

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME 75th Plenary Session 14 - 18 October 2024

Review of the global consultations with non-governmental organizations held in 2024

Speech delivered by NGO Rapporteurs:

- Julius Mvenyi Ntobuah, Chairman, Newcomers with Disabilities in Sweden
- Silvana Faillace, Senior Director, Technical Unit, Church World Service

Dear Chair, Excellencies, UNHCR and NGO colleagues,

We are honoured to report on behalf of NGOs and UNHCR on the Global Consultations with NGOs, held in June, that focused on the themes of **Solutions, Inclusion, and Gender Equality**.

The Global Consultations are a biennial event jointly organized by UNHCR and the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA).

We have reached a significant milestone: it is over 30 years since UNHCR first held consultations with NGOs in recognition of their crucial role as partners in action. Today, these consultations continue to deepen and advance our partnership and dialogue.

The Global Consultations this year brought together over 200 participants from 126 NGOs, networks, and other civil society organizations. NGOs in all their diversity were represented, including:

- 41 organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless people;
- 39 women-led organizations;
- 18 faith-based organizations;
- 65 national and local NGOs; and
- 61 international NGOs.

The consultations consisted of five plenary sessions, an interactive session, and 12 side events.

We also celebrated the significant work of the winners of the 2024 NGO award: three local organizations supporting forcibly displaced and stateless persons with disabilities. The [winners](#), [Umoja People with Disability Group](#) in Malawi, [Asociación de Sordos de Honduras](#), and [Takatof Shababe Association](#) in Syria, were awarded for their exceptional contributions in the provision of protection and services to **displaced persons with disabilities**.

The consultations recognized how vital solutions, inclusion, and gender equality are to drive change for the millions of forcibly displaced and stateless populations globally.

Participants reiterated that protection should mean access to essential services and to a conducive environment to thrive. It should mean being protected by inclusive policies that safeguard the rights of all and that foster self-reliance and a sense of belonging and empowerment.

At the centre of the Global Consultations was a collaborative process that began earlier in the year when a Steering Group was established. Myself, and my esteemed colleague are representatives of the Steering Group.

Together, UNHCR and NGOs co-created recommendations. Their development included a widely disseminated online questionnaire and an interactive session during the event to allow participants and experts to refine the recommendations, which my colleague will present to you.

On the theme of Solutions and Inclusion, focusing on the necessity of a shift from humanitarian to development and solutions approaches, the recommendations emphasize the importance of strengthening existing national structures and of avoiding the creation of parallel service systems in response to displacement situations.

Importantly, we recognised that protection must remain at the centre, and we recognized the importance of meaningful engagement and participation of forcibly displaced and stateless populations in creating effective solutions. We also acknowledged that stateless populations require specific attention and advocacy, especially regarding registration.

Recommendations under the solutions and inclusion theme were:

First, Member States, NGOs and UNHCR should focus on enhancing and utilizing existing national structures from the onset of a crisis. This requires policies and programmes that intentionally include host, stateless, and displaced communities within national systems. Area-based approaches are a good example of inclusive humanitarian responses, ensuring strong collaboration and alignment between humanitarian, development, and peace actors.

Second, actors should work towards increasing the self-reliance of displaced and stateless persons. This can be achieved by addressing barriers to access rights and opportunities through inclusive policies informed by local realities for increased self-reliance in jointly implemented sustainable programmes. The use of accurate, comparable data was identified as one enabler to promote self-reliance. In particular, **Member States** should introduce legislative changes that protect and enable the right to work for forcibly displaced and stateless persons.

Third, we recognised that fostering a positive narrative and strengthening locally-led initiatives are key to enhancing social cohesion. Facilitating dialogue between forcibly displaced, stateless, and host communities is essential for building trust and understanding, which in turn promotes their inclusion in the host society. Strengthening local efforts in these regards ensures that all members of the community are informed of their rights and can access services and protection equally, without discrimination, thus paving the way for durable solutions.

Fourth, recommendations pointed towards the importance of equitable and collaborative partnerships, particularly on mutual capacity-sharing. It is crucial to engage diverse stakeholders and to ensure local ownership by including local organizations and those led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons throughout the programme cycle.

On the theme of Gender Equality, we recalled that the global environment is marked by a decrease in funding for lifesaving gender-based violence interventions, backslide in women's rights, and rise of anti-gender diversity movements. The consultations delved into the

challenges and the opportunities for sustaining the progress gained towards gender equality and the right to live free from gender-based violence.

We recognised the need to address the root causes, working with men and boys to redefine masculinities, and further scale-up women and girls' empowerment.

Recommendations under the gender equality theme were:

First, Member States, UNHCR and NGOs must promote sustainable and equitable partnerships with organizations led by displaced and stateless women and girls, including those with disabilities, and LGBTIQ+ people. This means shifting power and resources. We recommend supporting the expertise and leadership of these organizations and assuring their meaningful participation in decision-making. To achieve this, we need to scale up opportunities for flexible, direct and sustainable funding, capacity sharing, collective advocacy, and coalition development. Partnerships with the private sector will help us to further reinforce impact. Efforts of LGBTIQ+ organizations must be supported and uplifted. By removing barriers restricting the rights of LGBTIQ+ people and addressing the risks and challenges they face, we can create a more inclusive and just environment for all.

Second, we must strengthen accountability to forcibly displaced and stateless women and girls in all their diversity, including those with disabilities. Actors must ensure they are involved as equal partners and empowered to develop solutions. To achieve this, meaningful participation and leadership in local, national, and international decision-making processes should be realized. Likewise, actors should ensure gender inclusive programming and meaningfully engage women and girls in all their diversity in the development of interventions for protection and solutions.

Third, it is essential to adopt a survivor-centred approach to protect forcibly displaced and stateless people from gender-based violence. This requires a holistic, coordinated, and adaptable strategy that addresses survivors' diverse needs along mixed movement routes. Equally important is fostering equal partnerships with organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless women in the context of gender-based violence prevention and response, ensuring that their voices and expertise shape effective protection measures.

Dear Excellencies, as we bring this statement to a close, we invite you to read the full list of recommendations, which are available on the webpages of this year's Global Consultations. Participants identified key actions for each recommendation, some of which are particularly addressed at you as Member States. We urge you to take them forward.

A resounding conclusion from the consultation is on the importance of working in strategic and equitable multi-stakeholder partnerships that recognize the expertise and contribution of each actor.

UNHCR and NGOs will, together, continue to robustly engage on operational, policy, and advocacy priorities to achieve gender equality and realize solutions for, and inclusion of, forcibly displaced and stateless persons.

We stand ready to put these recommendations into action.

Thank you.