



A GLOBAL NGO NETWORK
FOR PRINCIPLED
AND EFFECTIVE
HUMANITARIAN ACTION

NGO Statement Drafting Procedure for Statements to UNHCR Standing Committee and Executive Committee Meetings

May 2017

This procedure for drafting NGO statements was originally drafted in 2007 and then adapted after discussions with NGOs in June 2011 and then again in March 2017. Separate guidelines for those drafting statements accompany this document.

(ICVA will continue to try and improve the process in consultation with NGOs. Please feel free to share your thoughts as you see fit.)

General Purpose of NGO Statements

The purpose of an NGO statement to UNHCR's Standing or Executive Committees (SCOM and ExCom) or other UNHCR fora is to ensure that NGO thinking and views are heard. NGO statements are important because they often provide a view that neither States nor UNHCR are able to articulate. NGO statements should be of a high quality in terms of clear messages and factual accuracy and must not aim for the lowest common denominator. The statements should not only identify problem areas for attention, but also provide concrete recommendations and suggestions. They should advance ICVA's mission for more principled and effective humanitarian action, promoting protection, assistance and durable solutions for refugees, IDPs, stateless persons, and other persons of concern to UNHCR.

Throughout the Year

When the UNHCR annual meeting calendar is released, NGOs should note the dates of each meeting and plan to contribute to specific statements. The statement drafting process should be of a continuous nature. NGOs agree to seek input from their field colleagues on an ongoing basis throughout the year and to share this information with the ICVA Secretariat. The ICVA Secretariat will keep track of these issues and make them available during the statement drafting process. It will also develop a list of NGOs and what issues they work on to be able to proactively solicit input. ICVA will also strive to identify lead drafters for statements as early as possible to give them time to prepare.

NGOs commit to produce a prepared statement (according to the agreed drafting procedure) for at least the main agenda items of each Standing Committee/ExCom meetings, which include:

- March Standing Committee: regional statements; partnership, conclusions
- June/July Standing Committee: international protection;
- September Standing Committee: budget; and
- ExCom: general statement.

Before Standing Committee/ExCom Meetings

When NGOs receive their invitation letters from UNHCR they are invited to contact ICVA about statements.

Eight weeks: ICVA will alert NGOs of each upcoming UNHCR ExCom or Standing Committee meeting and ask NGOs to volunteer to lead the drafting of statements, if lead drafters have not already been determined in advance.

6-7 weeks: The deadline for NGOs to volunteer for leading the drafting will be four weeks in advance of the Standing Committee/ExCom meeting. The ICVA Secretariat will play a proactive role by requesting NGOs with known expertise on particular agenda items to lead the drafting. If there are no volunteers for statements on the main agenda items, the ICVA Secretariat may produce a draft statement based on the information sent by NGOs throughout the year and the Secretariat's knowledge of the issues for comment. The ICVA Secretariat will send out contact details of drafters and input for statements should be sent directly to drafters for incorporation into the first draft.

5-6 weeks: The first draft of each statement from the lead drafters to be sent to the ICVA Secretariat for distribution to NGOs. Hopefully, at this point in time UNHCR background documents will be available. NGOs are invited to comment on the drafts and add any information they have not yet provided for the first draft. NGOs should strive to submit substantive input before the first draft, to make the drafting process more efficient and transparent.

3-4 weeks: The same process is repeated for a second round of distribution to NGOs for comments and inputs. This second phase is key for NGOs to raise serious objections (i.e. legal/factual inaccuracies)
In order to avoid disagreements on the final draft, it is important that you contribute early on in the process.

2-1 weeks: Final drafts incorporating suggestions and comments are sent by lead drafters to ICVA Secretariat for copy-editing, formatting, and sending to NGOs in advance of the meeting.

To allow for this relatively flexible approach and still keep the drafting as consultative and transparent as possible, it is crucial that input be provided to lead drafters early on in the process, i.e. before the first draft. This input can take the shape of a single paragraph on a particular situation or larger sections as appropriate.

During Standing Committee/ExCom Meetings

NGOs attending Standing Committee/ExCom meetings may draft and deliver a so-called "second statement" against each agenda item addressing concerns and issues that arise during the meeting (subject to agreement by the ExCom Chair). A "second statement", coordinated by ICVA, can also be used where a prepared statement on an agenda item has not been drafted according to the procedure outlined above, but that is considered important by NGOs attending the meeting. These

“second statements” will be less formal and more *ad hoc* and will state explicitly that they **“represent the views of those NGOs attending the meeting”**.

After Standing Committee/ExCom Meetings

Following the meeting, ICVA will send a message to NGOs informing them where the final versions of all NGO statements can be found on the ICVA website and providing a reminder of the main agenda items requiring an NGO statement for the following Standing Committee/ExCom meeting.