

**Intervention of the NGO Rapporteur, Ms. Yamamah Agha on
Agenda item 7: Review of the annual consultations with NGOs**

Excellencies;

Distinguished delegates,

Fellow NGO and UNHCR Colleagues,

Born from World War II, UNHCR was given its first task of shining a light of hope on the hopeless. 'Putting people first', UNHCR contributed to a new world arising out of global migration, defining decades of multiculturalism to come.

This year, we've returned to that original mandate of Putting People First.

Putting People First was the theme of the 2018 Annual Consultations, which gathered 523 participants from 287 organisations and 88 countries.

Today, I'd like to highlight four critical themes of this year's consultations, which recurred in many forums:

- Including refugee voices in discussions surrounding policy and programs.
- Building and Maintaining global partnerships between UNHCR, NGOs, States and the private sector.
- Enhancing data collection, security and accessibility to better inform integration programs and initiatives for and with refugees and IDPs.
- Utilising a 'Whole of Society Approach' to develop effective tools to be applied on a global scale.

It's easy to liken the current climate of displacement, to that experienced generations ago. However, armed with a wealth of experience, we are now far better informed and equipped to face challenges, through strengthening and diversifying partnerships and fostering a culture of innovation within refugee protection and integration.

The Global Compact has provided us a vehicle to drive meaningful change in our shared global responsibilities towards refugees. 193 nations have spoken with one voice on the New York Declaration. Building on the CRRF, NGOs, service providers and host countries working with refugees every day, have had the opportunity to inform the compact.

Indeed, in putting people first, it was a key recommendation within this year's consultations that the voices of those refugees we support must remain at the centre of decisions on refugee policy and programs.

Elaborating on this, we must ensure that not only refugees, but IDPs, the stateless, host communities and NGOs, all have a voice in decision-making processes. Critically, NGO partnerships must be underpinned with equality, transparency and inclusiveness.

Diving deeper, it was also agreed that we must be inclusive in our implementation and recognise the needs of those refugees often marginalised by society and culture. They can get drowned out in a sea of more powerful voices. Youth, women and girls, LGBTQI individuals and communities, all require their own unique considerations as decisions are made on refugee policies and programs that directly affect them.

The way we develop these refugee policies and programs must also shift, to reflect a multi-year approach and ensure effective participation of both displaced peoples and the communities that host them.

Durable solutions are a key factor in achieving this. Establishing reliable, consistent and robust programmes to address immediate and long term needs of communities will in turn encourage the development of national policies and their implementation.

Another recommendation of critical importance refers to the process of strengthening national systems through building capacity and creating mechanisms for information sharing.

During the consultations, data was a resource continually referenced as a major contributor to refugee support. Data collection, storage and accessibility were all discussed as priorities. Data's practical and potential applications for supporting refugees on an international stage cannot be underestimated.

Partnership is key to innovation. Therefore, it is essential that we continue to foster our global partnerships and develop more integrated methods of supporting refugees. Global partnerships are not just restricted to the UNHCR, NGO and refugee space. The Private Sector represents a golden opportunity to increase efficiency and capacity with its resources. Having identified the needs and best practices, we must pursue private sector partnerships with shared interests. This will encourage increased involvement.

I've already touched briefly on the importance of strengthening National systems. The New York Declaration calls to incorporate in the CRRF, when appropriate, national development planning to strengthen the delivery of essential services and infrastructure for the benefit of host communities and refugees.

A recommendation stemming from discussions around this topic is that host countries need to be supported in a number of ways, including the incorporation of inclusive education policies, strengthening of national health systems and investment in WASH systems.

Consistent, inclusive and effective education strategies play a vital role in the long-term prospects of displaced people. In the short-term, these can have an outstanding positive effect on the mental and psychological wellbeing of individuals and communities. Education should incorporate technology, align with national curriculum and ensure quality and accreditation.

The availability of quality education at all levels also has a critical effect on one particularly vulnerable group: unaccompanied children from refugee background. While this group was identified specifically in the Asia-Pacific regional discussions, its relevance extends well beyond one region.

It's examples like this which support the 'Whole of society approach', a key focus in the Global Compact. Where possible, having a global resource available to address fundamental causes of statelessness and other outcomes of forced displacement, is invaluable.

It was also noted that in considering responses, the 'legacy of statelessness' must also be addressed. The intergenerational impact of this type of displacement on families and communities cannot be ignored.

Too often, people are forced to move multiple times, and there is often a push for returns to their home. In considering this, a need was identified to actively engage in addressing protracted internal displacement, going beyond humanitarian and development actors to include a peace building dimension. This seeks to fulfil the greater achievement of sustainable solutions through regional peace processes.

This year's annual consultations have comprehensively reflected the current state of global displacement which we face today. The approaches and solutions are dynamic, and I am inspired by the attitudes and thinking reflected in these discussions. While many of the drivers of displacement around the globe remain the same, we are required to constantly re-consider our strategies due to shifting socio-centric criteria.

I encourage everyone to read all of the recommendations in detail in the [Rapporteur's report](#) which is now available online through UNHCR and ICVA websites. Printed copies are also available in this room.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson