

GP2.0 Policy Brief



**PREVENT
PROTECT
RESOLVE**

Ten Years since the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions*

This Policy Brief on **Ten Years since the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions** aims to contribute to the ongoing discussion on how to strengthen durable solutions to displacement by providing a light review of the application, utility, and achievements of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons ('the Framework') since its issuance more than a decade ago.[1]

This review is particularly useful at a time when the issue of durable solutions has garnered renewed interest in the context of the establishment by the UN Secretary-General of the High-level Panel on Internal Displacement. It is based on a study undertaken as part of the GP20 Plan of Action, which has been succeeded by GP2.0.

What is the Significance of the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions?

The Framework, adopted in 2010 by the IASC, is widely recognized as the authoritative document providing overarching guidance to humanitarian and development actors as well as national and local authorities in their efforts to achieve durable solutions to internal displacement due to conflict, generalized violence, violations of human rights and disasters. The Framework's key contributions are threefold:

First, it offers, for the first time, an agreed-upon **definition of durable solutions** situated fundamentally in terms of protection and human rights, stating that solutions will be achieved when "IDPs no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement." Countering the often simplistic equation that durable solutions mean returns, it also emphasized that local integration and settlement elsewhere in the country are equal options, while highlighting that the search for solutions is a long-term and complex process that gradually diminishes displacement-specific needs and that requires coordinated engagement by multiple stakeholders that addresses human rights, humanitarian, development, reconstruction and peace-building challenges.

Second, it establishes some **overarching principles** that should guide the search for solutions, including a) that the primary responsibility to provide durable solutions for IDPs rests with the national authorities b) that the needs, rights and legitimate interests of IDPs should be the primary considerations guiding all policies and decisions on durable solutions; c) that all relevant actors need to respect the right of IDPs to make an informed and voluntary choice on what durable solution to pursue and to participate in the planning and management of durable solutions; and d) the importance of taking into account the needs of host communities.

GP2.0 is a multi-stakeholder initiative that has succeeded the three-year GP20 Plan of Action upon its conclusion in 2020. GP2.0 will carry forward the GP20 objectives to strengthen collaboration on internal displacement and to advance prevention, protection and solutions for internally displaced people (IDPs).

*This policy paper is based on the findings and recommendations included in the IASC framework on Durable Solutions light research study conducted by the consultant Anne Davies under the GP20 workplan in December 2020. The GP2.0 co-chairs and the core group, led by the UN SR for the Human Rights of IDPs, are very thankful to Anne for her work, professionalism and insights that shed light on and proposed viable recommendations to ensure its expanded dissemination and application in operational contexts.

[1] <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/other/iasc-framework-durable-solutions-internally-displaced-persons>

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Third, the Framework provides the following eight **criteria that may be used to measure to what extent a durable solution has been achieved**: (a) safety and security; (b) adequate standard of living; (c) access to livelihoods; (d) restoration of housing, land and property; (e) access to documentation; (f) family reunification; (g) participation in public affairs; and (h) access to effective remedies and justice.

Due to its generic character, it should be applied in light of the specific situation and context and should be seen as complementary to more detailed operational guidelines adopted by humanitarian and development actors or national and local authorities.

How has the Framework been applied?

Most stakeholders who know and use the Framework consider it a useful tool, encapsulating human rights standards that IDPs should enjoy in order to achieve solutions to their displacement. In a number of countries, the Framework, and in particular its eight progress criteria, has **helped inform durable solutions strategies or initiatives**, including but not limited to Afghanistan, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Georgia and Syria.

Where the Framework has been applied successfully, including in country strategies, laws and practices, this has been largely due to **sustained and concerted efforts** such as training, capacity-building as well as sustained advocacy by successive Special Rapporteurs and Representatives of the United Nations Secretary-General on the human rights of IDPs, UN agencies and advisers, and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

Incorporation of the Framework in **national laws and policies** have transformed its contents into legally binding or at least authoritative standards at national levels, reflecting acceptance and sensitization by governments, even ahead of development actors.

Practical approaches, tailored to context, have also been vital, including related to durable solutions profiling, IDP participation, benchmarks and indicators, toolboxes and studies in Somalia, Sudan, the Philippines, Ethiopia and Iraq, among others.

Efforts to **disseminate and provide detailed guidance** on aspects of the Framework for policy, planning, programming and institutional levels have also helped meet the needs for training, coordination and operationalization.

However, in some countries, the Framework is not widely known beyond a small group of technical experts and government ministries where durable solutions are being planned and/or implemented. Not only are many development and peace actors unaware of the Framework but also many humanitarians. Nevertheless, even where actors are not familiar with the Framework or its content, some of its key elements (such as the centrality of human rights and protection, the three ways through which solutions can be achieved, or its guiding principles) have become generally accepted standards informing multi-stakeholder approaches to internal displacement. Still, there is consensus that the **Framework needs greater visibility and awareness** by key stakeholders, including greater information about how to put the principles to practice.

Where are the Upcoming Opportunities?

With current emphasis on operationalising the **Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDPN)**, in particular in the context of UN Development System reform, opportunities exist to coordinate assessments, planning, programming, implementation and monitoring durable solutions, using the Framework's human rights principles and standards across the different nexus activities.

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The impetus created by the HDPN will open opportunities to sensitise a wider range of development and peace actors on the Framework and its related guidance and operational tools, and to internalise these in their overall strategies and policies.

Measuring and monitoring how IDPs are progressing towards a durable solution, as well as developing a (very often non-existent) **evidence base to inform durable solutions**, begin with having a common set of indicators, drawn, for example, from the Joint Interagency Profiling Service (JIPS) developed Durable Solutions Indicator Library (which is built on the Framework's criteria) or a national framework, adapted to the specific context of the place where IDPs decide to pursue a durable solution.[2]

The International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS), developed by the Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS) and endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission in March 2020, provide further critical guidance for the implementation of harmonised measurements of statistics on internally displaced people.

Building on the Framework, the IRIS proposes a composite measure (based on five out of the eight IASC criteria) to assess for the purpose of official statistics whether key displacement-related vulnerabilities have been overcome, and a more comprehensive progress measure for the purpose of programme design and response.

Training, workshops, webinars and online learning, organised in-country at different levels of competency, could help **raise awareness among a wider group of relevant actors** of successful approaches to durable solutions and the Framework.

These include:

- a) **consultations** with HDP actors on adapting the Framework to specific contexts and bridging different concepts, terminology and ways of working;
- b) **community of practice website** to exchange experiences, queries and advice on how best to apply the Framework;
- c) **Durable Solutions toolbox** used in countries seeking to plan, implement and monitor durable solutions with operational tools such as the Durable Solutions Indicator Library and Analysis Guide, examples of good practice, training modules, country-specific laws and policies and policy papers, analyses and commentary from a wide range of sources;
- d) **training of government counterparts organized with Durable Solutions Working Groups**, where they exist, or externally with visiting experts; and
- e) **durable solutions experts seconded to governments**.

[2] <https://www.jips.org/tools-and-guidance/durable-solutions-indicators-guide/>

Recommendations

- **The Framework remains fit for purpose** and does not need to be changed. It continues to constitute a key reference document grounded in international human rights law. Other tools based on the Framework's principles and standards are also available for operational guidance.
- **Sensitize a wider range of actors to the Framework**, not only at country level but also at decision-making and policy levels at UN and NGO headquarters, through training activities, workshops, webinars and online learning. This could include the training courses on internal displacement conducted at the Sanremo Institute of International Humanitarian Law, in collaboration with UNHCR and the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs.
- Raise awareness and build on the many **tools to operationalise the Framework**, such as the 'Durable Solutions in Practice' handbook, the Interagency Durable Solutions Indicator Library and Analysis Guide, the ReDSS Solutions Framework and others, as well as examples from countries that demonstrate how it has been put into practice, such as the joint profiling exercise in urban El Fasher in North Darfur (Sudan) using the Interagency Durable Solutions Analysis Guidance and Indicator Library.
- In countries where durable solutions are planned or ongoing, encourage relevant UN actors to incorporate the Framework's elements into **Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs), peace-building projects and programmes, national development plans, collective outcomes and Common Country Assessments (CCAs)**. The UN's Development Coordination Office (DCO) should incorporate the Framework into Guidance Notes to Resident Coordinators (RC's). NGOs should also incorporate it in their strategic and programmatic documents and apply it more widely.
- Advocate for **national IDP laws and policies** to refer to and incorporate key elements of the Framework, such as those in Kenya, Niger, Sri Lanka, Somalia and South Sudan which integrate the eight criteria of the Framework.
- Work with local civil society to ensure that, in every country where durable solutions are being planned or implemented, the Framework is **disseminated to relevant stakeholders in ways that makes it most appropriate for different audiences**. This might include translating it into local languages, culturally-appropriate and breaking it down into digestible sections, as relevant for government counterparts, local NGOs, IDPs and host communities, such as in Somalia where this brought the federal government on board as a driving force.
- **Develop a comprehensive evidence base** based on the Framework to inform durable solutions policy and programmes at the outset. Improve monitoring of progress towards durable solutions over time to assess evolution towards achieving the Framework's eight criteria, using multi-year 'longitudinal' studies and periodic profiling exercises where relevant, such as in Iraq in collaboration with IOM and Georgetown University.
- Create an online **Durable Solutions toolbox** that could be useful for countries involved in promoting durable solutions, including it in the Framework and related operational tools, such as with the Ethiopia Durable Solutions Initiative (DSI), where the toolkit comprises a set of exhaustive activities that can be selected according to relevance, all contributing to the achievement of durable solutions.
- **Re-brand and re-launch the Framework** as the 'International Framework on Durable Solutions' with the involvement of humanitarian, development, human rights and peace actors, to ensure it has broader buy-in from all fields of activity and not only for humanitarians.