

Outcome Document

The 2023 UNHCR Asia-Pacific Consultations with NGOs Partnerships Side Session

15 June 2023

Summary:

The Partnerships side session gathered 89 participants from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Civil Society Organisation (CSOs), Community-based Organisations (CBOs), Organisation led by Refugees or other forcibly displaced and stateless people¹ (RLOs), Faith-based Organisations (FBOs) and Networks. The session focused on UNHCR's efforts to advance the localization agenda, reach new audiences, pursue diverse and inclusive strategic partnerships, and shift the focus of the response so that it increasingly fosters inclusion and solutions. UNHCR provided an overview and update on UNHCR-funded partnership reforms, including its approach toward partnerships agreements (PAs). In addition, participants received updates on regional strategic priorities and areas of engagement with UNHCR in Asia and the Pacific. Two parallel breakout sessions were organised during the side session. The first breakout session focused on Strategic Partnerships, how to sustain a whole-of-society approach at all levels beyond consultations. The second breakout session focused on UNHCR partnership agreements where participants shared their experiences on the partnership agreement process. Both the side sessions and the plenary enabled participants to raise specific issues or challenges they face when partnering with UNHCR. The importance of a Whole-of-Society² Approach in responding to complex displacement to meet the needs of refugees and their host communities alike was highlighted throughout.

Key Recommendations

Recommendation1: UNHCR Role as convener to enhance Communication and Coordination

Strategic partnerships, streamlined coordination, sharing information and inclusive approach To partnerships are highlighted.

- Create an accessible information-sharing platform where RLOs can regularly communicate and directly engage with UNHCR i.e. meetings, webinars, and web portal
- Establish an inclusive coordination mechanism at national and regional level to avoid duplication in responses

Recommendation2: Empowerment and Capacity Strengthening

- Treat all with mutual respect and recognition as equal partners
- Involve relevant stakeholders, especially RLOs, in working groups or taskforces
- Promote participation and co-leadership of local actors in national coordination mechanisms to encourage locally-led advocacy

Recommendation3: Partnerships Agreement

- Continue tackling challenges faced by UNHCR-funded partners, especially RLOs (i.e. challenges in establishing bank account)
- Advocate for Multi-year funding with donors

Resources:

- [UNHCR Strategic Directions 2022-2026](#)

¹ Refugee-led Organisations are defined by UNHCR as “an organization or group in which persons with direct lived experience of forced displacement play a primary leadership role and whose stated objectives and activities are focused on responding to the needs and/or related communities” <https://www.refworld.org/docid/63e658fc4.html>

² A “Whole-of-society” engagement: a comprehensive refugee response should involve a multi-stakeholder approach, including national and local authorities, international organizations, international financial institutions, regional organizations, regional coordination and partnership mechanisms, civil society partners, including faith-based organizations and academia, the private sector, media and refugees themselves.” —New York Declaration, Annex 1, paragraph 2