

Bi-weekly Operational Update: 1-15 November 2019

Stakeholder consultations continue as GRF approaches: As part of a series of national consultations in preparation for the Global Refugee Forum (GRF), the Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs - ARRA and the UN Refugee Agency - UNHCR organized a one-day workshop, bringing together relevant government agencies and partners involved in the refugee response in Ethiopia. The workshop, which is a follow up to the national consultative meeting held on 15 October 2019, discussed Ethiopia's new set of Pledges for the GRF and provided valuable inputs for their consolidation. Ethiopia is expected to be represented at the GRF at the highest level and will announce a new set of pledges in the following areas: Livelihoods; Education; Renewable Energy and the Environment; and Protection and Capacity Development.

Law and Policy workshop to inform draft national IDP Policy: In partnership with the Ministry of Peace, UNHCR organized a "Law and Policy" workshop in Addis Ababa with the aim to build further consensus for the development of a draft national policy on the protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons (IDP). The three-day workshop that took place from 13-15 November 2019, was a follow up to a regional workshop on the Kampala Convention in April which recommended the national adoption of the Convention as a critical next step in light of the current internal displacement context in Ethiopia.

In her opening remarks, Hirut Zemene, State Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, informed that Ethiopia would soon ratify the Kampala Convention which was under consideration by the Council of Ministers and would subsequently be referred to Parliament. UNHCR Representative Ann Encontre thanked the participants for their contribution and expressed hope that the draft national IDP policy would incorporate the key principles of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, also known as the Kampala Convention.

Attended by participants, representing a wide range of stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, donors and UN agencies, the workshop benefitted from the presence of prominent experts in the field, most notably Professor Chaloka Beyani of the London School of Economics, who is the former Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons and has significant experience in supporting various African countries in crafting a national IDP policy or law.

Inter-Agency Steering Committee to ensure zero tolerance to sexual exploitation and abuse: In the Benishangul-Gumuz Region, UNHCR facilitated the establishment of a Steering Committee on 'Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse' (PSEA) with the participation of all agencies that are involved in the refugee response. Members of the Steering Committee are receiving training to equip them with the tools to ensure compliance with the UN's zero-tolerance policy to PSEA. Similarly, UNHCR facilitated a one-day training session to members of the different refugee structures in Shimelba Refugee Camp, in Tigray Region, to familiarize them with the concept of PSEA and the prevention and reporting mechanisms. Participants included focal points from the Refugee Central Committee, Youth Association, Women's Association, Child Rights Club, and Child Welfare Committee.

Workshop in Wollega discusses root causes of conflict and displacement: UNHCR partnered with the Wollega University in organizing a workshop on conflict and displacement in which a team of professors from the Wollega University shared findings of their research conducted at the peak of the intercommunal conflict in the area in September-November 2018. The findings, which showed a direct link between conflict and displacement, will inform ongoing and future activities while paving the way for implementing peace building initiatives. Subsequently, a task force was formed to follow up implementation of the recommendations and conclusions of the workshop, which was attended by participants drawn from UN Agencies, community members from the Benishangul-Gumuz and Oromia regions, academics and local authorities.