

**Executive Committee of the
High Commissioner's Programme**

Sixty Third Session

Geneva, 1-5 October 2012

**UNHCR's Annual Consultation with NGOs
Rapporteur's Presentation to UNHCR's Executive Committee
Anoop Sukumaran, Rapporteur for the Annual Consultations**

Mr. Chairman, Madam Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you on the behalf of the NGO partners of the UNHCR for the opportunity to present the report on the 2012 Annual Consultations, held in July. I trust you received the detailed report. In the interest of time, in this presentation I highlight a few key issues of concern and the main recommendations which emerged from the Consultations.

The Consultations featured eight thematic sessions and five regional sessions. "Partnership in focus" was the theme of the consultations this year. It highlighted the centrality of the role that NGOs, especially local civil society organisations, play in assisting UNHCR to respond to the increasingly complex protection needs of refugees and other persons of concern. The three days provided a platform for the exchange of ideas, discussion of emerging challenges, and strategies to enhance refugee protection across the globe. This year's record number of delegates in attendance reflects growing interest in

the Consultations.

In his opening address the Deputy High Commissioner outlined some of the urgent challenges facing UNHCR and its NGO partners such as the shrinking protection space, new emergencies, and increased refugee flows. The DHC noted two major themes that UNHCR prioritizes this year: innovation and self-reliance. Innovation in more efficient use of technology and resources to promote learning amongst organisations. Self-reliance activities promoted in camps, urban, and resettlement contexts to expand access to livelihoods and refugee aspirations. He urged NGOs to share their innovative strategies for promoting refugee resilience with UNHCR, as UNHCR proposes to compile a report on highlighting some of the many innovative strategies utilized by NGOs in their everyday practice.

The widening gap between refugees in need of resettlement and actual resettlement places available was examined in the session on 'Refugee Resettlement.' NGOs urged resettlement countries to increase the ceiling on resettlement each year, especially to respond to emergency situations, and ensure these ceilings are met. NGOs, UNHCR, and States must develop appropriate services to support settlement with special attention to women and girls at risk and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) individuals in countries of first asylum and countries of resettlement; it is essential that refugees are engaged in developing and providing resettlement services, as well as the creation of welcoming communities.

Climate change is an emerging area that received large amounts of attention. There is a need to develop a legal protection framework for people displaced

by climate and natural disasters. The session 'Marginalisation and Social Exclusion of Particular Refugee Populations' called attention to excluded groups—such as people living with HIV/AIDS, people with disabilities, LGBTI individuals, along with ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities, and indigenous people—who often find themselves mistreated when displaced. Therefore, NGOs recommend involving persons who are marginalized from the very beginning of an emergency situation in the design, assessment, monitoring and evaluation of interventions as an effective way to ensure their inclusion.

In the session 'Strategies and tools for the protection of stateless persons' the need for follow-up on pledges made during the 2011 Ministerial Meeting was emphasized, in particular those on statelessness determination procedures that may serve to better identify stateless persons and reduce detention rates. The session on Child Protection highlighted the new UNHCR Framework for the Protection of Children provides a holistic and integrated approach to the protection of children. NGOs urge Member States to demonstrate their commitment to end the detention of children in law and in practice, and to pilot alternatives to detention.

A number of current regional situations in which the rights of refugees and other persons of concern remain at risk, pre-occupied many of the NGOs present. These included the situations in Mali, Sudan, Somalia, and Kenya. In the context of the large number of protracted refugee situations across Asia, States are encouraged to make more concerted efforts towards the development of comprehensive durable solutions. The ongoing and unprecedented unrest in the MENA region was highlighted and UNHCR was

urged to continue work with states in the region to sustain and enhance protection of refugees. Additionally, in Europe, governments must develop monitoring and reporting mechanisms to address the sharp rise xenophobia.

In the closing plenary the High Commissioner (HC) spoke of the necessity for effective partnership between UNHCR and civil society, and referred to his launch of an ad hoc initiative in 2012 to identify and improve the quality of partnerships -- termed a "Structured Dialogue". He highlighted the shrinking asylum space in different parts of the world and the crucial role that civil society could play, together with UNHCR, to work against this trend. He expressed concern about increasing security risks in refugee operations, both for UNHCR and partners' staff, as well as for the affected populations.

Finally, a common thread during the Consultations was the precarious funding situation both for UNHCR and NGOs. It is important to instill within the donor community an understanding of the need for sustained and long-term funding. NGOs expressed the damaging affect unpredictable yearly funding has on service provision and overall protection. Strong partnerships between NGOs and UNHCR help to advocate for the mobilisation of scarce resources and their best use.

Mr. Chairman, the complete version of the Consultations report is available online and in the back of the room.

I thank you, once again, for the opportunity to speak here today and welcome any comments from the floor.