Outcome Document

Global Alliance Inter-Regional Network Lab

Regional Action, Global Impact: Leveraging Regional Approaches and the Role of Inter-Governmental Organizations in Addressing Statelessness

20 May 2025

Introduction

The Global Alliance first Inter-Regional Network Lab titled *"Regional Action, Global Impact: Leveraging Regional Approaches and the Role of Inter-Governmental Organizations in Addressing Statelessness"* was held online on 20 May 2025. Co-organized by UNHCR in partnership with the Organization of American States (OAS), the Council of Europe (CoE), and the Latin American and Caribbean Council of Civil Registry, Identity and Vital Statistics (CLARCIEV), all three of which are Solution Seekers of the Global Alliance, the event brought together 57 participants, representing 9 regional IGOs – the AU, ECOWAS, CoE, CLARCIEV, ICGLR, LAS, OSCE HCNM/ODIHR, OAS, 6 regional CSO networks - ENS, EANN, Global Movement, Hawiati, NFA, SANN, and SDCC–AP, and UNHCR.

The objective of the Network Lab was to strengthen collaboration among regional organizations, identify good practices, and explore opportunities for peer learning and coordination. The half-day event focused on charting actionable paths toward ending statelessness by leveraging the mandates, capacities, and experiences of regional inter-governmental organizations (IGOs).

Opening Remarks

The event began with opening statements by four senior representatives of the co-organizing entities: Mr. Patrick Eba, Deputy Director, Division of International Protection, UNHCR; Ms. Betilde Muñoz-Pogossian, Director, Department of Social Inclusion, Organization of American States (OAS); Mr. Gerald Dunn, Head of Division, Secretary to the CDCJ, Council of Europe (CoE) and Ms. Karine María Famer Rocha Boselli, First Vice-President of the Executive Committee, the Latin American and Caribbean Council of Civil Registry, Identity and Vital Statistics (CLARCIEV).

Mr. Patrick Eba (UNHCR) welcomed participants and underscored the critical role regional organizations have played in advancing legal and policy frameworks on statelessness. He emphasized that ending statelessness is a collective effort requiring coordination at national, regional, and global levels. Mr. Eba highlighted the adoption of significant regional instruments, such as the Abidjan Declaration, Banjul Plan of Action, and Arab Declaration, as examples of how IGOs are translating global commitments into regional and national action.

Ms. Betilde Muñoz-Pogossian (OAS) emphasized that statelessness remains a key regional priority for the OAS, particularly through its Department of Social Inclusion. With six OAS member states having joined the Alliance, she stressed the importance of legal reform, civil registry improvements, and regional dialogue through regional mechanisms such asCartagena+40. OAS

has a unique position to create consensuses bringing together 34 States. She called for solution-driven collaboration grounded in the lived experience of stateless people.

Mr. Gerald Dunn reaffirmed CoE's strong partnership with UNHCR and highlighted the inclusion of statelessness in its current Action Plan on protecting vulnerable persons in the context of migration and asylum in Europe (2021-2025), which will also feature in the future action plan currently in the make, and in its Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027). He mentioned existing standards at the CoE, in particular the European Convention on Nationality which lays down a right to nationality, and noted that while the European Convention on Human Rights does not explicitly address nationality, the European Court of Human Rights has recognized that it was part of person's social identity. He shared the CoE's current focus on childhood statelessness and its commitment to support member states and work closely with civil society.

Ms. Karine Boselli, speaking for CLARCIEV, described the organization's unique role as a regional technical body on civil registration. She highlighted the importance of inclusive legal identity frameworks for indigenous peoples, migrants, and other marginalized groups. Ms. Boselli underscored successful regional initiatives such as MoUs between Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, and the joint Chiriticos project between Panama and Costa Rica. She outlined CLARCIEV's commitment to enhancing identity systems and promoting the participating of its members in the Global Alliance.

Session I: Regional Momentum and Frameworks

This session, moderated by Mr. Francesco Crisafulli, Chair of the CDCJ-MIG and member of the CDCJ, Council of Europe, aimed to highlight key regional legal and policy frameworks and upcoming priorities for 2025-2026. Representatives from each region shared their organization's progress and plans.

Ms. Mildred Ouma from the **African Union** presented the new Protocol to the African Charter on the right to nationality, adopted in 2024. The Protocol addresses unique challenges in Africa, such as colonial-era boundaries, weak civil registration systems, and transgenerational statelessness. It supports Agenda 2063 and affirms the right to nationality, with safeguards against statelessness at birth, non-discrimination clauses, and protections for nomadic populations. Plans for 2025–2026 focus on promoting ratification and beginning implementation of actionable provisions. Key collaboration areas include resource mobilization, government training, digital ID system strengthening, and leveraging regional bodies like ECOWAS, SADC, and ICGLR.

Speaking on behalf of **ECOWAS**, Mr. Godfrey Alozie highlighted that ECOWAS has been at the forefront of regional efforts to eradicate statelessness, with major milestones including the adoption of the 2015 Abidjan Declaration - a high-level political commitment endorsed by Heads of State. This historic declaration sets out 25 specific measures for member states to address statelessness. Building on this, ECOWAS developed the Banjul Plan of Action (2017–2024), which

outlines concrete activities for both the regional body and member states to prevent statelessness and protect the rights of stateless persons. The Plan also includes mechanisms to monitor and evaluate implementation of the Abidjan Declaration, reinforcing accountability and sustained action.

Mr. Victor Mugaruka of **ICGLR** showcased that ICGLR is actively working to address statelessness across its 12 member states through a consolidated action plan. The plan is structured around four key objectives: strengthening legal and institutional frameworks, improving data systems, promoting access to legal identity, and advancing durable solutions. Notable achievements include the nomination of national focal points on statelessness, adoption of common terms of reference, rollout of targeted trainings, and a regional study on protracted refugee situations and statelessness risks. Looking ahead, ICGLR plans a range of high-level and technical meetings, including a regional advisory board meeting on durable solutions in Kampala, and engagement with ministries, refugee-led organizations, and civil society to shape regional policies on CRVS and durable solutions for refugees and IDPs.

Ms. Karine Boselli elaborated that **CLARCIEV** continues to lead efforts in the Latin American region to raise awareness and promote best practices among civil registries to address statelessness. Their regional initiative focuses on improving CRVS systems to include unregistered persons and strengthen mechanisms to reduce statelessness. Key components include an annual thematic discussion on tools and practices for CRVS reform, and an annual Declaration at CLARCIEV meetings. A dedicated Technical Working Group, led by the Civil Registry of El Salvador, will focus on identity and identification of migrants. Looking ahead, CLARCIEV plans to host a regional "CRVS Week" in 2025 with field-based registration activities to entrench a culture of registration in the region. In 2026, a regional consultation will assess national progress in combating statelessness, while the Migration Working Group will continue its work on developing practical tools and approaches.

Ms. Sarah Meneses of the **OAS Department of Social Inclusion** highlighted that the OAS is actively supporting regional efforts to prevent and eradicate statelessness in the Americas. She noted that statelessness has been positioned as a regional priority through initiatives such as the Chile Declaration and its Plan of Action, as well as through the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS). Furthermore, the OAS General Secretariat has fostered spaces for knowledge exchange to support the implementation of these commitments. In 2024, OAS co-hosted a regional event on statelessness prevention and eradication with UNHCR and Georgetown University. Building on this momentum, in 2025, the OAS also organized an Expert Panel on Statelessness and Gender Discrimination in Nationality Laws in collaboration with American University. For the 2025–2026 period, OAS aims to enhance the visibility of statelessness issues within its broader agenda and promote the exchange of good practices. A regional report on statelessness prevention and eradication is planned, along with the relaunch of the Americas Network on Nationality and Statelessness.

Mr. Amit Sen from UNHCR's Regional Bureau for **Asia and the Pacific** highlighted key regional partnerships in addressing statelessness across Asia. A strong and ongoing collaboration with ASEAN has focused on promoting legal identity for women and children, which has yielded positive outcomes. In Central Asia, UNHCR celebrated significant progress, particularly through the adoption of the 2024 Ashgabat Declaration, which outlines eight priority areas for regional action. Noteworthy developments include efforts to confirm the nationality of historical migrant populations, as well as initiatives to ensure the inclusion of stateless individuals within national systems. Looking ahead, the upcoming CRVS Ministerial Conference in 2025 will serve as a major milestone, building upon two previous such initiatives and reinforcing the importance of legal identity and civil registration in preventing and reducing statelessness.

Ms. Julie Devys of the **Council of Europe** emphasized that CoE is prioritizing the issue of statelessness among children through its Working Group on Migration (CDCJ-MIG) for 2024–2026. This expert group, which includes representatives from across the region and observers with relevant experience, including UNHCR and the European Network on Statelessness (ENS), meets twice annually. Its first session in May 2024 included a hearing from statelessness advocates who had experienced statelessness in childhood. A key milestone is the publication of a feasibility study by Prof. de Groot, recommending a revision of Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)13 on the nationality of children. For 2025–2026, the Council is developing a compendium of good practice related to legal aid, access to information, and to justice for children in nationality and statelessness determination procedures to be completed by the end of the year, and the revised Recommendation on the nationality of children, accompanied by a checklist for policymakers, which is expected by end-2026.

Ms. Beata Bislim Olahova from the **OSCE ODIHR** emphasized that the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights continues to promote the right to nationality, building on its longstanding work on documentation access, particularly for Roma and Sinti populations. A formal pledge has been made to support states in building capacity and exchanging good practices over the next five years. Recent activities include a European human rights conference and a side event on progress since 2014 in ending statelessness across the OSCE area. In 2025, ODIHR will release a joint publication compiling good practices for preventing childhood statelessness, under the theme "Opening Doors for Children."

Ms. Mitra Jalali from the **OSCE HCNM** highlighted that the High Commissioner on National Minorities engages on statelessness as part of broader efforts to promote social cohesion and conflict prevention. This work involves both private diplomacy -through country visits -and public awareness raising via reports to the OSCE Council. Statelessness is consistently highlighted in these communications. The Commissioner also facilitates depoliticized dialogue platforms focused on good practices. This approach will continue into 2025–2026 with ongoing conversations and targeted events.

Ms. Lobna Azzam of the **League of Arab States** highlighted that LAS continues to play a key advocacy and coordination role in advancing regional efforts to prevent statelessness. Following

the adoption of the Arab Declaration on Belonging and Legal Identity in 2023 and its launch in 2024, LAS has worked with Member States to develop a regional Plan of Action. Eleven Member States have submitted feedback and recommendations on the draft plan. Notably, eleven countries have also appointed national focal points to coordinate implementation. As part of the next steps, LAS will convene a workshop on internal displacement in early June, followed by a dedicated meeting of the focal points. At this meeting, two priority objectives from the Plan of Action will be selected for focused work. Member States will subsequently report on implementation progress related to both the overall plan and the chosen priorities. Looking ahead, LAS aims to finalize and adopt the Plan of Action by 2026. This will be accompanied by efforts to strengthen regional coordination, support technical capacity-building, and promote shared solutions to statelessness. LAS will also continue to facilitate the exchange of best practices—highlighting legal reforms already undertaken by seven Member States, including Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Djibouti, and Yemen.

Session II: Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Regional Commitments

This session, moderated by Ms. Claudia Gonzalez Bengoa and Ms. Sarah Meneses Pajuelo, from the Department of Social Inclusion of the OAS, explored the practical challenges and opportunities faced by regional stakeholders in implementing their commitments to end statelessness. It served as a platform reflect on regional experiences, exchange good practices, and identify concrete opportunities and recommendations.

Breakout group discussions, moderated by UNHCR, were organized to foster deeper exchange on specific aspects of implementation, including good practices, challenges, opportunities, and common recommendations.

Key Outcomes from the Breakout Discussions

- **Centering Lived Experience and Civil Society in Implementation** - all groups underscored the importance of placing stateless people and communities with lived experience at the heart of implementation efforts. Stateless-led organizations and civil society networks were seen as essential partners in shaping strategies, ensuring accountability, and driving national and regional progress.
- **Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Peer Learning** - there was broad agreement on the value of increased cross-border cooperation, including regional monitoring mechanisms and peer-review processes. Study visits, dialogue platforms, and knowledge exchanges were identified as practical tools to replicate good practices and harmonize responses across states.
- **Thematic and Targeted Approaches** - participants recommended focusing on specific root causes of statelessness - such as gender discrimination in nationality laws, lack of civil documentation for minorities, or childhood statelessness - to maintain political will and deliver concrete results. Thematic focus was seen as a pragmatic way to achieve traction in politically sensitive environments.

- **Expanding Partnerships/Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity Building and Awareness-Raising - s**everal underutilized partnerships were highlighted, including with the media, academia, and government departments beyond civil registries and MoI, such as Ministries of Foreign Affairs. Participants stressed the need for sustained investment in capacity-building, training, and public awareness. IGOs were encouraged to support efforts that mainstream statelessness within broader human rights and development agendas.
- **Proposals for New Coordination Structures and Mechanisms - s**ome groups proposed establishing regional focal points on statelessness and creating regional advisory boards to support regular consultation and coordination. Others suggested using existing platforms more strategically, such as dedicating annual themes to specific statelessness issues.

Session III: Strengthening the Global Alliance and Expanding the Solution Seekers Programme (SSP)

This session focused on building momentum around the Global Alliance and expanding the reach and impact of its Solution Seekers Programme (SSP). Moderated by Ms. Thandeka Chauke, Coordinator of the South African Nationality Network (SANN), the session featured a panel discussion with representatives from regional intergovernmental and civil society organizations.

Ms. Mitra Jalali, Senior Legal Adviser at the OSCE HCNM, emphasized the unique preventive mandate of the HCNM office, which focuses on addressing the root causes of inter-ethnic tensions before they escalate into conflict. Statelessness, she noted, often intersects with these tensions, particularly in the OSCE region where it disproportionately affects national minorities. The denial or deprivation of nationality can deepen exclusion, limit access to basic rights and services, and over time, undermine social cohesion and societal stability.

HCNM joined the Global Alliance to support its strategic objective of fostering inclusive and resilient societies, and to contribute a conflict prevention and peacebuilding perspective to the global dialogue on statelessness. The Alliance provides a valuable platform for structured exchange and mutual learning with other actors at national, regional, and global levels. This is especially important for amplifying the quiet diplomacy efforts of HCNM aimed at ensuring that minorities have access to nationality without discrimination, and that they can meaningfully participate in the life of the societies where they live.

Ms. Jalali highlighted that statelessness should not only be addressed as a human rights issue but also as a matter of peace and security, offering states multiple angles of rationale for policy reform. In many cases, presenting statelessness as a risk to social stability has proven more persuasive than rights-based arguments alone.

The Global Alliance offers an opportunity to gain insight and tailor more context-specific policy advice to participating states. The need to involve civil society and people with lived experience

of statelessness, when safe to do so, was emphasized, to ensure that solutions are grounded in reality and respectful of the dignity and safety of affected individuals.

Finally, the value of regional cooperation was highlighted, noting that while contexts vary, the human, societal, and regional impacts of statelessness are shared - and regional platforms are well-placed to foster dialogue, peer learning, and harmonized approaches to addressing and preventing statelessness.

Mr. Subin Mulmi, Executive Director of Nationality for All (NFA), emphasized that joining the Global Alliance was a natural step for their organization, given its close work with stateless communities in Asia and the Pacific. He noted that in a region where coordination between civil society, states, and impacted persons is often limited, the Alliance provides a much-needed global space for bridging those divides. The inclusion of stateless-led organizations from the outset - through the Task Force and Advisory Committee - was a key motivation, marking a shift from top-down approaches to one that centers lived experience.

He stressed that while there is increasing normative clarity and data on statelessness, what has been missing is coordinated, multi-stakeholder action and political will. The Alliance addresses this gap by creating space for collaboration rather than confrontation, enabling CSOs and states to work side-by-side and keep stateless persons at the core. Subin highlighted the formation of the Asia Pacific Coalition on Statelessness (SDCC-AP), co-led by impacted individuals, as a major outcome of this shift toward inclusion and shared leadership.

Finally, Subin pointed to emerging good practices, such as impacted-person-led reforms in Malaysia and Nepal, and engagement with regional mechanisms like ASEAN. Despite ongoing challenges, he expressed optimism grounded in the growing leadership and visibility of stateless individuals across the region.

Following the panel, participants engaged in a brainstorming session on how to encourage more Member States to join the Alliance and take concrete actions on statelessness. Participants emphasized the catalytic role that regional IGOs can play by modelling leadership and encouraging Member States to act, and highlighted the value of peer recommendations and bilateral outreach as practical tools to engage new members. The discussion reinforced several key points: the need to center stateless-led organizations in all aspects of the Alliance's work; the role of the Alliance in facilitating structured cooperation between states and civil society organizations (CSOs); and the importance of integrating statelessness into broader, sustained policy dialogues through awareness-raising and inclusive engagement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The Inter-Regional Network Lab reaffirmed the vital role of regional intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) in preventing and reducing statelessness by fostering inclusive, coordinated, and regionally grounded action.

The participants highlighted several priority areas for follow-up:

- Leverage the convening power of IGOs to expand the Global Alliance and Solution Seekers Programme, including through peer recommendations, bilateral outreach, and leadership by example to bring in new Member States and partners.
- Strengthen regional cooperation, peer learning, and accountability mechanisms by promoting cross-border dialogue, study visits, and regional monitoring or peer review frameworks. These tools can help replicate good practices and harmonize approaches across regions.
- Promote targeted, theme-based action focused on specific drivers of statelessness - such as childhood statelessness, gender discrimination in nationality laws, and access to legal identity for marginalized groups - to maintain momentum and political engagement.
- Invest in capacity-building, public awareness, and multi-sectoral partnerships, including with civil registries, ministries of foreign affairs, academia, and the media, to embed statelessness in broader human rights, development, and peacebuilding agendas.
- Center stateless-led organizations and people with lived experience in all regional and global responses to statelessness.