations, Geneva

13h30 – 14h30 Room XIX

The Search for Regional Solutions: The 10 Point Plan of Action and Rohingyas in Asia

Jean-Marie Garelli, Senior Desk Officer, Asia Bureau, UNHCR

Chris Lewa, The Arakan Project

Alice Nah, Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network

José Riera, Senior Policy Adviser, Policy Development and Evaluation Service, UNHCR

Anna Samson, APRRN

This meeting will use the case study of Rohingya refugees across the Asia-Pacific region to discuss more broadly the issue of developing regional solutions to protracted refugee situations and ensuring protection outcomes in mixed migration flows.

In particular, speakers will:

(a) provide some background to the situation confronting the Rohingya in states across the region and the context of their migration, including endemic SGBV, arbitrary detention, torture, precarious livelihoods and statelessness;

(b) discuss UNHCR's *10-Point-Plan of Action on Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration Flows* and assess its practical application to the Rohingya case;

(c) outline the preferred basic elements of "regional solutions" to the Rohingya and other protracted refugee situations - this will include a discussion of the limitations of the 10-point-plan, the Bali Process, and strategic use of resettlement; and

(d) begin to develop strategies for NGOs to work together and with UNHCR to promote protection-centred regional solutions to refugee crises in the Asia-Pacific.

13h30 – 14h30 Room XXII

Integrated Solutions to Cooking Needs and Safe Water

Sonia Heptonstall, Solar Cookers International

Joyce Jett, Solar Cookers International

Valentine Ndibalema, Senior Technical Officer, UNHCR

Faustine Odaba, Solar Cookers International

Derk Rijks, KoZon

The focus of the meeting is to discuss how food preparation needs and the provision of potable water can be met through an integrated approach of using simple technologies. Approximately one third of the world's population still cooks over open fires utilizing traditional fuels such as wood, charcoal and other forms of biomass. Through the utilization of solar energy and solar cookers combined with fuel efficient stoves, hay baskets or fireless cookers, dependence on traditional fuels can be substantially reduced while decreasing environmental devastation and drastically reduce smoke related illnesses. Furthermore, utilizing solar energy to pasteurize water by use of the solar cooker can reduce water borne diseases such as those caused by e-coli, Hepatitis A and Rotaviruses.

13h30 – 14h30 Room XXIII

Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Refugee Rights: A Protection Gap?

Jesse Bernstein, Researcher

Neil Grungras, Organization for Refuge, Asylum & Migration

Rachel Levitan, Helsinki Citizens Assembly

Anne Mwangi-Wambugu, HIAS Refugee Trust Kenya

George Okoth-Obbo, Director, Division of International Protection Services, UNHCR

Human rights violations perpetrated against people due to their real or perceived gender identity and sexual orientation constitute an entrenched pattern of serious concern affecting many millions of individuals around the globe. Many of those with differing gender or sexual identities live in constant fear, driving them to search for safe and secure refuge outside of their national borders. This Side Panel will explore the challenges in providing protection and asylum to refugees and asylum-seekers on the grounds of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. In particular, the panel will identify specific protection issues across a range of thematic areas which require further development and analysis in light of the experience of LGBT refugees and asylum seekers. These areas include: refugee status determination, protection of social/economic rights and physical security in the country of first asylum, detention, and resettlement. The Side Panel will also draw attention to global human rights developments in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity, and will consider the ability of UNHCR and the NGO community to provide a basis for improved protection for these sexual and gender minorities. Finally, the panel will highlight UNHCR's 2008 Guidance Note and on practical ways to benefit from and move forward on its recommendations.

Tuesday 30 June 2009
Palais des Nations, Geneva

8h30 – 9h30 Room XIX

The Forgotten Refugees in Latin America

Msgr. Hector Fabio Henao, Caritas Colombia

Sr. Janette Ferreira, Caritas Ecuador

Martina Liebsch, Caritas Internationalis

Merida Morales-O'Donnell, Director, Bureau for the Americas, UNHCR

Carlos Santos Repetto, Permanent Mission of Ecuador

Rationale: When it comes to refugees and IDPs in Latin America the continent is often forgotten. The issue of refugees and IDPs from Colombia is meanwhile affecting the whole region. Currently Colombia has one of the largest population of IDPs (close to 4 million people). Nearly 70 % of IDPs and refugees live in urban settings: capital cities and large or medium-sized towns. Displaced women and children are particularly hit by the violence. UNHCR reports that up to 70 % of Colombians refugees and IDPs live below the poverty line. The responses are not at all satisfying. The commitments made in the context of the Mexico Plan of Action are not yet implemented.

Expectations: Raise awareness about the Colombian refugees in other Latin American Countries and elaborate recommendations on ways of strengthening cooperation with relevant stakeholders on how to better address the regional implications of this humanitarian crisis.

8h30 – 9h30 Room XXII

Launch of the 2009 World Refugee Survey

Anna Samson, Asia Forum for Human Rights and Development
Lavinia Limon, US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
Temmee Lee, SUARAM

Ruvendrini Menikdiwela, Deputy Director, Division of International Protection Services, UNHCR

Panelists will introduce *World Refugee Survey 2009* and discuss reporting and evaluation of refugee protection and advocacy around the world. Of special note, will be the *Survey's* transition to an interactive, wiki format to allow more immediate, real-time reporting and action. Copies of WRS09 will be available.

8h30 – 9h30 Room XXIII

Environmental Management and Human Displacement: How are we doing?

Jock Baker, CARE International
David Stone, ProAct Network

Environmental impacts are seen in virtually every refugee, returnee or IDP operation, both as a result of conflicts and natural disasters. Some may be short-term but many cause significant long-term impact – something which climate change is already magnifying.

This session will explore how and why environmental considerations should be addressed in a timely and consistent manner from the start of a refugee or IDP emergency, drawing on recent experiences in supporting IASC clusters and other examples.

Examples of good practice will be highlighted while at the same time describing how “business as usual” approach of international agencies may no longer be appropriate or acceptable in many countries. Lessons learned suggest that more appropriate and sustainable environmental initiatives may be needed. But is there sufficient willingness or understanding within the humanitarian sector to make the necessary changes?

13h30 – 14h30 Room XXIII

Defining UNHCR's SGBV Agenda 2010-2011

Heidi Leihmann, International Rescue Committee
George Okoth-Obbo, Director, Division of International Protection Services, UNHCR

UNHCR seeks to advance its achievements and address the constraints of prevention of, and response to sexual and gender based violence (SGBV), which as one of the most challenging protection concerns for women and girls. UNHCR intends doing this through the elaboration of a clearly defined agenda for the work on prevention and response for UNHCR 2010-2012. The aim of the three-year SGBV agenda is to improve the Organization's ability to work in partnership to provide protection for people of concern. Through this session UNHCR envisages drawing on the inspiration and experience of the NGO community who are at the frontline of addressing SGBV. As the session will take place during the Annual NGO/UNHCR consultations 2009 in Geneva, it avails NGO partners a strategic opportunity to share their views on the direction that UNHCR's work to address SGBV should take.

Wednesday 1 July 2009

Palais des Nations Geneva

8h30 – 9h30 Room XXII

Alternatives to Immigration Detention

Mary Meg McCarthy, Heartland Alliance's National Immigrant Justice Centre
Grant Mitchell, International Detention Coalition
Jerome Phelps, London Detainee Support Group
Jane Rasmussen, Senior Legal Officer, Division of International Protection Services, UNHCR
Pieter Stockmans, Flemish Refugee Action

Background:

Governments around the world are increasingly using detention as a migration management tool, with hundreds of thousands of men, women and children detained in conditions falling below international standards and that deny basic rights. Where a government intends to detain a person for immigration-related reasons, it should first consider and pursue alternatives before detention, in compliance with international and regional human rights standards. However many governments that utilize alternatives to detention, focus on restrictive or intrusive options, or on different forms of detention, such as electronic tagging or family detention centres.

Expectation:

Individuals and groups are invited to share experiences of examples of alternatives to detention, good practice, challenges and lessons learned and to input directly into a handbook being written by the International Detention Coalition for States and civil society on alternatives to detention. The session aims to draw out the key components required to implement community-based alternatives to detention that ensure the rights, dignity and wellbeing of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, while meeting government and community expectations.

8h30 – 9h30 Room XXIII

***Implementing the Conclusion on Women and Girls at Risk
Economic Empowerment: One Way to Prevent and Respond to SGBV***

Eileen Pittaway, University New South Wales
Naoko Obi, Chief, Community Development Gender Equality and Children Section, UNHCR
Joan Timoney, Womens Refugee Commission
Geraldine Doney, Asia Women's Human Rights Council

The Conclusion on the Protection of Women and Girls at Risk was adopted at the 2006 ExCom. An International NGO working group formed to monitor the use of the Conclusion and to ensure that the commitments made in the Conclusion were implemented. They will present a report of the progress to date and the challenges to its full realization. Discussion will focus on strategies to improve the protection of women and girls and will focus on the issue of livelihoods as a protection measure.

Livelihoods interventions in UNHCR allow refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people (IDPs) to protect and build their own resources, and forge their own futures. This is critical to maintain their sense of purpose and normality, and their dignity.

Self-reliance amongst displaced women has also a strong protection aspect. Self reliance give women freedom from dependency, empower them and gain them respect and recognition. Self reliance enhances their capacity to support their families and their preparedness for return, local integration, or resettlement. Women who suffered SGBV can re-gain confidence in becoming self supporting and reintegrating themselves into the community, as active part of it.