From Durable Solutions to Development Solutions:

What Role for Development Actors in Addressing Internal Displacement?

Submission for the

UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement

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1. Towards a new narrative and dynamic on internal displacement

Responses to address internal displacement, similar to refugee movements, have been for the most part the domain of humanitarian agencies. However, new impetus towards rethinking solutions to internal displacement has been given by the creation of the UN Secretary-General (SG) High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement (HLP), an effort largely driven by stakeholder nations – both those affected by the forced displacement phenomenon as well as major donors. The HLP's work allows for a "reframe and reset" of durable solutions as a development issue, with renewed focus on the role of States, governance, and prevention.

A sovereign nation is responsible for and accountable to its own population. If citizens are forced to leave their areas of origin involuntarily, this ultimately points to the responsibility and accountability of national authorities. Displacement can be seen as a failure of governance, where the State has been unable or unwilling to uphold the social contract with its citizens, and to fulfil its role as duty bearer. In these situations, and particularly in new and emerging crises, international protection and humanitarian assistance remain crucial to save lives.

As internal displacement situations become protracted, however, the question arises on how the protection and solutions agenda can be nationally owned to improve lives for displaced citizens and affected communities and help address the root causes and prevention, in line with international law and standards. The underlying causes for displacement may not always be directly attributable to the State (such as climate change). However, from the point of view of re-establishing broken social contracts, durable solutions for displaced persons will need to rely upon state structures taking primary responsibility for those solutions.

Such an approach was already presented in the OCHA-commissioned Policy Paper "*Breaking the Impasse*", published in 2017, which highlighted that protracted internal displacement "is primarily a development and political challenge with humanitarian elements"[1]. Countries will not be able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals – including critical goals on poverty, education and gender equality – without fully addressing protracted internal displacement. A key recommendation is for Governments to lead efforts, wherever possible, to achieve collective outcomes that address protracted displacement and prevent new displacement from becoming protracted, as an important national development priority. Governments, development and humanitarian actors and donors must work together to achieve context specific, clear and measurable collective outcomes that reduce vulnerabilities and support solutions to protracted internal displacement. This is very much in line with the spirit and content of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement[2] developed by Francis Deng.

By treating internal displacement and solutions as ultimately government-owned developmental priorities, there is an opportunity to re-orient the approach substantially to foster systematic collaboration between governments, development and humanitarian actors, donors and other stakeholders. Doing so would require a *mindset change* on the part of national and international actors to move from the traditional "durable solutions" approach, mostly coordinated and led by humanitarian actors, towards nationally-owned *development solutions*, oriented around a shift from *beneficiaries* to *citizens* where IDPs are seen as important contributors to the economies and societies of their host communities. Taking a development approach rooted in governance opens up the opportunity to enable internally displaced individuals and communities as agents of change and leaders in the development processes that shape their lives and to be part of the solution.

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[1] "Breaking the Impasse, Reducing Protracted Internal Dislacement As A Collective Outcome" (p.2)
https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/Breaking-the-impasse.pdf
[2] Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, UN OCHA 2001

2. Current approaches to internal displacement and durable solutions

Following the massive internal displacement crisis in Darfur, the international community and UN had been unable to agree on a collective approach in the absence of a formal mandated entity responsible for the problem. The cluster approach, established in 2005, constituted a division of labour between UN agencies, with the participation of NGOs, coordinated under the auspices of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and Humanitarian Country Team – as such, excluding the governments of those countries where internal displacement occurs. Although an "early recovery" cluster was later included in its architecture, the cluster approach has remained predominantly humanitarian, with limited roles for developmental actors and no formal link to national development platforms or resource mechanisms.

Various solutions-oriented frameworks, platforms and guidance notes have been created since the cluster approach was introduced. This includes *inter alia* at the global level: the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) (2010), the UNSG Decision No. 2011/20 on Durable Solutions[3], the UN Development Group (UNDG) Guidance Note on Durable Solutions for Displaced Persons, and at the regional level for example in East and the Horn of Africa the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDDS), a NGO and donor consortium.

More recently, as part of the UN Development System Reform, which resulted in a reinforced RC/HC role and increased focus on the collective pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and following the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit with its emphasis on the strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus (with the subsequent evolution into the "triple nexus" encompassing peacebuilding), examples have emerged of good practices around more developmental approaches to displacement solutions – though in practice these remain the exception rather than the rule.

Integrated area-based approaches, relying on spatial planning led by national and sub-national authorities with participation of concerned communities, have especially gained traction among practitioners as an effective tool to promote (re)integration of displaced populations into mainstream society – although the risk of significant differences in individual benefits may continue to occur between returning refugees and IDPs (for instance as a result of the use of individual "return packages").

The shift in thinking towards development solutions requires going beyond an "exit strategy" to compensate for dwindling humanitarian funding and a consequent "handover" to developmental partners. Rather than continuing to consider internal displacement as a temporary "holding pattern" after which a standard set of options (return, local integration, resettlement) could be applied, considering the link with broader long-term societal processes such as urbanisation, economic, social and political transformation would allow for positioning of solutions as a true development priority.

3. New opportunities to pursue "development solutions" beyond "durable solutions"

In times of crisis, immediate and life-saving humanitarian and protection-based responses are unquestionably required, especially at the onset. However, engagement with States on displacement solutions must begin at the earliest moment, led whenever possible by development actors. As a general rule, it is never too early to plan and programme for development solutions in responses to internal displacement. Whereas there is a tendency for a linear approach to humanitarian and development programming, a systematic common approach that includes development analyses

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[3] UN Secretary-General (UNSG), Decision No.2011/20 - Durable Solutions: Follow up to the Secretary-General's 2009 report on peacebuilding, 4 October 2011, available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/5242d12b7.html

(social, political and economic) with humanitarian situation analyses, joined up development and humanitarian needs assessments, planning and implementation in line with national development plans will build a strong foundation for solutions.

Rather than continuing to see displacement as a by-product of a temporary "humanitarian phase", thinking needs to advance around human mobility as a legitimate coping mechanism to various external challenges. Displacement is part of a societal transformation process whereby it ties in with broader phenomena such as climate change-induced movement patterns, massive global urbanization, a shift in livelihoods, etc. Therefore, a development approach should be aimed at a principled participatory management by States of human mobility and settlement patterns of their populations.

There are a number of good practices in this regard where States have fully integrated displacement into their National and Regional Development Plans (e.g. Somalia). A better understanding, appreciation and action towards nationally owned developmental solutions for displacement could be established through institutionalization of data management and analysis in governmental development planning and statistical capacities. UN Country Teams should also be strongly encouraged to promote national ownership anchored in social and political accountability and include development solutions to displacement into programmatic activities aiming at the central goal of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Besides the work of the HLP, renewed inspiration from the G7+ and thinking on the "New Deal for Fragile States" has refocused attention on the importance of nationally owned and led approaches to fragility-related issues. The methodology of "self-diagnosis" in particular, as a basis for a collective approach between States and the international community, can become a powerful new tool in addressing displacement[4]. At the same time as acknowledging the need for a collective developmental direction with the international community, a nationally owned approach to internal displacement gives the opportunity to work on the restoration of the "social contract" between displaced communities and the State as a way to address the underlying causes for displacement.

States need to demonstrate national ownership by explicitly understanding and addressing underlying causes to displacement, declaring solutions towards displacement as national development priorities and allocating national resources (including development assistance) towards inclusion – defined as access to rights, services and sustainable livelihoods available to all citizens – and enhanced resilience. Governments should also engage the private sector in the design and implementation of market-driven sustainable livelihood opportunities for forcibly displaced persons. Displacement ends when its underlying causes have been addressed; displaced persons are no longer discriminated against and, similarly to fellow citizens and community members, they fully enjoy their rights, including formal constitutional rights, but also those that are customarily and socially available.

4. Development solutions and "sovereignty through responsibility"

The pursuit of development solutions, whilst building on collective efforts pursued as part of durable solutions, aims to promote the enhancement of access to full constitutional, social and economic rights of the displaced. This, in the words of Francis Deng, can be described as "sovereignty through responsibility"[5].

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[4] Ideally, this would result in the inclusion of displacement solutions in national and sub-national development plans, which includes the allocation of national development resources.
[5] Sovereignty as Responsibility – Conflict Management in Africa by Francis M. Deng, Sadikiel Kimaro, Terrence Lyons and I. William Zartman (June 1, 1996).

In the footsteps of Agenda 2030 and the recent introduction of the "triple nexus" approach, it is evident that displacement solutions are an area of particular potential for a rights-based drive, led by States and underpinned by a solid development approach. In addition, displacement occurs particularly in fragile environments and therefore benefits strongly from the various concepts and mechanisms developed to tackle the underlying causes to fragility that have led to lack of inclusion of displaced populations into the national development effort.

Significant resources have been directed, mostly from humanitarian funding, towards enhanced resilience of displaced populations, particularly at individual and community levels. However, it is much rarer to see these efforts linked with, let alone be driven by, local governance programmes. For those state representatives located closest to their constituencies, a particular and evident focus on the interest of population groups that were excluded from the national development efforts would be a key precondition for a successful approach to displacement solutions.

Central to Agenda 2030 and the Secretary-General's thinking has been the principle of "prevention" and relatively little effort has gone into this as most actions on displacement have focused on managing ongoing displacement and, to a much lesser extent, solutions. A more systematic mapping of local conflict dynamics, with the close cooperation of sub-national authorities, could support stabilizing and anchoring factors. Likewise, promoting more nationally owned approach to managing multi-dimensional risks including disaster risk resilience and climate change adaptation, could help prevent and preempt what are in most cases highly repetitive and predictable forced population movements.

States, in line with the Guiding Principles formulated 20 years ago, should be held responsible from the outset for the resolution to forced displacement within their population. In fact, this responsibility starts before movements take place, and includes addressing potential causes of future displacement, as well as management of human mobility by design, rather than by default, post facto. It is evident that not all States are willing or able to assume such a pre-emptive comprehensive role. However, by acknowledging the developmental character of solutions to displacement, the international community is less likely to "de-responsibilize" those national actors that ultimately are the key to sustainable solutions and political, social, economic and cultural inclusion of displaced in society.

5. Major areas of focus for "development solutions"

Displacement, whether related to the ramifications of climate events, or related to conflict and dispossessions, epitomizes a fundamental breakdown of the bonds between a state – its systems and services – and its citizens. Trust amongst communities and confidence in institutions get eroded, to the point that in many cases the government deflects its responsibilities in areas like camps, and social segregation becomes a feature of cities or rural settings. Helping governments rebuild systems, create accountability between institutions and citizens, while supporting social cohesion, is fundamentally the transformation that development partners can help promote, shifting from an externally-driven protection-based approach to one rooted in accountable national and local governance as well as rule of law.

Systematic, principled engagement by development actors during the early phases of a displacement situation can support an increased empowerment of national and local delivery mechanisms. A systematic adherence to national social service delivery standards would facilitate an earlier phasing in of government structures or inclusion in the national development architecture. In line with G7+ principles, national ownership starts with a self-diagnosis and acknowledgement of problems and their underlying causes. A shift away from internationally owned datasets and analysis on displacement towards a reinforced national capacity would be a key contribution of development actors in this regard. Reputable and credible national statistical and development planning

institutions, particularly in countries with a high propensity towards internal displacement, are central to understanding the reality, contributing to a national dialogue and shaping remedial developmental action.

From the above, it is clear that development solutions to displacement require a multi-dimensional and integrated approach, as follows:

- Applying a preventive approach, the role of States is key in identifying, owning and remedying risk factors that can cause displacement in the first place. Efforts by development partners are necessary to build and reinforce national capacities and promote nationally owned approaches to conflict prevention, disaster risk reduction and climate change resilience.
- Displacement occurs due to a breach in social contract driven by a lack of access to basic rights (including security and justice), necessitating a gender-responsive and "whole-of-government" approach. Fundamental to this is enabling the full enjoyment of displaced persons of their rights as citizens. This includes access to national IDs, land and property rights, access to judicial remedies for disputes, and accountable security institutions that offer a fair protective environment. Rebuilding core features of the social contract will enable a rebuilding of trust between the state and displaced members of society.
- Based on nationally owned data management, digital technologies and analysis capacity around displacement, a better understanding can emerge of systematic inequalities and exclusion in society. This will help direct development investments and financing towards redressing these imbalances, and promote affirmative action policies, including better targeted safety nets, equal opportunities for employment and livelihoods, thus leading towards the full enjoyment of fundamental rights.
- For solutions to be nationally owned and led, States need to be equipped and capacitated, whilst adopting a "governance angle" to resolving the displacement reality. In particular, engagement with and reinforcement of transparent and accountable sub-national governance structures and mechanisms constitute a main priority.
- Development actors should support, in partnership with the local private sector, government efforts to develop livelihoods initiatives that will reinforce the inclusion of forcibly displaced communities in area-based programmes, led by accountable authorities. Such efforts will contribute to fostering socio-economic integration and social cohesion, both from a community and governance angles.
- Development solutions to internal displacement are one of the most concrete examples of a "triple-nexus approach", constituting a link between early governance and development engagement in humanitarian emergencies, identifying and addressing underlying causes through nationally owned actions and investments, and addressing exclusion, discrimination, including gender-based discrimination, and vulnerability through rights-based governance initiatives.

6. UNDP's role in development solutions to internal displacement

Fragile and crisis contexts are already a key part of UNDP's portfolio. Over 60% of UNDP's programming, and nine out of UNDP's top 10 country offices, are in fragile contexts, including those with large-scale displaced populations[6]. UNDP is currently revisiting its overall approach in these environments, from considering fragile contexts and crises as anomalies to approaching these situations as opportunities for rethinking development, and in particular to promote integrated solutions to address the multi-dimensional risks that threaten progress towards the SDGs. Internal

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[6] In 2020, UNDP projects targeting IDPs totaled over $922 million, 88% of which in the top 20 countries with the highest internal displacement. The largest portfolios are in Iraq, Sudan, DRC, CAR, South Sudan and Syria.

displacement is a consequence of slow-burn, high-risk, volatile and complex situations, requiring actors with longstanding engagement on the ground, solid understanding of these contexts, and strong local relationships of trust – a position that UNDP has well built across programme countries.

Programming needs to be targeted at the highest risks and opportunities, and must be at scale and integrated, going beyond addressing immediate needs and recovery. These are no places for business as usual. With work to improve our capacity to understand the links between fragility and displacement, we need to scan the horizon, and to know what works and what does not. Joining up country-level and global efforts, UNDP can leverage its borad mandate and expertise to support to governments and societies to address the drivers of crises and displacement and forge a path towards sustainable peace and development.

UNDP's main programmatic and operational engagements, including support to UN Country Teams, its SDG integration role, and based on strong existing global and local partnerships with key UN system actors such as UNHCR and IOM, IFIs and private sector feature the following areas:

- Reinforcing a programmatic focus on prevention of displacement by investing in Government-owned disaster risk resilience, conflict analysis, and systematic application of risk (including climate-induced risk) and conflict mitigation measures in local and community-based development programmes, supported through local governance structures. An early, specific and deliberate focus on, and investment in addressing, underlying causes of displacement, extending social safety nets to those most at risk of displacement, and building social cohesion, guide UNDP's engagements in this regard.
- Early and robust engagement in Humanitarian Country Teams with a focus on promoting and supporting an earlier and stronger delivery of basic services (particularly health, education, housing, and social protection) through national and local systems/actors, preferably from the outset of emergencies.
- UNDP has supported national and local governments in integrating displacement into national statistical, assessment, and development planning systems, and supporting community based and participatory planning processes that engage both displaced and host communities; prioritizing such communities from a perspective of "leaving no one behind" and in a manner that rebuilds trust. Similarly, UNDP can work to support UN Country Teams in their development analyses and planning along these lines, including in Common Country Assessment (CCA) and UN Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) processes.
- Providing sustainable livelihood opportunities and promoting socio-economic inclusion of IDPs and vulnerable host communities, through access to employment opportunities in the formal economy, support to demand-driven entrepreneurship initiatives, and promotion of financial inclusion and literacy, in partnership with the private sector. Displaced women should receive specific support to help them mitigate the specific challenges they face in terms of gender-based violence and discrimination, as well as care responsibilities; unemployed youth will also need a differential approach.
- Identifying, supporting and implementing targeted stabilization efforts, with a particular focus on decentralized Rule of Law institutions that aim to address underlying inequalities and lack of access to justice (including transitional justice).
- Designing and promoting the establishment of governance-based programmes, including Joint Programmes with other UN agencies, to support national and local (including municipal) authorities in areas with major displacement impact. UNDP has a long history of convening such joint platforms, whilst assuming a lead resource mobilization and management role through the use of Trust Funds.
- Initiating, at a very early stage in emergency situations, recovery and resilience planning in support of national and local authorities (who preferably should be empowered and

responsibilized to take the lead), and in broad partnership with UN agencies, IFIs, NGOs and the private sector. Established multi-partner and government-led needs assessments, such as Post Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNAs) and Recovery and Peace-Building Assessments (RPBA), based on partnerships between the EU, UN and World Bank, could be used as methodologies alongside humanitarian-based mechanisms in this regard.

- As the largest delivery partner of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), UNDP is well positioned to support activities that promote peaceful coexistence between displaced populations and host communities and build social cohesion and peaceful coexistence, in partnership and through joint programming with other UN Country Team development agencies.
- UNDP has already developed strong and comprehensive thinking around human mobility, and on mobility as a coping mechanism and risk management strategy and is therefore well placed to engage in broader partnerships linking climate change, migration, social protection through development and governance-based approaches.
- UNDP has strengthened partnerships on migration, displacement and development with IOM and UNHCR at the global, regional and country levels. This includes co-leadership on durable solutions working groups and strategies under the UN Country Teams and joint-programming of humanitarian, development and peace interventions.
- UNDP is particularly well placed to build and support platforms for inter-agency and collective action around "collective outcomes" and operationalize these through common funding mechanisms (including Trust Funds).
- With the G7+, UNDP can facilitate and promote south-south cooperation on effective development solutions to internal displacement for potential replication and scaling up.

In conclusion, building on its wide range of programmatic engagements, UNDP has much to offer in the pursuit of development solutions to internal displacement and can bring to the table what the HLP has already indicated to be some of the "missing links" to solutions:

- ✓ A **solid developmental approach**, whereas currently displacement management and solutions are still almost exclusively anchored in humanitarian mechanisms with the exclusion of State actors.
- ✓ **National ownership** of solutions to displacement, without which development solutions can never be sustainable.
- ✓ A **strong link to governance** to responsibilize and empower States to take ownership and leadership.
- ✓ A **broad attention span to societal transformation** in the context of global priorities with a strong focus on participatory and inclusive remedial action, led by State- and non-state actors.
- ✓ The support to **accountable systems** that promote shared prosperity and sustainable development.