

CONVENTION PLUS  
TARGETING OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR DURABLE SOLUTIONS  
TO FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Joint Statement by the Co-Chairs
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*Aim of this Joint Statement*

1. Denmark and Japan, as facilitating States of the “targeting of development assistance” strand of the Convention Plus initiative, have prepared, with the support of UNHCR, the present Joint Statement as a means to inform future discussions and efforts to promote the targeting of development assistance to achieve durable solutions to forced displacement.
2. The present Joint Statement by the Co-Chairs summarizes the viewpoints expressed by States and other stakeholders in discussions in the Convention Plus framework, including in the High Commissioner’s Forum, on the targeting of development assistance for durable solutions to forced displacement. It includes viewpoints received on the ‘*Issues Paper on Targeting Development Assistance*’ (June 2004) and ‘*Statement on Good Practice on Targeting Development Assistance for Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement*’ (May 2005).
3. From the outset, the Co-Chairs chose to pursue a “practical”, bottom-up approach based on concrete initiatives to target development assistance in refugee and returnee situations, benefiting the uprooted as well as host communities. In line with this, the ‘*Statement of Good Practice on Targeting Development Assistance for Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement*’ was intended to provide a basis for shared understandings on the issues involved in targeting development assistance. It also provided a non-exhaustive list of examples of good practice and highlighted the practical work and valuable experiences of countries of asylum, donor countries, countries of origin, NGOs and UNHCR alike.
4. A number of States expressed an interest in discussing the *Statement of Good Practice*, which led to the initiative to launch a Focus Group on this issue on 16 September 2005. However, several States felt that a Focus Group was not timely and proposed instead to draw up a Joint Statement of the Co-Chairs on this issue to inform further discussions and work.
5. The discussions to date have highlighted the fact that governments hold the prime responsibility for protecting and providing durable solutions to displaced people. In addition, the efforts of governments need to be

complemented by close cooperation among all stakeholders, as well as more systematic and integrated approaches by humanitarian and development agencies as well as relevant peace and security actors.

6. The Co-Chairs therefore hope that future cooperation in this area will benefit from a deeper understanding of the concerns and motivations of all affected stakeholders and the concrete experience derived from initiatives under way.
7. Many States believed that the discussions on this issue have contributed to sensitizing all stakeholders to the potential role that development assistance can play in underpinning and sustaining durable solutions, while benefiting host communities. This is consistent with Goal 5 of the Agenda for Protection.
8. Many States acknowledged that targeting development assistance for durable solutions to forced displacement should ideally:
  - Respect the principle that States have primary responsibility for their national development processes, and that development cooperation is based, therefore, on national ownership and leadership, as well as partnership;
  - Improve overall protection and develop national and local capacities to strengthen protection and access to durable solutions for forcibly displaced persons;
  - Strengthen international cooperation and promote international burden and responsibility sharing more equitably amongst states, including multilateral commitments aimed at providing speedy, durable, rights-based and protection-orientated solutions, especially for protracted refugee situations;
  - Tap the productive capacity of forcibly displaced populations by deploying methodologies which encourage their active participation of displaced populations in community-based development programmes;
  - Integrate a gender and age perspective; and
  - Aim at reducing poverty, promoting human development, peace and security, and meeting the needs of displaced persons and the most vulnerable nationals in society, based on the right of all people to a dignified life free from poverty, in line with the Millennium Development Goals.
9. A number of States recommended that the discussion on targeting development assistance be incorporated in the work of the Executive Committee and its Standing Committee, as part of mainstreaming the Convention Plus initiative into the work of UNHCR and as reflected in the Programme of Work for the Standing Committee for 2006.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this, there was a request from some States to continue to have substantive and open discussions on the future use of targeting development assistance in the work of UNHCR.

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the fifty-sixth session of the Executive Committee, paragraph 26 (d)

10. Many States expressed a wish that efforts should continue to identify and document good practice on targeting development assistance. Many States stressed the need to undertake timely and independent evaluations of ongoing initiatives, such as the Zambia Initiative, as well as past experiences in Africa and elsewhere, in order to provide empirical information on how these programmes have resulted in better protection of refugees or contributed to the attainment of durable solutions, the catalytic role played by UNHCR, and the involvement of international development agencies and financial institutions. Some States cautioned against holding up new initiatives pending the results of such evaluations.
11. Many States saw a need for UNHCR to continue to play its catalytic role, to pursue the development of concrete, field-based projects, including those based on the *Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern*<sup>2</sup>. To this end, UNHCR was encouraged to continue to engage the UN development community and, together with other stakeholders, advocate for the inclusion of displaced populations in development policies and practices. There would also be a need to differentiate between work on the “4Rs”<sup>3</sup> in countries of origin, on the one hand, and work on “DAR”<sup>4</sup> and “DLI”<sup>5</sup> focusing on refugee-hosting countries on the other. Some States also stressed that targeting of development assistance for durable solutions to forced displacement should take into consideration the specific conditions of each situation.
12. Many States were of the view that the humanitarian community, acting alone, cannot find solutions for protracted refugee situations and that targeting of development assistance for durable solutions to forced displacement should ideally be part of comprehensive approaches<sup>6</sup> to achieve them. In this regard, some States reiterated the need to seek a solutions-orientated outcome for protracted refugee situations with the active engagement of a broad range of relevant actors and agencies with responsibilities in the areas of peace and security, and development.
13. A number of States expressed concern that the targeting of development assistance should not be viewed as a substitute for humanitarian assistance, which remains an essential element of international burden- and responsibility-sharing. Many advocated that a commitment to providing targeted development assistance should be coupled with a commitment to fully fund UNHCR’s Annual Programme budget as a means to continue to support States hosting large refugee populations, particularly for protracted periods of time.

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<sup>2</sup> UNHCR, May 2003

<sup>3</sup> Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction

<sup>4</sup> Development Assistance for Refugees

<sup>5</sup> Development through Local Integration. Reference is made to ExCom Conclusion on Local Integration (Report of the fifty-sixth session of the Executive Committee, paragraph 22)

<sup>6</sup> Comprehensive approaches in this context refer to approaches providing for a mix of responses and stakeholders as defined in *Making Comprehensive Approaches to Resolving Refugee Problems more Systematically*, Forum/2004/7

14. Many States cautioned that any development assistance provided for solutions to forced displacement should be additional to the development envelope for a given country and not subtract funds from already under-funded humanitarian programmes that aim to meet the basic needs of forcibly displaced people. Other States pointed to situations where efforts to target development assistance for durable solutions had indeed attracted additional funds. They also stressed that the commitments made by the donor community to increase Official Development Assistance (ODA) over the next years offered an opportunity to access additional funds for durable solutions to forced displacement.
15. A related issue was the question of aid conditionality. A number of States feared that targeting development assistance for durable solutions to forced displacement could potentially lead to the imposition of new conditionalities on development cooperation that would not necessarily enhance the capacity of developing countries to provide adequate protection to displaced communities or achieve durable solutions. They felt that targeting development assistance might, for example, be linked to agreements on readmission, local integration of refugees or limit the right to seek asylum. Others held the view that targeting development assistance for durable solutions to forced displacement would continue to be governed by the prevailing broadly agreed principles for development cooperation, namely poverty reduction, local ownership and partnership.
16. Some States took issue with qualifying forcibly displaced persons as agents of development since, in their experience, displaced persons represented a burden on the host State and often competed for already limited natural and other resources. At the same time, many States felt that more could be done to benefit from the initiative and capacities of forcibly displaced populations so as to not only mitigate the impact of the presence of large refugee populations but also to demonstrate to the local population the tangible benefits of hosting refugees. This would also contribute to an improved security and protection environment in countries, reducing competition between refugees and the local population over scarce resources, diminishing local grievances towards refugees, and enabling them to contribute to national development processes and prepare them for durable solutions. They advocated for the needs and resources of displaced populations to be taken into account in development cooperation policies, post-conflict transition frameworks, national development plans and poverty reduction strategies. Several States made it known that they have already done so.