

**Executive Committee of the
High Commissioner's Programme**

Distr. : Restricted
28 May 2019
English
Original: English and French

Standing Committee
75th meeting

**Update on UNHCR's engagement with
internally displaced persons***Summary*

This paper provides an update on some key aspects of UNHCR's engagement with internally displaced persons since its report to the seventy-second meeting of the Standing Committee (EC/69/SC/CRP.9) in June 2018. It includes an overview of the work undertaken to revise UNHCR's policy on internal displacement, which was one of the recommendations of the operational review of UNHCR's engagement in situations of internal displacement carried out in 2017. The paper also describes UNHCR's involvement in the plan of action that was issued during the twentieth anniversary year of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction.....	1-2	3
II. Updating UNHCR’s policy on internal displacement	3-7	3
A. Key characteristics of UNHCR’s engagement	4	3
B. Change management in support of predictable engagement.....	5-7	4
III. Mobilizing global and national action – GP20.....	8-17	4
IV. Next steps.....	18	6

I. Introduction

1. The magnitude and complexity of internal displacement requires scaled up and sustained international support to local and national authorities, communities and affected individuals. An estimated 41.3 million people worldwide were internally displaced by conflict and violence in 2018.¹ Despite enhanced international engagement, the majority of internally displaced persons (IDPs) continue to confront serious and persistent threats to their safety and well-being. They have limited opportunities to achieve comprehensive solutions as conflicts multiply and become intractable, while the underlying causes, such as gross violations of human rights, go unaddressed. In addition, 17.2 million people were internally displaced due to disasters in 2018.² The impact of such disasters is mounting, including as a result of climate change, urbanization and population growth. Conflict and disasters take their toll on national and local economics and infrastructure, further limiting the ability of IDPs to return to their areas of origin and reintegrate in a sustainable manner.

2. UNHCR has been engaged in situations of internal displacement since the 1970s. A number of General Assembly resolutions defined the criteria on which UNHCR's involvement with IDPs should be based, notably resolution 48/116 of 20 December 1993. Coordination arrangements established by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) have evolved significantly over the years to enable greater predictability and enhance coordination in the international response to internal displacement situations. In April 2018, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNHCR and the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons launched a three-year multi-stakeholder plan of action (GP20) to reinvigorate efforts to prevent, respond to and resolve situations of internal displacement. GP20 refers to the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (Guiding Principles).

II. Updating UNHCR's policy on internal displacement

3. In revisiting its policy on internal displacement, UNHCR seeks to establish a clear framework for engagement and to define the necessary actions it needs to undertake to engage in situations of internal displacement in a predictable, decisive and meaningful way. The updated policy will align itself with the Office's Strategic Directions 2017-2021. It will be grounded in, promote and reinforce the Guiding Principles. In accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it seeks to identify actions that will enable UNHCR to contribute to collective outcomes, enhancing protection and promoting solutions for IDPs and the communities affected by displacement.

A. Key characteristics of UNHCR's engagement

4. UNHCR seeks to improve the predictability of its engagement in situations of internal displacement in the following areas:

- Strengthening **early preparedness** so that, when a humanitarian crisis unfolds, UNHCR can take up its IASC leadership and coordination responsibilities and can ensure the timely and effective delivery of protection and assistance through its own programmes within a multi-partner, multi-sector response led by the Humanitarian/Resident Coordinator.

1. See IDMC's "Global report on internal displacement 2019", which is available from: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2019/>.

2. Ibid.

- Maintaining a **robust emergency response capacity** that addresses some of the most urgent immediate needs of IDPs and mitigates protection risks in a manner that i) meaningfully engages displacement-affected communities; ii) complements and reinforces local and national response capacities; iii) is responsive to the ways different groups experience risk as well as to their different capacities and needs; and iv) creates space for other actors to assume responsibilities once they are able to do so.
- Ensuring an **orientation towards sustainable solutions** from the outset so as to enable the most effective use of resources and pave the way for responsible disengagement in a manner that actively identifies and supports local and national response capacity.

B. Change management in support of predictable engagement

Integrated programming

5. In order to engage effectively with all people affected by forced displacement, (e.g. refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, stateless persons, returning refugees and IDPs, and local communities), UNHCR country operations need to pursue equitable, integrated and area-based approaches to programming, particularly in locations where several populations of concern live together. Integrated programming in turn requires multi-year protection and solutions strategies that draw on evidence-based assessments and analyses that are inclusive of different population groups in the operational context.

Data and information management

6. Accurate, up-to-date, comprehensive and quality data and information are the starting point for effective protection and assistance, and are essential for programming, monitoring, analysis and advocacy, for all organizations in the inter-agency response. At the country level, UNHCR will further develop and make use of standard information products, such as protection monitoring reports, needs analyses, response monitoring reports, and service and presence mapping. It will share these products as appropriate, including via web-based platforms and portals.

Resource mobilization and funding

7. It will be vital that sufficient financial resources are available for all aspects of UNHCR's engagement in situations of internal displacement. The organization's capacity to sustain its coordination function and operational contributions will therefore also be determined by the success of its continued efforts to mobilize resources and support. At the country level, UNHCR will intensify resource mobilization at the onset of the emergency, including by ensuring that its programming is supported by an evidence-based analysis that articulates the protection and life-saving impact of the interventions. At the global level, UNHCR will continue to demonstrate the added value of its coordination role and operational delivery in situations of internal displacement.

III. Mobilizing global and national action – GP20

8. The GP20 plan of action was born out of a need to refocus international attention on internal displacement at a time when this global phenomenon showed no sign of abating. The aim of the GP20 plan of action is to reduce and resolve internal displacement through more strategic, collaborative and multi-disciplinary action among all relevant stakeholders, primarily at the national level. It offers a platform to capture and share experiences and practices in preventing and responding to internal displacement. At the same time, the GP20 plan of action provides a

framework for stakeholders to harness and expand their efforts to deliver meaningful outcomes for IDPs.

9. The GP20 plan of action has four priorities: i) engaging IDPs in decision-making processes that affect them; ii) promoting, developing and implementing national frameworks to prevent and address situations of internal displacement; iii) enhancing the quality of data and analysis on internal displacement; and iv) addressing protracted internal displacement and driving durable solutions for IDPs. It seeks to galvanize all relevant stakeholders into coordinated action across the four priorities.

Raising awareness

10. In the context of the GP20 plan of action, stakeholders are coordinating messages and communication efforts to raise greater awareness of internal displacement and the plight of IDPs among the general public. In Honduras and Ukraine, for example, art, photo and virtual-reality exhibitions brought the experience of internal displacement to the attention of a wider audience. At the global level, communications staff of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) worked together to ensure consistent social media messaging on internal displacement and produced an animation that was broadcast on France 24. The broadcast called on the public to take action in preventing and finding solutions to internal displacement.

11. In protracted internal displacement situations, stakeholders have used the GP20 plan of action as an opportunity to raise awareness and refocus attention on past and ongoing internal displacement trends. The plan has made particular protection issues related to internal displacement more visible and facilitated access to specialists to undertake mitigation or response efforts. In Honduras, a specialized training of judges and magistrates contributed to drawing more attention to the internal displacement situation in the country, as well as the specific protection issues IDPs face. At the regional level, an international forum on internal displacement in Latin America gathered public officials from Colombia, Honduras and El Salvador in November 2018 to discuss incorporating the Guiding Principles into national legislation. The forum enabled the sharing of experiences and practice in protecting and responding to the needs of IDPs.

Participation of internally displaced persons in processes that affect them

12. In Niger and South Sudan, UNHCR commissioned a study in support of the GP20 plan of action to examine the extent to which women and girls were effectively engaged in national consultations for the development of a law on internal displacement. The study highlighted the importance of safe spaces for women and girls, as well as the specific challenges women face in accessing their rights and assuming leadership roles. It included a set of recommendations to enhance the participation of internally displaced women and girls, including for example support for women's economic empowerment projects with longer-term donor commitments.

Laws and policies on internal displacement

13. The GP20 plan of action has contributed to advancing the development and adoption of national laws and policies on internal displacement. The translation and dissemination of the Guiding Principles and the organization of workshops have given greater visibility to the issue of internal displacement and contributed to the formulation of new policies and law, as well as a better understanding of their practical application to prevent and resolve internal displacement.

14. In Niger, a new law on internal displacement was adopted in December 2018. This made Niger the first country to incorporate the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) into domestic law. In September 2018, a national High-Level Panel on National Legislation on Internal Displacement in South Sudan brought together

government officials, experts on internal displacement, the World Bank, private sector partners, donors, development and humanitarian actors, and the African Union to discuss a draft law to address internal displacement. The event was preceded by a training for government officials and United Nations staff on law and policy making related to internal displacement; the drafting of a national law on internal displacement; and a presentation of the requirements for the ratification of the Kampala Convention, which the country had signed in 2013. The final draft bill on the protection and assistance to IDPs was presented to the Transitional National Legislative Assembly of South Sudan for adoption in February 2019.

15. In March 2019, to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Kampala Convention and under the auspices of the GP20 plan of action, parliamentarians and national experts on internal displacement from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) participated in a regional exchange on the development and implementation of laws and policies related to internal displacement in West Africa. The event resulted in a renewed commitment among ECOWAS parliamentarians to include the Kampala Convention in relevant laws, which would ensure its application throughout the region. The ECOWAS Parliament committed to review the recommendations generated by the exchange at its next parliamentary session.

Data on internal displacement

16. In the Central African Republic, a multi-stakeholder workshop was held in January 2019 aimed at improving the quality of data collection on internal displacement as well as its analysis and use. Convened at the request of the Government and the members of the Commission on Population Movement, participants discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the multiple data collection tools and methods currently in use, how to improve the quality of disaggregated data and ensure its confidentiality, and the challenges to quantifying protracted displacement. The main outcome was a roadmap towards stronger collaboration between relevant actors, including the government, and a renewed commitment to improve data sharing practices, including for work on collective outcomes to address the protection and assistance needs of IDPs.

Sharing of practices and challenges related to internal displacement

17. UNHCR is an active and committed participant in the informal GP20 Steering Group established to support the implementation of the plan of action. The Steering Group has fostered a constructive multi-stakeholder dialogue on internal displacement at the global level. Its quarterly meetings gather States, United Nations agencies, NGOs, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and the World Bank around thematic issues, with States invited to share their experiences in how to manage and respond to internal displacement. Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Fiji, Honduras, Nigeria and Ukraine have shared lessons learned and good practices on the development and implementation of law and policy, and the collection, analysis and use of data on internal displacement.

IV. Next steps

18. Efforts on the GP20 plan of action will continue along three main avenues, namely to: (i) support efforts by stakeholders at the national level to prevent, address and resolve internal displacement; (ii) facilitate exchanges and learning on internal displacement that draw on current experience and operational practice at the national level; and (iii) develop a final publication that compiles country-specific practices shared during the duration of the GP20 plan of action.