

SURVIVORS, PROTECTORS, PROVIDERS

Regional Dialogues with Women and Girls

The Regional Dialogues project has been commissioned by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees as part of the commemorations for the 60th anniversary of the Refugee Convention. Between November 2010 and May 2011, over 500 refugee and internally displaced women and girls as well as some refugee men will take part in Dialogues with UNHCR. The Dialogues will focus on assessing the problems that this most vulnerable group of refugees – women and girls – face during flight, as well as developing (better) solutions to their problems.

The Dialogues demonstrate UNHCR's commitment to giving refugee women and girls a voice and allowing them a say in the decision-making process that affects their lives. Similar Dialogues were held as part of the 50th anniversary commemorations. The recent dialogues will:

- Asses the main protection concerns facing refugee women and girls and suggest solutions;
- Strengthen UNHCR's global capacity to provide protection by documenting effective field practice, both by UN bodies and Non-Governmental Organisations. A tool box will be developed which can be accessed globally to guide protection service provision to this particularly vulnerable group; and
- Assess nine core areas of concern for refugee women and girls (linked to 22 existing UNHCR impact indicators) as to their relevance and impact, and make recommendations for improvement.

The Dialogues provide participants with human rights training and a platform to share problems and develop solutions. A parallel two-day workshop with men and adolescent boys enables them to make suggestions for the improved protection of women and girls in their communities. On the final day, both groups come together to discuss the outcomes of their consultations with UNHCR staff, implementing partners, government officials and other relevant stakeholders.

The Dialogues will take place in locations in southern and eastern Africa, the Americas, South Asia, Australia and Europe.

Two women from each Dialogue will be selected by their peers to travel to Geneva and represent their community before international civil society organisations and national governments, at UNHCR's Annual NGO Consultations and the UNHCR's Standing Committee meeting in June 2011.

The Dialogue process is facilitated by UNHCR's Senior Coordinator for Gender Equality and the Centre for Refugee Research at the University of New South Wales, Australia.