ICVA Bulletin

Highlights from March 2024



Dear Reader,

In this bulletin, we bring you the latest news concerning our focus areas: forced migration, humanitarian financing, and humanitarian coordination. We continue to transform the ICVA network to be more engaged in operationalising principled humanitarian action, in addressing the impact of climate change on humanitarian action, pursuing being globally distributed and locally rooted, being diverse, inclusive, and living our values, and proactively engaging in agile collaborative partnerships. Check more on the transformations of our ICVA 2030 Strategy. We also share our updates from our regional hubs and so much more.

Don't miss to follow us on X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, and YouTube for more updates.

Message from ICVA

In a world marked by constant change and evolving challenges, the need for collaboration, trusted partnerships and shared understanding is more critical than ever.

Our recent <u>annual conference</u>, held on 21 March, in Geneva, focused on rethinking coordination and addressing trust erosion in humanitarian action. Central to our discussions was the contemplation on the efficacy of our aid delivery mechanisms and the necessity for redefining coordination amidst navigating uncomfortable scenarios.

We deliberated on the type of humanitarian system we aspire to operate within and examined how NGOs are effectively delivering aid to vulnerable populations. It's imperative that we scrutinise structured coordination systems, determining whether they remain aligned with our objectives and values. We must have the courage to acknowledge when these systems no longer serve our needs and engage in dialogue to effect necessary changes. We considered whether the humanitarian principles are indeed manifested in our actions, particularly in regions fraught with conflict and crises such as Ukraine, Gaza, Mali, Sudan and Burkina Faso.

During our General Assembly on 20 March, we witnessed the election of a new board by the members of ICVA. We extend our trust to these newly appointed board members, who will now shoulder the responsibility of guiding ICVA forward. Special acknowledgment goes to Nimo Hassan of Somali NGO Consortium, our new Chair, who will lead both the board and the General Assembly.

Looking ahead, I am eager to collaborate with the new board, leveraging their expertise to address the challenges that lie ahead. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the outgoing Chair, Jane Backhurst, and the

board members who navigated us through turbulent times, including the trials of the COVID-19 pandemic and crises in Gaza, Sudan, and Ukraine.

Furthermore, we express our appreciation to the members for endorsing the Strategic Priorities 2025 -2027, approving the revised Statues, and for reaffirming our commitment to humanitarian principles and standards, including the Core Humanitarian Standard.

In unity and solidarity, let us forge ahead, resolute in our commitment to humanitarian action and the pursuit of a more equitable and compassionate world.

Dr Jamie Munn

Executive Director | ICVA

ICVA Updates

1. ICVA's 19th General Assembly and Annual Conference

19th General Assembly



The General Assembly was held on 20 March, with the participation of 77 member organizations in person and over 100 casting votes online. The members adopted the Strategic Priorities 2025-2027, approved amendments to the ICVA Statutes, and reaffirmed their commitment to humanitarian principles and standards. Notably, a new Board was elected with Ms Nimo Hassan elected as the ICVA Chair.

The incoming Board brings a wealth of expertise, energy, and commitment to navigate the challenging humanitarian environment. We thank the outgoing Board and Chair, Ms Jane Backhurst, for their excellent work over the past three years.





ICVA Annual Conference

The <u>ICVA Annual Conference</u>, held on 21 March in Geneva, brought together over 250 ICVA members and partners around the theme "Rethinking Coordination: Accountability, Credibility and Trust in Principled Humanitarian Action."

Session 1 delved into the complex dynamics of trust among humanitarian actors, exploring how approaches for resolving humanitarian dilemmas can shape trust positively or negatively. Drawing on the insights of ICVA's Principled Humanitarian Action Steering Committee (PHASC), discussions centered on the application of humanitarian principles in complex contexts such as Iraq, Yemen and Afghanistan. In the second session, participants engaged in a frank discussion regarding the challenges faced by NGOs in fully responding to existing operational contexts and strategies for enhancing humanitarian assistance delivery to those in need.

The conference concluded with the global launch of the revised <u>Core Humanitarian Standard</u>, signaling a renewed commitment among aid actors to uphold standards and be accountable to people affected by crisis.

2. Staff Update

We welcome our new team member: Elisa Baudot as the Head of Humanitarian Financing.

3. ICVA 2023 Annual Report is Out



The report highlights a year of resilience and collaboration and serves as a testament to the dedication of our members, partners and entire ICVA community. Together we are shaping a more effective, principled and collaborative humanitarian response.

The report showcases the work and activities of ICVA and its members throughout 2023. It encapsulates our efforts in contributing to meaningful partnership, collaboration and responsiveness to the evolving humanitarian landscape. Read the <u>Annual report</u>.

4. We are Hiring

We are hiring two consultants to develop a barometer of the localization of humanitarian aid in Burkina Faso and Mali. Check out more details on our <u>website</u>.

Forced Migration

5. ICVA and World Bank Consultation

On 11 March, ICVA and the World Bank Group held an informal consultation on the companion piece to the <u>World Development Report (WDR) 2023</u>: Migrants, Refugees, and Societies entitled Migration: Africa's Untapped Potential. The event was attended by ICVA members and featured presentations from World Bank colleagues Federica Marzo, Senior Economist; Quy-Toan Do, Lead Economist and WDR Codirector; and Samik Adhikari, Senior Economist. Following an introduction by ICVA's Head of Forced Migration, the World Bank Group provided an overview of the companion piece and its emerging key messages. ICVA members present had the opportunity to pose questions and provide comments on the companion piece.

6. 89th Meeting of UNHCR's Standing Committee

On 13-15 March 2024, the 89th meeting of UNHCR's Standing Committee took place. More information on the agenda, related documents and presentations are available here. ICVA coordinated six collective NGO statements which were delivered under the relevant agenda items during the Standing Committee. The collective NGO statements were on Africa, delivered by Action for the Needy; the Americas, delivered by Save the Children; Asia and the Pacific, delivered by the <a href="https://example.com/Asia Displacement Solutions Platform (ADSP); Europe, delivered by the <a href="https://example.com/Jesus/

On 26 March, the first reference group meeting was held since the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) on the <u>Multistakeholder Pledge: Advancing Localisation in Displacement and Statelessness Responses</u>, which ICVA co-convenes with UNHCR. The meeting focused on strategising the role of the reference group, outlined steps to mobilise other entities to join the pledge, and presented a roadmap to maintain

momentum among existing pledging entities in the run-up to the High-Level Officials Meeting (HLOM) in December 2025.

For more information, please contact davina.said@icvanetwork.org and loise.dairocheteau@icvanetwork.org.

Financing

7. The Grand Bargain Beyond 2023

Grand Bargain Secretariat Update

Current updates from the Grand Bargain Secretariat can be found here.

8. Pooled Funds

Throughout March different State Donor Agencies reached out to ICVA to discuss Pooled Funds and their further potential to support the work of NGOs, especially national and local NGOs. ICVA input to such discussions was based on its previous researches, and in particular the <u>Pooled Funding at a Crossroads</u> and <u>Pooled Funding Models</u>.

For more information, please contact <u>manon.glaser@icvanetwork.org.</u>

Coordination

9. Updates related to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)

Emergency Directors Group (EDG)

The EDG met with Reena Ghelani in her new role as IASC Climate Crisis Coordinator for the El Nino/La Nina Response. Key follow-up points included discussions on funding mechanisms, data-sharing, transparent collaboration, harvesting climate success stories, and committing to pragmatic approaches to help field operations focus programmatically on resolving challenges faced by selected countries. There was emphasis on the need for preparedness over response to reduce the scope/scale of shocks, merging fragmented financing frameworks, and mobilising additional resources for action that spanned the humanitarian-development-peace-climate nexus. Other points raised included the importance of context-driven interventions, engagement with affected governments and the private sector, and building coalitions to address humanitarian priorities more effectively.

The EDG also met to discuss the situation in Sudan, including plans for a forthcoming EDG mission, and to hear from the mission team lead on the follow up to the recent Peer to Peer mission to Mozambique.

IASC Deputies Group





On the 6 March, the IASC Deputies Group met in Kenya to discuss the recommendations from the IDP review and the boundary-setting process. Updates were also provided on other priority areas of work, including climate crisis, humanitarian financing, and lack of acceptance and erosion of trust.

Prior to the meeting, the Deputies visited Mathare informal settlement. This visit provided an opportunity to discuss with local NGOs and communities the chronic vulnerabilities and the multiple, often seasonal, shocks people are exposed to (i.e., spikes in food prices, risks of floods and fires, health hazards), as well as solutions explored at the local level.

The Operational Policy and Advocacy Group (OPAG)

The Operational Policy and Advocacy Group (OPAG) of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) convened on 26th March 2024 to identify how OPAG can help bring key remaining Task Force deliverables to the finish line and reflect on OPAG's further ways of working through 2024. The Task Forces' mandates come to an end in June 2024. They were established as time-bound structures – reporting to the OPAG – to deliver on specific tasks under the framework of the IASC Strategic Priorities 2022-2023. The Task Forces were intended to complete their work by December 2023; however, they were extended for an additional six-months to June 2024.

The IASC Secretariat also informed OPAG members that on behalf of the ERC, the IASC secretariat is carrying out consultations with IASC members to gather views on the priorities of the IASC and the structures and working modalities required to deliver on these priorities beyond 2024.

10. The Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) In-Briefing - Resident Coordinator (RC)/HC for Chad

ICVA hosted a briefing for members globally and in the region with the incoming RC/HC for Chad Mr. François Batalingaya. This was an opportunity for members to share priority areas of attention for the RC/HC as he takes on this new role.

11. UNOCHA Flagship Initiative Learning Event

ICVA, represented by member Plan International, joined the learning event in Luxembourg on 20-21 March to hear updates from the four pilot countries (Colombia, Niger, the Philippines and South Sudan) and to discuss how this initiative may continue to develop. The learning event consisted of an in-person component, which was attended by OCHA, donors, the four RC/HCs, UN agencies, some NGOs (ICVA/Plan, Save the Children, NRC, Welthungerhilfe, Diakonie), IFRC, academia (ODI and ALNAP) and local NGOs and local government representatives. The event showed some progress during the first year of the initiative, which has been mostly conceptualisation and piloting, but also raised further questions around how this process could better complement ongoing system-wide efforts around accountability to affected people, and the need for strengthened linkages to other work ongoing in the system.

12. NGO Fora Support

ICVA Leadership Exchange



ICVA hosted its second Leadership Exchange event on 20 and 22 March in Geneva. The event brought together a diverse group of humanitarian leaders, with a particular emphasis on leaders of local NGO platforms and consortia. The aim was to provide participants with the opportunity to build relationships with international and national actors in the humanitarian sector, as well as with UN Agencies and donors. Discussions centered around the main humanitarian coordination challenges and current humanitarian crises, allowing participants to share their priorities, challenges, and needs for support.

Global Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) Onboarding Session

ICVA participated as one of four trainers in OCHA's Global HCT Onboarding session in March.

These 90 minutes sessions, organized by OCHA's HLSS (Humanitarian Leadership Strengthening Session) are offered to all new HCT members, including UN and NGO staff as well as donors with HCT seats. They aim to raise awareness of the roles and responsibilities of HCT members, and ICVA is looking forward to supporting such sessions also in the future.

Further, ICVA provides free on-demand training and coaching sessions for senior NGO personnel on engaging with the humanitarian coordination system and NGO fora governance. These sessions are primarily aimed at NGO fora directors, steering committees and HCT members, but can be tailored to individual requests.

For more information, please contact albertphilip.burger@icvanetwork.org.

13. OCHA-ICVA Advocacy and Communications Team (ACT)

In March, the ACT met and discussed the worsening humanitarian and protection crises in Gaza, Sudan, and Haiti. They also addressed the humanitarian financing crisis, where only 15% of overseas development assistance funds go towards supporting humanitarian action despite increased needs. To address the shortfall, OCHA is creating a working group with the UN and NGOs, and those interested can contact Belinda Gurd at gurd@un.org to join.

For more information, please contact eileen.morrow@icvanetwork.org.

Transforming our Network

14. Champion Principled Humanitarian Action

Principled Humanitarian Action Steering Committee (PHASC)

In March, ICVA convened a meeting for The <u>Principled Humanitarian Action Steering Committee</u> to explore effective ways of promoting principled humanitarian action concerning dilemmas and access constraints. During the meeting, Kirk Kinnell from Negotiated Resolutions presented on decision-making processes, emphasising the importance of documenting decisions to protect staff and ensure the correct level of approval. The committee is working on developing a decision-making framework and tools, case studies, simplified guidance on humanitarian principles, and a workshop methodology to be piloted in three contexts. Those interested in contributing an anonymous case study can contact eileen.morrow@icvanetwork.org.

15. Address Impacts of Climate Change on Humanitarian Action

On 6 March, ICVA held a consultation with NGOs and the COP28 Presidency on implementing the COP28 Action Agenda. The need for a strong focus on reaching local actors and communities impacted by climate change in conflict and fragile contexts was emphasised. Humanitarian NGOs provided insights on the COP28 Presidency's proposals for engaging local and community actors and requested clarification on their contribution to UNFCCC processes. Explore some of the initiatives coming out of COP28: UAE Consensus, negotiated outcomes, the Presidential Action Agenda, and the Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace.

16. Be Globally Distributed and Locally Rooted

The IASC Task Force 5 on Localization

The IASC Localization Task Force is hosting a series of webinars to discuss the practical implementation of the IASC Guidance on the meaningful participation of local actors in humanitarian coordination architecture. In January and February, webinars were held in East and South Asia, and Africa, respectively. In March, a webinar was held in Latin America and Caribbean region. Recordings and slide decks from these sessions are available in both English and Spanish. The next webinar will focus on the Middle East and North Africa region and is scheduled for 18 April 2024.

Additionally, the Task Force will be hosting an interactive session during the upcoming HNPW conference entitled "Unleashing Local Potential: Shaping the Future of Humanitarian Action - Key Insights & Recommendations from the IASC Localization Webinars". The session will take place on 10 May. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in face-to-face discussions on how to implement the IASC's Localization Guidance and share key insights from the webinars held earlier in the year. Check registration details.

For more information, please contact eman.ismail@icvanetwork.org.

17. Be Diverse, Inclusive and Live our Values

UNICEF-NGO Consultations

ICVA is co-convening with UNICEF, the NGO Consultations, a two day event taking place on 16 & 17 April in Geneva. The consultations, themed "Partnering for Children in the Climate Crisis", provide an opportunity for UNICEF and NGO partners to engage in meaningful dialogue on programmatic and policy issues in areas affected by climate change. Check more information in the dedicated webpage.

18. Proactively Engage in Agile Collaborative Partnerships

European Humanitarian Forum (EHF)

The European Humanitarian Forum took place on in Brussels from 18-19 March and was co-organized by the European Commission (DG ECHO) and Belgium in the framework of its Presidency of the Council of the EU. This edition of the EHF addressed the critical issues surrounding funding and prioritization of humanitarian aid within the challenging contexts of forgotten crises and fragile humanitarian environments.

ICVA facilitated the participation of 26 national NGO leaders at the EHF. Among them, several had the opportunity to share their insights as speakers during the event. Full information about the meeting can be seen here.

Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Weeks (HNPW)

The HNPW 2024 will be held in a hybrid format from 29 April to 10 May 2024. The first week (29 April to 3 May) will be held remotely, the second week (6 to 10 May) will be organized face-to-face at the CICG in Geneva. Registration for on-line meetings is still open. For more information and to register see the HNPW website.

For those registered to attend the in-person week of the HNPW, please note that there will be three interactive <u>sessions</u> on 6 May related to power dynamics, organizational culture, and workforce well-being. These session are based on the <u>Leading Well</u>, <u>Funding Well</u>, and <u>Working Well</u> publications. For more

Region Specific

19. Africa

West and Central Africa

Workshop on Humanitarian Coordination for Coastal Countries

On 12 March ICVA held a workshop on humanitarian coordination for NGOs in coastal countries (Benin and Togo) without a Humanitarian Response Plan. The event aimed to equip NGOs with tools to understand and engage in the coordination mechanism during emergencies. 32 participants from both countries' NGO Forums attended the workshop.

Lobby Tour for National NGO Fora in Brussels and Geneva

ICVA arranged a Lobby Tour during the European Humanitarian Forum in Brussels for Representatives from five national NGO Forums (Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria, Chad, DRC). They engaged in meetings with ECHO and the department for International Partnerships, spoke at the European Humanitarian Forum, joined a roundtable on localization by Act Alliance, and later attended ICVA's Annual Conference and the Leadership Exchange.

Regional Workshop on Humanitarian Access Analysis in the Central Sahel and Coastal Countries

On 26-27 March, ICVA helped organize a workshop focusing on analysing shared regional challenges in humanitarian access across the Central Sahel and coastal countries. The workshop, led by the Regional Task Force on Access and Humanitarian Principles co-chaired by OCHA and NRC, gathered members of access working groups from involved countries. It aimed to delve into the root causes of deteriorating humanitarian access in the region and outline actionable steps. The insights gained will be aligned with inputs from other stakeholders like think tanks and institutions to enhance them, leading to the development of a roadmap for future actions.

For more information, please contact <u>adeline.benita@icvanetwork.org</u> or fatoumata.konate@icvanetwork.org.

20. Asia and the Pacific

Pooled Fund

The Emergency Relief Coordinator has approved a new pooled fund for Asia and the Pacific, which is expected to act as a regional and complementary pooled fund to other financing mechanisms in the region. ICVA has been convening regularly with other NGO networks such as START, NEAR and ADRRN with OCHA to share best practices and input into the set up to support greater accessibility by NGOs.

Regional Accountability to Affected People (AAP) & Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Working Group

We are excited to present the updated <u>2024 work plan</u> for the <u>AAP/PSEA working group</u>, now reflecting the roles of our newly endorsed PSEA technical co-lead, Asma Saleem. Both the work plan and the proposed <u>revised TORs</u> are intended as living documents, open to your feedback throughout the year.

For more information, please contact keya.sahachaudhury@icvanetwork.org or asma.saleem@icvanetwork.org.

21. Latin America

A New Pooled Fund for Latin America

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has launched a new pooled fund for Latin America and the Caribbean. The fund will initially focus on providing support to Haiti

and Colombia, aiming to improve access to local and national organizations in Haiti and address humanitarian needs arising from conflicts and climate change in Colombia. The Fund will also help to strengthen community-centred approaches and enhance local efforts, following the model adopted in Central and West Africa.

For more information, please contact lina.gomez@icvanetwork.org.

22. MENA

Gaza Crisis

We extend our condolences to the to the families of aid workers killed in Gaza. We stand in solidarity with others in condemning any act of violence targeting humanitarian personnel.

As the crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (oPt) intensifies, 25 NGOs released a <u>statement</u> urging governments to prioritise ceasefire and ground-based humanitarian aid. With an estimated 100,000 people dead, injured, or missing, and 2.3 million living in inhumane conditions, the UN warns of famine and widespread disease outbreaks. Communication blackouts, safety concerns, and infrastructure destruction make aid distribution difficult. ICVA continues to support NGOs in MENA by connecting them with key partners, maintaining an active presence at regional advocacy groups, and continuing its deployment support to AIDA in Rafah and Jerusalem.

Nine Years On: Economic Downturn plunges Millions into Poverty in Yemen

Over 60 NGOs working in Yemen have signed a joint statement on the economic downturn and calling on the international community to respond with increased funding and support, to invest not only in the immediate needs but in the long-term recovery of Yemen.

Skills Training Workshop for Local Iraq NGOs

ICVA continued its engagement with local NGOs in Iraq and invited 20 local actors to participate in Phase II of the Skills Training. The aim is to strengthen understanding and participation of local actors in mechanisms of coordination, networking, influence, and collective advocacy.

For more information, please contact eman.ismail@icvanetwork.org or stephanie.yousef@icvanetwork.org.

Learning Opportunities

23. Free Courses - Risk Management and Funding Partnerships: ICVA and DisasterReady are offering these <u>courses</u> for humanitarian aid and development professionals to better understand how to apply risk management best practices in their daily work.

New and Noteworthy

- **24.** Transforming Tomorrow: Innovative Solutions for Children in Crisis -- Learning from Ahlan Simsim's experience in the MENA region: IRC's report highlights the achievements and recommendations of the Ahlan Simsim initiative, showing how innovative solutions can have a positive impact on children in conflict zones and serving as a blueprint for change in difficult circumstances.
- **25.** Trapped and Scarred: The Compounding Mental harm inflicted on Palestinian children in Gaza: The <u>report</u> by Save the Children provides insights into the severe mental harm inflicted on children in Gaza, with a focus on the compounding mental health crisis exacerbated by ongoing hostilities and security issues.
- **26.** Hanging in the Balance: Yemeni Children's Struggle for Education: Save the Children's report based on a survey of over 1,000 children and caregivers, reveals that despite a reduction in fighting and civilian casualties during the 10th year of conflict, 39% of school-age children are still out of school and child labor is a major cause for school dropout.
- 27. GISF Announces inaugural Board of Directors: The Board has been assembled as part of GISF's

transition to becoming an independent Community Interest Company, which was completed in February 2024. Previously, GISF was hosted by the Mines Advisory Group (MAG International).

- **28. Launch of a Localization Platform:** Terre des hommes will launch a localization platform, <u>LocalLink Hub</u>, on 25 April for the wider public and its partners. The platform will gather e-learning products and other useful resources on localization for NGOs. <u>Register</u> for the webinar.
- **29. Survey: Learning in New & Emerging Crises:** ALNAP, the UK Humanitarian Innovation Hub and Humanitarian Outcomes are conducting a survey to explore learning opportunities for improving humanitarian responses to crises. Take the <u>survey</u>.

Agenda

April 16 - 17: 2024 UNICEF-NGO Consultations: "Partnering for Children in the Climate Crisis"

April 25: Launch of LocalLink Hub, Localization Platform by Terre des hommes. Register.

April 29 to May 10: <u>Humanitarian Networks and Partnership Week</u>, remotely (April 29 to May 3) and in Geneva (May 5-10)

May 9-10: Make Your Voices Heard at the 69th UN Civil Society Conference in Nairobi. Register.

May 14: Launch of the Global Report on Internal Displacement, Geneva & online

May 27-30: CCHN Peer Workshop on Humanitarian Negotiation in MENA. Register by 10 March.

June 11-13: UNHCR-NGO Global Consultations, Geneva

June 20: World Refugee Day

June 24: Second quarterly informal briefing on the Global Compact on Refugees

July 1-3: 90th Meeting of the UNHCR Standing Committee, Geneva

August 19: World Humanitarian Day

September 4: Third quarterly informal briefing on the Global Compact on Refugees

September 12-13: 91st meeting of the UNCHR Standing Committee, Geneva

October 14-18: 75th plenary session of the UNHCR Executive Committee, Geneva

November 25: International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

December 2: Fourth quarterly informal briefing on the Global Compact on Refugees

December 3: International Day of Persons with Disabilities

December 10: Human Rights Day

December 18: International Migrants Day



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