

**FRONTLINE**  
NEGOTIATIONS

CENTRE OF COMPETENCE ON  
HUMANITARIAN NEGOTIATION



## High-Level Panel & Professional Roundtable Strengthening the Capabilities of Humanitarian Organizations to Negotiate on the Frontlines

**26 - 27 November 2019**  
Berlin, Germany

In partnership with:





# About the CCHN

The Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation (CCHN) is a joint initiative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP), Médecins sans Frontières (MSF-Switzerland) and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD). It was launched in 2016 to facilitate the capture, analysis and sharing of negotiation experiences between humanitarian professionals. It provides a platform for both multi- and single-agency dialogue and intends to foster a community of practice among professionals engaged in humanitarian negotiations.

The CCHN is staffed by seconded employees of the five Strategic Partners and operates out of Domaine "La Pastorale" at the heart of the international district of Geneva. During a five-year incubation phase, it is hosted by the ICRC. With the support of the five Strategic Partners, the CCHN organizes dedicated events, peer-to-peer exchanges and carries out research on issues identified by practitioners.

A Strategic Partnership between:



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# AGENDA

Tuesday, 26 November

- 09:00** *Welcome coffee*
- 09:30** ***Welcome/opening by Rüdiger König***  
Director General for Crisis Prevention, Stabilisation, Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Assistance at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany
- 09:35** ***Keynote by H.E. Bärbel Kofler***  
German Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Assistance
- 09:45** ***Framing of the debate by Claude Bruderlein***  
Director of the CCHN

## High-Level Panel

- 10:00** ***Opening statement by ICRC President Peter Maurer***
- 10:15** ***Statements of panelists and open discussion***
- 11:30** ***Launch of the CCHN Field Manual 2019***
- 12:00** *Lunch + Exhibit of Training and Peer Exchange Programs on Humanitarian Negotiation*

## Voices from the Field

- 13:00** ***Voices from the Field***  
Pre-recorded statements from field practitioners, discussion and plenary with field practitioners onsite.

## Professional Roundtable

- 14:00** ***Opening of the Professional Roundtable by Claude Bruderlein***  
Director of the CCHN
- 14:15** ***Session 1: Ascertaining the profile of humanitarian negotiators: On the required skills and competencies to engage in complex negotiations***  
(Working Groups + Plenary)
- 15:45** *Coffee break*

- 16:15**      ***Session 2: Designing professional development pathways on humanitarian negotiation – On toolkits and methods for humanitarian professionals***  
(Working Groups + Plenary)
- 17:45**      ***Cocktail dinatoire***
- 19:30**      ***End of Day 1***

Wednesday, 27 November

## Professional Roundtable (continued)

- 08:30** *Welcome coffee*
- 09:05** **Opening of day 2 by Claude Bruderlein**  
Director of the CCHN
- 09:10** **Session 3: On the framing and monitoring of humanitarian negotiation processes**  
(Working Groups + Plenary)
- 10:40** *Coffee break*
- 11:00** **Session 4: Review of experiential learning and peer-to-peer approaches**  
(Working Groups + Plenary)
- 12:30** *Lunch*
- 13:30** **Session 5: On the development of an informal action plan**  
(Working Groups + Plenary)
- 15:00** *Coffee break*
- 15:15** **Closing session**
- Rüdiger König**  
Director General for Crisis Prevention, Stabilisation, Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Assistance at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany
- H.E. Ambassador Paul Seger**  
Swiss Ambassador to the German Federal Republic
- Claude Bruderlein as moderator**  
Director of the CCHN
- 16:00** **End of Professional Roundtable**

# BACKGROUND NOTE

The purpose of this background note is to assist participants in their preparation for the conference on humanitarian negotiation in Berlin. It provides succinct information on the objectives of the conference and presents preliminary observations drawn from consultations and interviews of participants.

Readers will find inside the note the preparatory material for the High-Level Panel discussion as well as for the working groups of the Professional Roundtable.

## Objectives

The main goals of the Berlin Conference are:

- Review and discuss a common vision toward the development of negotiation capabilities of humanitarian organizations and professionals operating in conflict environments;
- Facilitate a dialogue between field practitioners, representatives of professional development departments, and dedicated training centers on how to implement this vision across field operations over the coming years; and
- Review and compare professional development pathways to ensure the relevance and accessibility of the necessary tools and peer support for all concerned staff, including national staff, operating on the frontlines.

## Format

The conference is composed of two parts:

- **High-Level Panel**

The High-Level Panel aims to mobilize the interest of humanitarian organizations toward the building up of negotiation capabilities through the critical review of a common vision. It is expected that the panelists will concur in promoting a more systematic and rigorous approach to building the capabilities of their organization and staff to negotiate on the frontlines. Already, the key players (ICRC, UNHCR, WFP, MSF, and HD) have developed a shared vision in the set-up of a Strategic Partnership on Humanitarian Negotiation and launching the CCHN in 2016. The aim of the conference in Berlin is to present, review, and improve upon this shared vision and discuss current plans for its implementation across the humanitarian community.



- **Professional Roundtable**

The Professional Roundtable that will stem from the High-Level Panel and look into practical ways of encouraging humanitarian organizations to strengthen their negotiation capabilities with the support of reputable policy and training centres and the contribution of the members of the CCHN's community of practice. It is expected that participants will discuss specific steps on how to move this agenda forward.

The Professional Roundtable discussion will be articulated among a series of four thematic sessions of 1 hour and 30 minutes each, subdivided into working group discussions. Each working group discussion will entail a plenary session during which the main conclusions of the working groups will be shared with the entire audience. The overarching goal of the Professional Roundtable is to develop and substantiate a plan of action to strengthen the capabilities of humanitarian organizations to negotiate on the frontlines. This plan of action will be the focus of the report of the conference.

# KEYNOTE SPEECH



## H.E. Dr. Bärbel Kofler

*Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Assistance | Berlin - Germany*

Bärbel Kofler, born 1967, has degrees in computer science, linguistics, Russian and Spanish languages. She joined the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) in 1991 and has been a Member of the German Bundestag since 2004. In the current 19th electoral term she is serving as a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. Previously she was the Development Policy Spokesperson of the SPD parliamentary group until February 2016. Since 2016 she has been Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Aid.

# HIGH-LEVEL PANEL SPEAKERS



## **Peter Maurer**

*President, International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) | Geneva - Switzerland*

Peter Maurer has been President of ICRC since July 2012. In this position, his priorities include strengthening humanitarian diplomacy, engaging States and other actors for the respect of international humanitarian law, and improving the humanitarian response through innovation and new partnerships. He has led the organization through a historic budget increase to meet the growing needs of victims of armed conflict, from 1,1 bn CHF in 2011 to over 1.6 bn CHF in 2015. He previously served as secretary State of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and ambassador of Switzerland to the UN in New York.



## **Jean-François Huchet**

*President, National Institute for Oriental Language and Civilization (INALCO) | Paris - France*

Jean-François Huchet was previously vice-president for research of INALCO from 2017 to 2019. He was director of the Centre for Asian Studies (ASIEs) at INALCO from 2014 to 2017. Between 2006 and 2011, he was director of the French Centre for Research on Contemporary China (CEFC) a French National Research Center (CNRS) research institute based in Hong Kong, and director of the Academic Journal "China Perspectives". He was based in Asia for 18 years and has occupied several academic positions as senior research fellow.



## **Grainne O'Hara**

*Director of The Division of International Protection, UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) | Geneva - Switzerland*

Grainne O'Hara holds a law degree from Trinity College Dublin and was called to the Bar in Ireland in 1992. After two years of service with the Free Legal Advice Centres in Dublin she opted for an international career and joined UNHCR in 1994 as a United Nations Volunteer. In 24 years with UNHCR she has served in a variety of functions and operational settings spanning a wide range of protection related responsibilities. Her postings have included: Mexico; fYROM; Kosovo; Burundi; Sudan; the Caribbean; the United States of America; Afghanistan; Syria; Iraq and Jordan.



## Rehan Asad

*Chief of Staff, World Food Programme (WFP) | Rome - Italy*

Rehan Asad was appointed as the World Food Programme's Chief of Staff in July 2017. This department focuses on strengthening the role WFP plays as one of the world's leading humanitarian agencies while at the same time helping develop its strategic and progressive vision. From 2015 until joining WFP, Mr Asad was responsible for AT&T's operations management. Leading up to this role, he held multiple key positions within AT&T, gaining extensive experience in corporate strategy, wireless network planning and broadband product management. Earlier with AT&T, he served as a director in corporate strategy.



## Jan Egeland

*Secretary General, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) | Oslo - Norway*

Jan Egeland was UN Under- Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator (USG/ERC) between 2003-2006 leading international efforts to streamline relief in large scale, acute crises. In this role, he developed the 2005 UN reform of the humanitarian system. Egeland later became Director of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) before assuming the position of European Director of Human Rights Watch. From here, he came to NRC in 2013. Egeland began his work as NRC's Secretary General on 12 August 2013.



## Carl Skau

*Deputy Director General, Head of Department for Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs, Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs | Stockholm - Sweden*

Carl Skau was ambassador and special envoy to Venezuela prior to the current role. He served as ambassador and Deputy Representative to the UN Security Council in 2017-2018 and headed the Swedish campaign to Security Council in 2015-2016. Previous positions include Deputy Representative to the EU PSC in Brussels, Deputy Head of the EU Mission in Zimbabwe and Counsellor at the UN Mission in New York. Before joining the Swedish Foreign Service, he worked for the UN in Africa and Latin America.



## Heba Aly

*Director, The New Humanitarian | Nairobi - Kenya*

Named by New African Magazine one of the 100 Most Influential Africans of 2018, Heba Aly runs the world's only news organization dedicated to journalism about humanitarian crises: [www.TheNewHumanitarian.org](http://www.TheNewHumanitarian.org). The New Humanitarian (formerly IRIN News) is an independent, non-profit newsroom reporting from the heart of conflicts and disasters. Its global network of journalists amplifies the voices of those affected to inform more effective and accountable responses by the international community. A multimedia journalist by training, Heba spent one decade reporting from conflict zones in the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia. She will moderate the High-Level Panel Session.

# HIGH-LEVEL PANEL

## TOWARD A COMMON VISION ON HUMANITARIAN NEGOTIATION

*Elaborated on the basis of the preparatory consultation and interviews of participants June-September 2019. To be reviewed and discussed by the High-Level Panel on 26 November 2019.*

Humanitarian organizations operate in increasingly complex and fragmented conflict environments. The access of humanitarian organizations to populations affected by armed conflicts is subject to competing local, regional, and global forces that tend to instrumentalize relief aid and set conditions for the delivery of life-saving assistance to people in need. As a result, the core principles of humanitarian action are under increasing pressure by conflict actors.

To ensure the impartial delivery of humanitarian assistance and protection activities, independent and neutral humanitarian organizations must find ways to engage with all relevant stakeholders on the terms of their activities. This engagement requires at times the ability to conduct complex negotiations with varied actors to seek the consent of the parties involved in a wide range of situations.

Humanitarian organizations have been engaging in negotiation processes all over the world for several decades. There is a vast amount of negotiation experience dispersed among field practitioners. Yet, this experience has rarely been collected or analysed. There are few training opportunities on humanitarian negotiation that draw from current practices. Negotiation tools, methods have not been systematized and there has been limited investment so far in the capabilities of humanitarian organizations to conduct complex negotiations in conflict environments in view of the political, social, and security risks associated with such engagements. The creation of the Strategic Partnership on Humanitarian Negotiation, composed of the ICRC, WFP, UNHCR, MSF, and HD, and the launch of the Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation (CCHN) in 2016, have been first attempts to identify basic tools and methods of humanitarian negotiation on the frontlines and to build a community of practice at the field level. Several other programs initiated in recent years have also focused their attention on building the capacity of humanitarian professionals to engage with state and non-state actors in securing access to populations in need, deploying effective programs, and ensuring the protection of people most affected.

The demands for professional tools and methods on humanitarian negotiation as well as for opportunities to exchange field practices have been growing steadily over several years. Most of these demands emanate from field practitioners, particularly national staff, who build and maintain relationships with conflict actors and communities on a daily basis. Humanitarian organizations have also expressed a growing interest in building their institutional capacity to plan and monitor negotiation processes in a coherent manner at national and regional levels. Further, the connection between field negotiations and humanitarian diplomacy has been a growing sector of inquiries as the challenges and dilemmas of frontline negotiations tend to reoccur across contexts. There is a new awareness on the importance of developing more nuanced strategies and negotiation plans to address some of the most salient challenges and dilemmas of humanitarian action.

Significant efforts will need to be devoted to responding to these demands in terms of:

- Developing practical negotiation tools and methods to assist humanitarian professionals in their engagements with conflict actors in complex environments;
- Ensuring the maintenance of safe spaces for the sharing of negotiation experience and peer support in times of crisis;
- Building the capabilities of organizations to plan and monitor negotiation processes as well as to guide and support the efforts of negotiation teams;
- Sharing negotiation tools and capacity across agencies in view of their growing interdependence in terms of safe and principled access; and,
- Focusing attention on the training of national and international staff at the field level and the mobilization of their field experience.

In this context, the Berlin Conference represents a significant opportunity to discuss the orientation of these efforts and connect relevant initiatives.

# VOICES FROM THE FIELD PANELISTS



## **Joëlle Germanier**

*Head of Operations, Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation (CCHN) | Geneva - Switzerland*

Joëlle Germanier was deployed with the ICRC in various field operations in Africa and Latin America as a protection delegate and Head of Office prior to joining the CCHN. Previously, she led within ICRC's Law and Policy Department a research project about International Humanitarian Law on the frontline, focusing on urban warfare. Besides her years of experience as a humanitarian practitioner, Joëlle worked as a political attaché for the Swiss Embassy in New Delhi. She holds an MA degree in International Public Law and a BA degree in International Relations from the University of Geneva and Vienna.



## **Clarisse Uwambayikirezi**

*Fmr Field Team Leader, International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) | Gondar, Ethiopia*

Clarisse Uwambayikirezi was born in Rwanda. From a displaced child, to a humanitarian actor, the encounter left an indelible mark that would shape her calling in life. She obtained a bachelor in law from the Rwanda National University and a masters in conflict resolution and Human Rights from CHAIR UNESCO Programme in Burundi. Her career began in Rwanda, working for the United Nations (2007-2014, UNDP and OHCHR). Further into crisis management and conflict resolution, she worked with with the UNV and ICRC in Niger/Diffa, Nigeria/ Maiduguri, South Sudan/Malakal, Mali/Mopti and Gao and Ethiopia/Gondar.



## **Oscar Sánchez Piñeiro**

*Senior Field Coordinator, UNHCR (United Nations Refugee Agency) | Cox's Bazar - Bangladesh*

Oscar Sánchez Piñeiro is an experienced and dynamic humanitarian worker with a 20 years of working in the international affairs arena. He is a strong background in Conflict Resolution, Policy Analysis, International Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law, Humanitarian Negotiation and Refugee Law. Mr. Sánchez Piñeiro graduated from THINK School of Creative Leadership. He holds a Master of Studies (MSt) in International Human Rights Law from the University of Oxford and a Master Degree in Public & Nonprofit Management & Policy from New York University.





## **Wissam Al-Ahmad**

*Head of Programme, World Food Programme (WFP) WFP Programme Policy Officer | Kadugli -Sudan*

Wissam Alahmad, Humanitarian from the field. Her negotiation skills mostly obtained during her work as Head of Damascus Sub-Office in Syria, Leading WFP operation in area where 90% of hard to reach and besieged areas are located. Her professional experience in Syria elongate over 11 years of development and humanitarian field of work between UNDP, OCHA and WFP. Wissam is a holder of master's degree in Cooperation for Development from University Libre de Bruxelles. Originally from Syria, French citizen. Spending her life between Syria, Belgium, United State of America and now in Sudan giving her side perspective of cultural diversity.

# PROFESSIONAL ROUNDTABLE

## ON STRENGTHENING THE CAPABILITIES OF HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS TO ENGAGE IN COMPLEX NEGOTIATION ON THE FRONTLINES

*This section provides a summary of the conceptual framework of the discussion and provides preparatory material for the working groups discussion of the Professional Roundtable.*

### **Defining Frontline Humanitarian Negotiation**

According to the CCHN Field Manual, humanitarian negotiation is defined as a set of interactions aimed at reaching an agreement between humanitarian organizations and parties to an armed conflict to ensure the safe access of the organizations to the affected populations and facilitate the delivery of assistance and protection activities in an impartial and neutral manner. These negotiations involve both state and non-state actors and take place most often in the course of field operations. Negotiation processes contribute overall to building trust between the parties as well as shaping the logistical and operational parameters of field operations.

Frontline humanitarian negotiations are further characterized by the unstable political and security environments in which humanitarian organizations operate, requiring the involvement of professionals with specific negotiation and communication skills to establish contextual, confidential, and personal relationships with counterparts. Frontline negotiators often face significant dilemmas in complex and fluctuating environments, making at times difficult calls to ensure the best possible outcomes for the affected populations. Frontline humanitarian negotiators often work in isolation from each other and under considerable pressure.

Professionals engaged in humanitarian negotiation have recognized commonalities of purposes and methods in their negotiation practices—both within a given conflict and across conflict situations. The growing interdependence of humanitarian actors on the ground further implies a greater need and benefit for sharing negotiation experiences and promoting peer learning. Frontline negotiators are also increasingly aware of the impact of their tactics on the negotiation outcomes of other organizations, including the safety and security of humanitarian colleagues. As humanitarian organizations expand their operational outreach, the task of negotiating access has become a central part of their activities and the crucial point at which humanitarian principles intersect with field practices.

## **On the Development of Individual Abilities to Negotiate on the Frontlines**

In the view of participants from agencies who were interviewed, humanitarian negotiation has yet to become a properly recognized professional activity with its set of distinct tasks, functions, and responsibilities. Many have experienced humanitarian negotiation alternatively as:

- An advocacy activity undertaken by a large and diverse group of staff in various situations, from military checkpoints up to the highest echelons of state apparatus;
- A leadership function driven by mid-level to senior managers in the field as part of their operational responsibilities; or
- A specific mandate given to operational staff on the frontlines to set a framework of access or ensure protection under a clearly defined protocol and red lines.

In the absence of a clear understanding of the negotiation function, it has been difficult to build a consensus on the necessary competences of humanitarian negotiators applicable to all the various circumstances. As a result, the knowledge, attitudes, and skills required to engage effectively in humanitarian negotiation have remained for the most part uncharted.

Consequently, the demand for professional development opportunities on humanitarian negotiation has been rising steadily in recent years. Several training centers have developed introductory material on humanitarian principles and negotiation skills for the benefit of field practitioners, but these initiatives can hardly satisfy the demand, especially among professionals operating in remote locations. However, despite the need, thus far very few agencies have streamlined negotiation modules to their internal training programs. A key aspect in addressing the need for professional development on humanitarian negotiation resides in the ability of humanitarian organizations to both integrate practical negotiation tools and methods into their professional training programs and to scale up peer exchanges and reflections at the field level.

## **On the Need to Better Prepare Humanitarian Organizations to Negotiate on the Frontlines**

Developing the capabilities of field practitioners to engage in complex negotiation goes hand in hand with strengthening the ability of organizations to design and monitor negotiation processes. Negotiation activities are often perceived as essentially personal, contextual, and confidential endeavors. Yet, the implications of such processes on the reputation and policies of the

organizations, security and safety of staff, and welfare of the affected population are paramount. Organizations must learn from best practices in framing and guiding negotiation processes and maximizing the shared benefits of all stakeholders within a given risk management framework. Such abilities will benefit from dedicated training for operational hierarchies on how to plan, guide and monitor negotiation processes while providing the necessary autonomy to the frontline negotiators. In turn, humanitarian negotiators will need the support of their teams and hierarchies in addressing the challenges and dilemmas of their engagements with conflict actors. This support should be informed by the vast experience spread around the humanitarian community, as well as by reflections of policy centers on acceptable compromises in the implementation of humanitarian norms.

## **ON THE RESULTS OF THE PREPARATORY CONSULTATION FOR THE BERLIN CONFERENCE**

The CCHN conducted a series of informal consultations among field practitioners and interviews among participating agencies to prepare for the conference in Berlin. A group of 22 experienced humanitarian negotiators, most of them active members of the CCHN community, took part in preliminary consultations in Caux (Switzerland) on June 3-5, 2019, focused on the design of a competence chart and planning tools to build the capacity of frontline negotiators. Additionally, in September 2019, 12 interviews were conducted with representatives of participating agencies to narrow down the observations collected so far and prepare the agenda of the meeting. These observations are presented below, sorted by the themes of each session. The result of the interviews indicates a series of questions to be covered in working group discussions.

### **The four main themes that have been identified for the Professional Roundtable are:**

- 1** Ascertaining the profile of humanitarian negotiators: On the required skills and competencies to engage in complex negotiations;
- 2** Designing professional development pathways on humanitarian negotiation: Toolkits and methods for humanitarian negotiators;
- 3** On the framing and monitoring of humanitarian negotiation processes; and
- 4** Review of experiential learning and peer-to-peer approaches.

# SESSION 1

## Ascertaining the profiles of humanitarian negotiators: On the required skills and competencies to engage in complex negotiations

### Objectives

*The main objective of the first session is to prompt a conversation on the required knowledge, attitudes and skills to conduct effective humanitarian negotiations in complex environments. Participants are invited to share their perspectives on the necessary competences to engage in humanitarian negotiation based on their own experience as well as the proposed chart developed by members of the CCHN community. Later sessions will provide a space to discuss how to support the development of such competences.*

### Background

While some respondents still consider negotiation skills and abilities to be essentially personal or “natural”, the vast majority believe that the individual attributes of the negotiators alone are no longer sufficient. Conflict environments are becoming increasingly complex and hazardous. Humanitarian negotiators need an overarching framework to organize and analyze their practical experience across agencies and contexts. This does not imply that all negotiations are the same. Access, protection, delivery, presence, and safety are different domains that require their own negotiation framework. Contexts are also very different. Yet, the connection between these experiences and the interdependence among agencies are growing. A failed negotiation of one actor will have implications on the access and safety of other actors. More efforts are also needed to expand the capabilities of humanitarian negotiators across agencies to operate on the frontlines through critical reflections and the sharing of experience with other negotiators from outside their organization, to be confronted with other approaches to the same problems.

While his/her specific functions may still need to be clarified, the actual profile of humanitarian negotiators has significantly evolved over recent years—from one of mostly international staff engaging intermittently in high profile processes, to one composed mostly of national staff building and maintaining ongoing relationships with a number of counterparts in field operations. Understanding the context, the ability to work through field networks, and maintaining long-term and trusted relationships with counterparts have become paramount elements of successful humanitarian negotiations.

Consequently, national staff have been playing a growing role in negotiating access due to their sustained presence in the field and their understanding of and connection to the context. This role has been both understood as a first line of

engagement and as part of the negotiation team providing a critical space to deepen the understanding of the environment. Conversely, international staff members seem increasingly isolated from these field-based relationships due to security constraints. Senior staff, including country managers, have been investing considerable attention in inter-agency coordination mechanisms and donor relation issues, while operational staff members maintain the necessary relationships with conflict actors. Senior managers often end up managing operations from a distance, further insulating them from the operational relationships.

## **On The Required Competence And Skills**

In consultations with members of the CCHN community, field practitioners were invited to Caux (Switzerland) on 3 – 5 June 2019 to compile the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they believe were required to engage in humanitarian negotiation. These elements were organized in the form of a “Competence Chart” (see Table 1 below). This chart was seen as an important tool to orient the professional development activities of the CCHN and other professional development efforts for the years to come.

### **CCHN members first defined the categories of competences as follows:**

- 1 Knowledge elements** were understood as dedicated capacity and methods that support and guide the planning and implementation of a negotiation process. These elements can be acquired through training, mentoring, and sharing, as well as through personal experience.
- 2 Attitudes** were understood as a set of behaviors, manners, and senses (e.g., empathy) that contribute to the setting up of favorable relationships. It involves the development of conducive attitudes such as a sense of self-awareness about one’s natural inclinations based on one’s personality, culture, gender, age, etc., as well as a capacity to adapt to the specific cultural, social, and political environments of the negotiation. As with any social behaviors, attitudes can rarely be acquired by training or by reading books, but rather are the products of personal changes and flexibility over time through personal experience, critical reflection, and mentoring.
- 3 Skills** were understood as a set of technical and social abilities to communicate and engage actively in negotiation processes that can be acquired through experience, training programs, and the integration of technical protocols.

These categories are expected to overlap in terms of learning methodologies. Participants in the consultation further discussed how best one can acquire these competences in an iterative manner, starting from core competences required to negotiate on the frontlines to more advanced ones, up to an expert level in sync with the acquisition of negotiation experience and the development of a negotiator's career. This first draft of the Competence Chart (see below) informs the design of the CCHN learning pathways.

**Table 1: Competence Chart on Humanitarian Negotiation  
Compiled by members of the CCHN community in Caux (Switzerland) June 3-5, 2019**

<b>Level/Feature of development</b>	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Attitudes</b>	<b>Skills</b>
<b>Core</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of humanitarian principles and basic rules</li> <li>• Capacity to map and build conducive networks</li> <li>• Capacity to analyze contexts and interests</li> <li>• Knowledge of cultural protocols</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-awareness</li> <li>• Emotional intelligence</li> <li>• Accepting complexity</li> <li>• Intercultural flexibility</li> <li>• Empathy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to think tactically and critically about oneself, one's organization, and one's objectives</li> <li>• Ability to work under pressure</li> <li>• Ability to deal with difficult people</li> <li>• Ability to share experience and perspectives openly</li> </ul>
<b>Advanced</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity to manage multiple external stakeholders</li> <li>• Method to leverage influence</li> <li>• Capacity to balance interests and find the right compromises</li> <li>• Method to engage in strategic thinking and decision-making</li> <li>• Capacity to reflect and deliberate on complex issues in a systematic manner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptability to changing environments</li> <li>• Ability to create options out of complex problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to address negotiations tactically, including the use of social media</li> <li>• Ability to understand complex environments</li> </ul>
<b>Expert</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity to forecast changing environments and positions</li> <li>• Capacity to develop multi-stakeholders, multifaceted strategies</li> <li>• Capacity to leverage competing sources of influence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to take and manage risks</li> <li>• Ability to lead a negotiation process</li> <li>• Ability to align priorities within one's organization and maintain a clear mandate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to mentor and coach negotiation teams in complex environments</li> </ul>

## Questions for Session 1

- How can one describe the function and attributes of frontline humanitarian negotiators from both a field and HQ perspective?
- What is the perceived importance of these attributes in ensuring the success of humanitarian negotiations in conflict environments?
- Drawing from the CCHN Competence Chart, how can one identify and discuss the required knowledge, attitudes, and skills to build the capacity of humanitarian professionals to engage in humanitarian negotiation on the frontlines?
- How useful can a chart be for the recognition of frontline humanitarian negotiators and their assignment to increasingly complex and demanding environments?
- How can one use a competence chart or similar tool to support the evaluation of humanitarian negotiators and to draw possible professional development pathways on humanitarian negotiation?

## Moderator



### **Alain Lempereur**

*Professor, Brandeis & Harvard PON  
Boston, United States*

## Facilitators



### **Bettina Weitz**

*Head of Office, MSF  
Amman, Jordan*



### **Gerard Mc Hugh**

*President, Conflict  
Dynamics  
International  
Boston, United  
States*



### **Toufik Naili**

*Negotiation Support  
Specialist - Curriculum  
& Network  
Geneva, Switzerland*



# SESSION 2

## Designing professional development pathways on humanitarian negotiators: Toolkits and methods for humanitarian negotiators.

### Objectives

*Building on the results of Session 1, the objective of Session 2 is to identify potential avenues to equip humanitarian professionals with the proper tools and methods to engage in fruitful negotiations on the frontlines. Participants are encouraged to imagine innovative ways to build the capacity of individual negotiators through various pedagogical and experiential approaches.*

### Background

There is currently no consensus on the required tools to engage in humanitarian negotiation. According to participants from agencies, humanitarian organizations tend to recruit people, especially national staff, who have already some negotiation experience on the basis of which they conduct their field negotiations. Efforts have been devoted to train staff on humanitarian principles rather than develop new and more astute negotiation capabilities. As far as training programs on negotiation are concerned, the few introductory sessions that exist are for the most part focused on advocacy and communication skills in the context of field operations: talking to whom, talking about what (key messages) and how to deliver the messages. In the view of respondents, such approach prompts field professionals to engage in one-way communication with their counterparts rather than engaging in a true dialogue and building trust.

Noticeably, national staff operating on the frontlines have limited access to the few training programs available. This deficit is particularly visible in domains such as the protection of civilians were those most exposed to the challenges and dilemmas of frontline negotiations, i.e. “deep field” staff and implementing partners, are often ill equipped to properly engage in difficult negotiations with conflict actors, in particular those related to divergent norms. Advanced training on the conduct of difficult negotiations is therefore much needed, especially in local languages.

There is considerable untapped experience at the field level that could be disseminated widely across the respective organizations and operational contexts through experiential learning methodologies. Overall, humanitarian organizations are not clear as to how to provide experiential training based on their own negotiation practices in parallel with maintaining the required alignment on the policy objectives and norms involved in these negotiations. There are concerns that such assessment would reveal the extent to which organizations are compromising some of the core institutional norms.

It is widely recognized that the challenges and dilemmas faced by frontline negotiators require a new approach to training. Generic training on negotiation is no longer sufficient. Practitioners need to learn how to build and leverage networks of influence, how to design scenarios of negotiation processes in humanitarian settings and how to develop strategies for operational negotiation. As negotiation processes are at times about compromising for the sake of having an impact, frontline negotiators should be trained to discern acceptable compromises from unbearable ones. Even people who are the most skilled can make drastic mistakes if they are not made aware of the implications of some of these processes. They should also be trained to unpack and explain humanitarian principles in a convincing manner in the eyes of the counterparts. Trainers should make good use of simulation and cases studies drawn from current and past humanitarian negotiation practices with due respect to protect the confidential nature of some of the specifics which are of limited interest for learning methodologies.

In terms of scale, training of trainers and the use of digital platforms are seen as the best vehicles for reaching a large number of operational staff in need of basic negotiation tools. These approaches seem most relevant in large organizations. However, many frontline negotiators cannot imagine how they would have learned to negotiate with armed actors via oversimplified e-learning modules. In such situation, strong preference is given to onsite and peer driven processes of experiential learning which are hard to scale up.

## Questions for Session 2

- How should humanitarian organizations design professional development pathways on humanitarian negotiation? What are the main segments/ levels of such pathway? What are the objectives of such effort?
- Should organizations aim to certify the acquisition of advanced negotiation capabilities especially as they relate to specific domains (e.g. humanitarian corridors, hostage crisis, IDPs protection, diversion, etc.)? If so, how?
- What is the role of external providers in training on negotiation techniques and skills?
- What is the role and opportunities of digital platforms in building the capacity of humanitarian professionals to negotiate on the frontlines? What are the potential limitations?
- How should organizations address the issue of scale considering the large number of national and international staff in need of standardized negotiation capabilities?

## Moderator



**Robert Weibel**  
CEO, CENAD  
*Brussels, Belgium*

## Facilitators



**Anaide Nahikian**  
*Program Manager,  
Harvard Humanitarian  
Initiative  
Boston, United States*



**Karl Blanchet**  
*Director, CERAH  
Geneva, Switzerland*



**Larry Hollingworth**  
*Instructor, Institute of  
International  
Humanitarian Affairs,  
Fordham University  
New York, United States*

# SESSION 3

## On the framing and monitoring of humanitarian negotiation processes

### Objectives

*Session 3 focuses on the monitoring and framing of negotiation processes by humanitarian agencies to create the proper environment for the conduct of effective negotiations. Participants are invited to explore the ways and means to build the capability of humanitarian organizations to manage and monitor humanitarian negotiation processes considering their stakes both in terms of impact on the affected population as well as the risks associated to some of the operational compromises.*

### Background

The presence of humanitarian organizations in conflict environments has expanded considerably in recent years, requiring the engagement of field practitioners with a growing number of local actors, in particular, armed groups. With the radicalization of some of these actors, organizations have been exposed to new levels and types of risks due to the potential instrumentalization of humanitarian action, particularly when such negotiations involve groups listed under counter-terrorism legislation.

Some of the respondents argue that a key reason why humanitarian negotiation has remained a sensitive topic is the unwillingness of humanitarian organizations to develop an open narrative about their engagement with armed groups. Humanitarian diplomacy is further confronted with a problem of definition: many see diplomatic engagements of organizations as a slippery slope towards the further politicization of humanitarian action and organizations. Others argue that every negotiation of access is political in essence. There seems to be a fractured culture around distinguishing humanitarian negotiation from political diplomacy.

Respondents believe that operational hierarchies should be trained to guide and support negotiation processes, including determining the red lines and discussing the objectives of the negotiation with the negotiation teams. Designing the mandate of frontline negotiators is a matter of leadership where the management is capable of empowering field practitioners to negotiate effectively. Setting up a dialogue with conflict actors raise a number of political issues that have to be well understood and approved by the relevant levels of hierarchy.

Respondents believed that humanitarian negotiators should be given more guidance from their hierarchies to develop their interpretation of humanitarian principles. Humanitarian principles are seen as sacrosanct and are hard to deconstruct. As a result, humanitarian negotiators have limited ability to adjust their meaning and relevance to the context.

In addition, more support is required in terms of advanced tools, knowledge and skills dealing with high risk and complex situations, particularly in contexts such as Syria, Libya and Yemen. Strategic and critical skills need to be developed. Capacity to coordinate with other agencies and engage with communities is also lacking. Others are concerned that the early adoption of a systematic model will lose traction with field practitioners at the field level. Humanitarian negotiation is first and foremost a field practice. Systematizing this practice is by itself an abstraction, a theory of the negotiation. The point is to maintain a pragmatic approach to frontline negotiations without falling into the personal, contextual and confidential trap, i.e. no one can actually learn from the experience of others since negotiation is ultimately a personal and country-specific affair.

### Questions for Session 3

- What are the potential ways to enhance the capabilities of the management of humanitarian organizations to frame negotiation processes on the frontlines?
- How should organizations guide and monitor negotiation processes? Who should decide on red lines and how? What does an acceptable compromise look like? What are the risks involved, how are they evaluated and treated?
- How far agencies should invest in the development of monitoring tools such as digital journals to support the collective learning of the organization?
- What are the opportunities and constraints to developing a library of case studies and simulation?

### Moderator



**Joyce Luma**  
*HR Director, WFP*  
*Rome, Italy*

### Facilitators



**Casie Copeland**  
*Humanitarian Diplomacy*  
*Adviser, WFP*  
*Rome, Italy*



**Cecile Aptel**  
*Director, IFRC*  
*Geneva, Switzerland*



**Jacopo Giorgi**  
*Senior Staff Development*  
*Officer, UNHCR*  
*Budapest, Hungary*

# SESSION 4

## Review of experiential learning and peer-to-peer approaches

### Objectives

*The main objective of the fourth session is to examine the relevance of a peer community and the opportunities of peer exchanges to learn advanced negotiation techniques and tools as well as to develop a critical understanding of negotiation environments. Participants are invited to discuss their own experience and views in engaging in peer activities.*

### Background

There is a large consensus among respondents that humanitarian negotiation should be approached as a field practice and not as a conceptual framework. Efforts to build the capacity of agencies to negotiate on the frontlines should be based on existing field practices and be driven toward addressing the needs of field practitioners. In most cases, agencies do not have a clear understanding of what humanitarian negotiation entails and what the required competences are. Several respondents raised doubts about the benefit of principles-based training programs on negotiation capabilities in the field. Respondents believe that the primary objective of the common efforts would be first and foremost creating a space to share and analyze the experiences of field practitioners and being able to take advantage of further technical training on complex issues. Attending an introductory training on negotiation is not sufficient to be considered as a qualified and trusted negotiator. Much more need to be done in terms of sharing, coaching and mentoring.

In this context, the vast majority of respondents are strong supporters of the creation of an informal community of practice among frontline negotiators to facilitate the sharing of experience. The best geographical situation to share experience, in their view, is at the local level, among frontline practitioners across agencies. There may be some value at the regional level, considering common thematic concerns. Some argue that the value of peer exchanges at the strategic level (why an agency should engage in a negotiation) was seen as less relevant since those concerns are mostly agency-specific. However, many contended that such sharing should be expanded, eventually using digital platforms, while others believe that exchanges should remain face-to-face so as to avoid being diverted by formatted principled model. Overall, there is a consensus that such exchanges should be framed within a clear methodology in order to allow effective learning.

Rather than purely skills-based training, frontline negotiators need proper support of their hierarchy, through, for instance, mentoring and coaching. Most of the learning takes place in the field. Humanitarian negotiators need access to more experienced professionals for exchanges on their practices and to discuss their options. Many respondents felt that peer exchanges should be open to all those who can bring their experience to bear, including those from other agencies, NGOs, or even the private sector. There are definite confidentiality concerns pertaining to information on local actors, issues, and contexts, but these requirements can easily be addressed on a case-by-case basis since the interesting angle of these exchanges does not relate to sensitive information about local contexts, but to the reflections of professionals on their experience on the frontlines.

The issue is one of trust: to what extent can a negotiator foster exchanges with peers that will remain confidential? Some interviewees have difficulty seeing how someone could manage issues of confidentiality and internal policies in the course of peer exchanges with people from outside their agencies. They recognize the need to learn from the practice of other negotiators but see an insurmountable challenge to facilitating the exchange of experience across agencies. Others are much more relaxed about it since such exchanges are already ongoing at the field level, although in ad hoc ways. Interestingly, the reservation about the open-ended multi-agency community of practice is most apparent from respondents who belong to organizations that operate already in an inter-agency environment. The opening up toward other networks seems to question the approach with their own institutional mission. Yet, the creation of a community of practice as a safe space of engagement on current practices is seen as essential. Practitioners should be able to share experiences within trusted and non-judgmental groups and learn from each other, especially on issues related to protection.

The key issue of concern for most interviewees is the extent to which participants in these peer exchanges should be able to discuss and review standing policies of agencies. While there is an understanding that such policies are part of the topics of discussion among practitioners, it is important to limit the role of these forums to peer-to-peer learning and not necessarily to creating new consensus on what the best or most optimal negotiation policies are. Participants should avoid integrating these forums into policy-making processes of the humanitarian community lest they lose their openness and informality. Other respondents believe, on the contrary, that these peer exchanges should generate avenues for further research and lessons learned. Organizations will learn to negotiate better through informal peer exchanges. We should make sure that these lessons are learned across agencies.

Finally, some respondents express their surprise and amazement that the current initiative of the CCHN to build a community of practice seems to work. This experience goes against traditional expectations based on competition as a social norm as well as confidentiality requirements. The fact that frontline humanitarian professionals are meeting at the field level to exchange experiences on some of their most challenging and sensitive environment is already quite an achievement.

There was also feedback that humanitarian organizations would benefit by having a cohort of 20 to 30 experienced field staff who have acquired a systematic approach to humanitarian negotiation to help in crisis situations—for example, when the organization’s capacity to negotiate is no longer sufficient. These staff members could play a critical role in disseminating the organization’s best practices through a systematic model and vocabulary. The CCHN Field Manual could also play an important role in this regard, to be used as a framework for humanitarian professionals to reflect on their experience and communicate with others.

#### Questions for Session 4

- How should organizations facilitate the emergence of a community of practice around humanitarian negotiation? What should the role of the community be? What support can the members of the community provide?
- How can agencies benefit from this community of practice in terms of standard setting, training, and peer support?
- How should agencies deal with the confidentiality requirements while maintaining the safe character of these informal exchanges?
- What should the role of the CCHN be in the development of the community of practice?

#### Moderator



**Stephan Szepesi**  
*Director, Negotiation & Public Service*  
*Rotterdam, Netherlands*

#### Facilitators



**Brett Davis**  
*Fmr Head of Mission, MSF*  
*Amman, Jordan*



**Bruno Pommier**  
*Deputy Head of Delegation - Head of Operations, ICRC*  
*Bangkok, Thailand*



**Oscar Sánchez Piñeiro**  
*Senior Field/Technical Coordinator, UNHCR*  
*Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh*



# SESSION 5

## Design of an informal action plan

### Objectives

*A core objective of the Berlin Conference is the development of an informal action plan toward building the capacity of humanitarian organizations to engage in humanitarian negotiation on the frontlines.*

*Based on the common vision reviewed by the High-Level Panel and the more programmatic discussion of the working group sessions of the Professional Roundtable so far, participants are invited to identify priority objectives and means to put the plan into practice. It is expected that this informal action plan will serve as a point of focus on the orientation of future activities in this domain.*

### Questions for Session 5

- On the identification of common goals over the coming years
- On the role of agencies, donors, CCHN, and other entities in this process
- On further consultations and reporting in the implementation of these goals

### Moderator



#### **Joëlle Germanier**

*Head of Operations, CCHN  
Geneva, Switzerland*

### Facilitators



#### **Karim Hafez**

*Negotiation Support  
Specialist, CCHN  
Geneva, Switzerland*



#### **Will Harper**

*Negotiation Support  
Specialist, CCHN  
Geneva, Switzerland*



#### **Naïma Weibel**

*Negotiation Support  
Specialist, CCHN  
Geneva, Switzerland*

# CLOSING SESSION



## **Rüdiger König**

*Director General for Crisis Prevention, Stabilisation, Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Assistance, Federal Foreign Office of Germany | Berlin - Germany*

Rüdiger König was previously the Crisis Management Commissioner at the Foreign Office. Since his entry into the Foreign Service in 1986, his placements included the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations in New York, the Directorate-General for the United Nations at the Foreign Office in Berlin, and Head of former Federal President Rau's Office. Especially during his time at the Permanent Mission of Germany at NATO and as Head of the Special Task Force on Afghanistan and Pakistan, he focused on international security policies and supported the peacebuilding process in Afghanistan



## **Ambassador Paul Seger**

*Swiss Ambassador to the German Federal Republic, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs | Berlin - Germany*

Paul Seger completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Basel, where he went on to obtain a doctorate in law. After joining the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs as a desk officer in 1983, he entered the diplomatic service in 1986, and was deployed to Kinshasa, New York (UN) and Buenos Aires. Between these deployments, Mr Seger worked at the head office of the Directorate of International Law, which he headed from 2003 to 2010. During that period, he also served as Swiss ambassador to the Principality of Liechtenstein, based in Bern. From May 2010 to September 2015, Mr Seger was head of the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations in New York.



## **Claude Bruderlein**

*Director, Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation (CCHN) | Geneva, Switzerland*

Claude is a Strategic Advisor to the President of the ICRC and lead researcher on ICRC negotiation practices. In October 2016, he was elected Director of the CCHN. He has been engaged in international humanitarian action since 1985. From 1990 - 1995, he worked in humanitarian assistance and protection with the ICRC in Iran, Israel and the Occupied Territories, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Yemen as well as in Geneva as a legal advisor to ICRC operations. In 1996, he joined the UN in New York as Special Advisor on Humanitarian Affairs and worked particularly on humanitarian access in Afghanistan and North Korea. He will moderate the closing session.

# PARTNER STANDS

CCHN collaborates with a variety of partners on negotiation-related topics to develop high-quality programs for humanitarian practitioners. At this conference, several partners display their materials at a stand in the main hall (Europasaal).



## **ADN Group**

*Kirk Kinnel, Negotiation  
Consultant & Trainer  
Paris, France*



## **ATHA**

*Anaide Nahikian, Program  
Manager  
Boston, United States*



## **CENAD**

*Robert Weibel, CEO  
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## **CERAH**

*Karl Blanchet, Director  
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## **CHA**

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## **Clingendael Institute**

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## **INALCO**

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