

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
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NGO Statement on Community Based Protection, and Age, Gender and Diversity

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Oral Version

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Community-Based Protection

People and communities impacted by crisis or displacement are the most central actors in their own protection. Communities have the most at stake in achieving their own safety, dignity, and rights, and possess significant existing capacities to do just that – capacities that, when tapped and supported, can improve efficiencies, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability. NGOs believe that supporting these local actions should be central in UNHCR's understanding of its protection mandate. We further believe that the broad range of UNHCR protection and assistance interventions should seek to understand and reinforce the protective roles of communities. NGOs commend UNHCR for its important commitments to Community-based protection, including the steps it has taken globally to better understand Community-based protection, to better prepare and position its workforce for Community-based protection, and plans it has to pilot innovative Community-based protection programming. We call on member States to affirm UNHCR's commitment to Community-based protection, to track UNHCR's progress in this regard, and to ensure donor funding modalities are conducive to meaningfully support Community-based protection.

We would like to also underscore the importance of providing attention to host communities in IDP and refugee settings. Host communities play a crucial role in social peace and local integration, and thus, protection of IDPs and refugees.

Age, Gender and Diversity

NGOs support UNHCR's continued emphasis on applying an Age, Gender and Diversity approach to its operations. Humanitarian assistance must be exclusively based on needs, while taking into consideration specific vulnerabilities of people of concern.

NGOs note that one of the main gaps identified in the implementation of the AGD policy is addressing the needs of youth. NGOs appreciate UNHCR's successful Youth Initiative Fund, and we welcome UNHCR's suggestion to consider adopting an Excom Conclusion on engagement and empowerment of youth. Existing protection risks faced by all adolescents and youth are exacerbated in situations of displacement: adolescent girls, youth

with disabilities, pregnant and parenting youth are particularly at risk. Because youth often “fall between the gap,” NGOs request governments to provide targeted funding for youth and adolescents in crisis situations, and we call on UNHCR and governments to make greater efforts to include youth in the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes. We support the joint UNHCR – NGO initiative to launch a series of Global Consultations with Refugee and Displaced Youth in 2015-2016, and we urge governments to support this important initiative.

NGOs welcome UNHCR’s commitment to improve the inclusion of persons with disabilities in its programming and protection activities and to forge new partnerships with national disability actors. We support UNHCR’s multi-year programme to strengthen technical support for country operations and to ensure that persons with disabilities are actively included in project planning, design and evaluation. We stand ready to collaborate with UNHCR and governments in this important area of work.

Thank you, Mr Chair