

**2019 UNHCR Annual Consultations with NGOs**  
***‘Working together, better’***

**Concept note**

UNHCR would like to consult with all its NGO partners – from the global south and north, and amongst refugee-led organizations – on navigating the rapidly changing global refugee context. How do we use **data and evidence** to make an impact on refugee welfare? How can we harness the promise of the **global compact on refugees**, and what can we pledge to make it work? How do we maintain **integrity**, prevent **fraud** and **safeguard** those to whom we are responsible? And, as UNHCR undertakes a profound decentralization intended to place resources and decision closer to the field, how can we work with our NGO partners in a more **local** and **regional** manner?

This year’s UNHCR Annual Consultations with NGOs therefore have a three main components:

- data and evidence
- the Global Refugee Forum
- regionalization

There will also be room to discuss integrity and safeguarding.

**Theme 1: Data and evidence**

Data is central to timely, efficient and effective responses to address forced displacement. It provides the evidence base for responses and solutions, brings transparency to operations, provides information on capacities and needs of affected populations, and supports monitoring and evaluation efforts. The importance of data has spurred a number of initiatives in the humanitarian eco-system to strengthen data collection, analysis and use. These multiple endeavours require coordination and partnership among the various actors involved to promote complementarity and inter-operability, in line with the GCR’s strong call for multi-stakeholder responses to forced displacement.

The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) recognizes the importance of reliable, comparable, and timely data in refugee responses for evidence-based measures to: improve socioeconomic conditions for refugees and host communities; assess and address the impact of large refugee populations on host countries in emergency and protracted situations; and identify and plan appropriate solutions. Needs assessment and analysis of information on and with populations of concern is equally important for all humanitarian contexts and persons of concern (refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless populations alike).

Discussions will also be guided by the [Principles of Partnership](#) as well as humanitarian standards and principles. The sessions and workshops at the Consultations will be expected to come up with targeted recommendations that can be acted upon, and/or contributions that NGOs may wish to consider in the context of the GRF.

Specific elements of the data and evidence theme will be considered through dedicated sessions and workshops or through mainstreaming, as follows:

**How can data contribute to preparedness and early warning:** With protracted displacement at record-levels, the importance of preparedness and early warning is ever more crucial. UNHCR and NGOs are developing models that help identify displacement risks as a result of conflict and disaster. Using a range of diverse indicators, these models aim to predict temporal and spatial displacement patterns with a particular emphasis on vulnerability. To improve collaboration, UNHCR and NGO colleagues may:

- Review existing tools to identify triggers and impact of forced displacement;

- Outline data gaps at the onset of an emergency and ensure persons with specific needs are identified in a timely manner;
- Look towards mechanisms to overcome a siloed approach to data, often driven by privacy or confidentiality issues.

**Collaborative approaches to data collection:** Data is critical for evidence-based responses. At the global level, several data initiatives exist including the [UNHCR-World Bank Joint Data Centre](#), [IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix](#) and [OCHA's Humanitarian Data Exchange](#). While national statistical agencies drive the collection of country-level data, humanitarian NGOs too gather a range of project-level data, for example, through needs assessments. Increased synchronisation in data gathering practices can foster joint planning and coordination, and help in covering data gaps. Concurrently, it is vital that data collection and management adhere to key data protection principles and incorporate key elements of humanitarian standards including the meaningful engagement of affected populations in data gathering. In this thematic area, UNHCR and NGO colleagues may:

- Learn how to gather real-time information in an emergency and design a response plan;
- Examine how humanitarian standards can be applied locally and can improve the effectiveness of joint needs assessments;
- Consider possibilities of meaningful participation of affected populations in needs assessments.

**Evidence-based planning for collective outcomes:** Leveraging capacities of various actors is key to the success of the GCR. This is already taking place in country contexts (and some regional contexts) through the application of the CRRF. Such coordinated and focused action is also important in achieving the SDG objective of 'leaving no one behind'. In this thematic area, UNHCR and NGO colleagues may:

- Explore how data can help build complementarities between CRRF and SDG programming at the country level;
- Ensuring a common view, based on data and evidence, of which groups are being left behind and why;
- Work towards identifying collective efforts towards safe, responsible and purposeful collection, analysis and use of data for evidence-informed responses.

**Knowledge for better inclusion:** The GCR calls for a shift away from encampment towards policies that promote refugee self-reliance and inclusion in national systems. Data can not only provide the evidence base for shaping national policies that favour inclusion but can also provide knowledge about the impact and contribution of displaced populations thus helping design appropriate responses. In this thematic area, UNHCR and NGO colleagues may:

- Review opportunities to measure self-reliance outcomes over time as well as refugees' contribution to host communities;
- Explore how data can help refugees' education outcomes;
- Examine the role of data in promoting refugees' livelihoods.

**Target and identify protection needs:** Provided proper safeguards are in place, the profiling of populations of concern is fundamental to improving interventions and monitoring to address vulnerabilities and protection needs of persons of concern. This particularly requires ensuring that all data collected will be disaggregated by age and sex and by other diversity considerations, as contextually appropriate and possible, for purposes of analysis and programming.<sup>1</sup> Data and evidence are also crucial to ensuring Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP). In this thematic area, UNHCR and NGO colleagues may discuss:

- Partnership initiatives that enhance analysis, strategy-setting and response, thus enabling evidence-informed action for quality protection outcomes;

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<sup>1</sup> UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNHCR Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity, 8 March 2018, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5bb628ea4.html> [accessed 3 February 2019]

- How to apply an age, gender and diversity approach to ensure data contributes to protection.

## Theme 2: Regionalisation

UNHCR's regionalization is an opportunity for more focused programmatic collaboration with NGOs, through regional analysis and response to displacement situations. A UNHCR closer to the field and more accessible to its NGO partners is welcomed, especially for local and national NGOs not present in Geneva. This new proximity to the field has indeed the potential of resulting in faster and more effective response mechanisms. On the other hand, there is a fear that regionalisation also bears the risk of fragmentation and inconsistent application of global policies. The Consultations will feature a panel with the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations and Directors of Regional Bureaux to discuss regionalisation with NGOs, including the process and the impact it will have on partnerships.

## Theme 3: Global Refugee Forum

The **third day** of the Consultation will focus on **how NGOs can engage in, and contribute to, the first Global Refugee Forum**, which will take place in Geneva on 17 and 18 December 2019.<sup>2</sup> As such, the Annual Consultations will be a key milestone for UNHCR and NGOs to take stock of civil society engagement in the lead-up to the Forum, and collectively strategize around potential pledges and contributions that NGOs could either lead or support. Discussions will focus on:

- The modalities for NGOs to make pledges, individual and joint, and showcase good practices at the Global Refugee Forum.
- An exchange on the potential pledges and good practices to emerge from different regions, with a focus on particular situations and the thematic priority areas for the first Global Refugee Forum. The multi-stakeholder approach set out in the GCR will be pursued to mobilize NGOs and establish partnerships with other stakeholders in developing joint pledges.
- Exploring opportunities for complementary advocacy, towards States and other actors, to ensure all stakeholders contribute to the success of the Global Refugee Forum and its objectives, particularly with a view to expanding international solidarity and responsibility-sharing.
- The special initiatives related to the GCR (e.g. the three-year resettlement strategy; the Asylum Capacity Support Group; the Support Platforms), which will be showcased at the Global Refugee Forum and to which NGOs can contribute.

The expected outcomes of this day will be captured in the report of the NGO consultations and aim to include emerging pledges and contributions led or supported by NGOs, both individual and joint with other stakeholders, including refugees.

### Sub-theme: Investing in integrity:

All stakeholders – including the people we serve – have high expectations for strong systems to prevent, mitigate, and respond to all forms of misconduct, fraud, corruption, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), and sexual harassment (SH). Partners acknowledge that many humanitarian operations are in high-risk environments, physically and due to the nature of the work. We remain deeply committed to ensuring the integrity of all our activities. This consultation will be an opportunity to follow-up on mechanisms and capacity strengthening of UNHCR and NGO partners to understand and act on their responsibilities with respect to combating fraud, corruption, SEA, SH and other forms of misconduct. Discussions will also consider data protection (privacy) principles and related international standards that should be applied in the context of our work with individual beneficiaries to provide protection and assistance in partnership.

Final, 20 March 2019

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<sup>2</sup> Consult the Global Refugee Forum website for further information <https://www.unhcr.org/global-refugee-forum.html>