

2023 Asia and the Pacific Regional NGO Consultations Concept Note

Promoting Inclusion for Sustainable Solutions

Virtual side events (GRF and Partnerships): 14-15 June 2023

Hybrid Consultations: 14-15 September 2023

Background:

The Asia and the Pacific region continues to be affected by the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and faces a polycrisis (climate, food, energy, finance, conflict), which has resulted in increased vulnerabilities. Progress towards realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in the region is slow; at this pace, the 2030 mark will be missed by decades. In this context, the region's 13.3 million refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, returnees, and stateless people are at risk of being further left behind. Whole-of-society responses are needed more than ever to work towards sustainable solutions for the forcibly displaced and stateless. However, when societies are increasingly under pressure, it is critical to reflect on pragmatic and innovative ways to achieve these objectives with civil society actors.

Co-organized by UNHCR, the Asia-Pacific Refugee Rights Network, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies, and the Asia Pacific Network of Refugees, the 2023 Asia-Pacific consultations between UNHCR and NGOs will be held under the theme '**Promoting Inclusion for Sustainable Solutions**' with a focus on gender equality. The Consultations will offer an opportunity to reflect on UNHCR's and NGOs' joined-up efforts to advance the Global Compact on Refugees, five years after its affirmation and three months before the [Global Refugee Forum \(GRF\)](#) to be held in December 2023. They are also a natural follow-up to the 2021 Regional Consultations, which looked at the [socio-economic inclusion of refugees in the COVID context](#).

The Consultations are expected to articulate concrete recommendations to inform the formulation of strategies and the implementation of sustainable solutions. In addition, the recommendations of the Consultations will be presented at the annual meeting of the UNHCR's Executive Committee in October 2023 and will inform and support the global UNHCR-NGO consultations to be held in Geneva in June 2024.

Overall Objectives:

Based on the above, and grounded in the [Principles of Partnership](#), the 2023 regional Consultations with NGOs will pursue the following objectives :

- Exchange and agree on regional strategic priorities for the topics discussed, taking into consideration the specific challenges and opportunities in the region.
- Develop region-specific recommendations that promote solutions, inclusion and gender equality, targeting UNHCR, NGOs and/or other stakeholders in the region.
- Identify region-specific recommendations that will inform the global consultations in 2024 on the same topics.
- Mobilize and inform partners at regional level of the second Global Refugee Forum.

Theme

UNHCR works with States, NGOs, civil society, refugees, and other stakeholders to identify and pursue solutions for forcibly displaced and stateless persons. NGO and civil society actors play a key role in achieving these priorities. Although new momentum and innovative approaches have emerged through processes, such as the Global Compact on Refugees and the [UN Secretary-General Action Agenda on Internal Displacement](#), solutions and support have not kept pace with the number of displaced people and people becoming stateless. Building on the multiplier effects of partnerships with NGOs and civil society is fundamental to striving for progress, diversification, and innovation in the search for solutions out of displacement and statelessness.

The inclusion of forcibly displaced populations in national systems, programmes, and services is a key strategy to address their needs more predictably and promote their self-reliance and resilience while avoiding creating parallel systems. This approach aims to ensure more cost-effective investments in national systems that benefit host communities by expanding quality services and investments in key sectors such as education, health, social protection, and employment. To this end, UNHCR works with governments, civil society, and development actors to foster opportunities to include displaced populations in national services to benefit host communities and the forcibly displaced alike.

During the Consultations, UNHCR and NGOs will discuss how inclusion contributes to resilience and solutions for the forcibly displaced and stateless people, identify challenges and opportunities and offer recommendations to address them, in line with the Global Compact on Refugees' objectives of responsibility sharing and support to host communities. The Consultations aim to ensure gender equality is fully considered in all sessions, with specific recommendations aimed at strengthening meaningful participation, pursuing gender transformative approaches, addressing the gender data gap in humanitarian response, and strengthening evidence-based programming.

Format

The Consultations have been divided into two segments. The first consists of the virtual side events that took place in June and focused on the GRF and Partnerships. The second segment will take place in a hybrid format over two days in September and consist of roundtable discussions, enabling participants to discuss thematic areas in depth. The roundtables will cover inclusion in national systems, legal pathways, socio-economic inclusion, and refugee-led participation.

Participants are expected to reflect on and discuss some key questions:

- What are some of the biggest barriers to inclusion in national systems, and how can we address them?
- How can UNHCR, NGOs, and community-based organizations cooperate with and support member States and their line ministries to promote inclusion in national systems?
- What examples of successful inclusion in national systems have you seen, and what lessons can we learn from them?
- What recommendations do you have to enhance inclusion in national systems for member States and their line ministries, UN agencies, NGOs and civil society, and forcibly displaced populations?