

**Draft Interim Report**  
**from the Special Co-ordinator of the Network on Internal Displacement**  
**on future arrangements in follow-up to the review process, including longer-term initiatives**

**Background**

- On the basis of the broad definition of internally displaced persons (IDPs) set out in the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement<sup>1</sup>, internal displacement today probably affects over 50 million people. In particular, conflict-induced internal displacement today amounts to an estimated 20 to 25 million people worldwide. While not a new phenomenon, over the past decade displacement has become larger, more complex and geographically more widespread. Providing a comprehensive response to the protection and assistance needs of these displaced populations remains a major challenge to the international community.
- In recognition of the need for increased efforts by all actors to bring about concrete improvements in this response, in July 2000 the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) agreed to establish an Inter-Agency Network on Internal Displacement. The Network, comprising senior focal points in all concerned organisations, was mandated to carry out reviews of selected countries with internally displaced populations, and to make proposals for an improved international response to their basic needs.
- The terms of reference for the Inter-Agency Network on Internal Displacement specifically included longer-term recommendations for follow-up arrangements, as well as proposals for revised inter-agency approaches to strengthen future responses to internally displaced populations.
- The needs of displaced populations continue to be inadequately addressed for a variety of reasons. Responsibility for the assistance and protection of IDPs rests primarily with the host authority. IDPs are entitled to the full range of protection provided to members of the civilian population by international humanitarian law as well as the rights and guarantees afforded by human rights law and national law.

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<sup>1</sup> “..internally displaced persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an international border”.

- Governments are often unwilling or unable to effectively address the needs of the displaced. Accordingly, many organizations and agencies, both UN, Red Cross and non-governmental, have been involved for several decades in addressing the humanitarian needs of displaced people, in support of State efforts. In 1997, the Secretary-General designated the Emergency Relief Co-ordinator as the overall UN focal point for inter-agency co-ordination in responding to these needs.
- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has a specific mandate to provide protection and assistance to victims of armed conflicts, internal disturbances and tensions, which include internally displaced persons. In general, ICRC's mandate is discharged in close co-operation with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies supported by their International Federation. The national societies are mandated to assist the most vulnerable within their own countries, which include IDPs, and are often the first organisations present at the inception of a disaster. The ICRC, Federation and national societies are committed to supporting all efforts aimed at improving cooperation and achieving greater complementarity between the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the United Nations and NGOs.
- The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has a constitutional mandate to assist 'persons in need of international migration assistance'. This definition encompasses internally displaced persons. IOM carries out operational activities in support of IDPs, during both conflict and post-conflict situations.
- The non-governmental sector is involved in a wide range of protection and assistance activities for internally displaced persons. In recent years many operational NGOs have gone beyond providing "assistance" in a narrow sense: several NGOs are involved in monitoring displacement situations, human rights monitoring and advocacy.
- In view of the variety of actors involved in responding to displacement crises, effective coordination and collaboration remains essential. UN agencies need to ensure such collaboration with all concerned actors, and particularly with national and international NGOs. In situations of protracted crisis as well as in post-crisis and recovery situations, development and aid actors, such as the Bretton Woods Institutions, become increasingly relevant. There is a need to strengthen partnerships and enhance complementarity of humanitarian efforts with the programs and policies adopted by such agencies. There

is equally a need to ensure proper linkages between humanitarian, political and peace-keeping activities, including within the UN organisation.

## **Findings**

- The review missions undertaken by the Network to date have confirmed that there are serious gaps in the UN and agency humanitarian response to the needs of IDPs – including their protection - which need to be addressed. These gaps arise from both lack of clear agency responsibility for some sectors and inadequate efforts by some agencies in designated areas. Despite various forms of guidance provided to agencies and Resident Coordinators/Humanitarian Coordinators (RCs/HCs) the effective operational priority given to IDPs in the field continues to be variable. Lack of sustained funding, including for emergency needs, also remains a major constraint to an improved inter-agency response in many cases.
- Strengthening the UN's overall capacity, as well as that of individual agencies to respond to the assistance and protection needs of the internally displaced clearly must be done on an inter agency basis, at Headquarters and in the field. It is dependent on an increase in the provision of resources by concerned governments and agencies. The ERC, as the UN focal point, needs to be supported by a reinforced and dedicated capacity to ensure an improved response to the needs of IDPs. At the field level, the response capacity of the RC/HC<sup>2</sup> and country teams also needs, in some cases, to be strengthened. The capacity and willingness of individual agencies to address IDPs within their own mandates likewise should be reinforced. In particular, operational agencies need to ensure that IDP needs are given due priority in their programming and approaches.
- The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement should provide the overarching framework for the inter-agency response to IDPs, which should also seek to operationalise these principles. Enhanced operational efforts should be complementary to and in support of the advocacy and promotional activities of the Representative of the SG on IDPs. The modalities of this relationship between the functions and roles of the RSG and the proposed IDP Bureau should be formally outlined. Key components of this complementarity include (1) coordination of review missions undertaken by the IDP Bureau with the RSG's programme of visits, including mutual cooperation in the preparation for the visits and in the follow-up on mission recommendations; (2) coordination of efforts to promote and disseminate the Guiding Principles, including support of local capacities; and (3) research activities.

## Proposals

[Note: These are intended to address three key areas, viz, a better coordinated inter-agency response; more effective field capacity and improved government/funding support.]

### 1. Better coordinated inter-agency response

- To ensure increased focus and support to IDPs on the part of the UN as well as non-governmental and other international organisations, a small, non-operational, dedicated Bureau for IDPs should be established at Headquarters level. This would be attached to OCHA and led by a senior official who would report to the ERC (and periodically to the IASC in view of its inter-agency basis). Senior agency focal points on IDPs would continue to form an ad hoc advisory body to this Bureau.
- In order to ensure active inter-agency involvement and commitment, the core staff of the IDP Bureau would be provided and funded by key UN agencies, the RSG on IDPs, international organisations, NGOs and possibly governments. The Bureau would be administratively supported by OCHA from voluntary funds and its role would be reviewed after an initial one-year period.
- The main role of the IDP Bureau would include the following:
  - monitoring situations of internal displacement globally and compiling updated information, with close NGO liaison, including analysis and assessments;
  - undertaking systematic reviews of selected countries to assess combined efforts to meet the assistance and protection needs of IDPs and proposing revised approaches to strengthen this response, including through effective collaborative arrangements;
  - identifying operational gaps and making recommendations to address them;
  - providing training, guidance and expertise to the RCs/HCs, UN Country Teams and other operational humanitarian agencies on IDP-related issues, including in particular with regard to developing strategies to address protection needs, humanitarian and development assistance, as well sustainable solutions for the displaced;

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<sup>2</sup> See Terms of Reference of RC/HC as well as the IASC “Supplementary Guidance to Humanitarian/Resident Co-ordinators

- ensuring that IDP needs are fully taken into account in resource mobilisation processes, including CAPs and emergency appeals;
- promoting and supporting global promotional and advocacy efforts, including in particular those of the RS-G on IDPs;
- developing further inter-agency policy on IDP issues, as needed, and acting as focal point for inter-agency training and dissemination efforts on internal displacement;
- ensuring necessary linkages between IDP issues within the wider context of civilians in conflict, and between the humanitarian response to displacement and related political, development and security aspects.

## **2. Improved field capacity**

- At the field level, in situations where there is a clear operational gap in the international response to internal displacement and/or a clearly identified need for strengthened coordination on IDPs, it is envisaged that an IDP focal point could be designated, for a defined period, on a case-by-case basis, to work within the UN Country Team and with other operational humanitarian agencies (and under the RC/HC). The IDP Bureau would recommend to the ERC, for approval, this designation in consultation with the RC/HC and concerned agencies. Such designation would not preclude the S-G's prerogative to designate an agency with primary IDP responsibility in specific cases.
- The IDP Focal Point would assist the RC/HC and country teams to ensure the strategic coordination of assistance to and protection of internally displaced persons and timely reports to the Bureau. It would also assist in the development of an IDP country plan, as well as advocacy for assistance and protection, and in making proposals to the ERC for an early and effective division of tasks and responsibilities amongst agencies.

### **3. Increased protection**

- Despite long-term efforts by the Red Cross Movement, some UN agencies and non-governmental organisations, there remains a substantial gap in the operational capacity of agencies to effectively address the protection needs of IDPs. While the primary responsibility for this protection clearly rests with host governments, there is a well recognised need for mandated agencies and organisations to strengthen their collaborative efforts in this area. This improved collaboration should be supported by OCHA, on a country-by-country basis, with active Headquarters' backing.
- On a case by case basis, the RC/HC, (and IDP Focal Point where present), with the support of the IDP Bureau, should ensure the development of early, comprehensive strategies and the effective allocation of responsibilities for the protection of IDPs. The OHCHR should strengthen its protection role with regard to IDPs, including through priority within its human rights mechanisms, technical cooperation as well as its operational capacity on the ground.

### **4. Improved Government Response**

- As well as the UN, concerned governments need to recognise the often close linkages between the humanitarian, political, security and economic dimensions of crisis situations leading to population displacement and be encouraged to address more actively these root causes of displacement, including in prolonged conflict situations.
- Increased and sustained donor support for the humanitarian needs of IDP's is an essential pre-condition for an improved international response to this problem. Without detracting from this ongoing need, it is proposed that an emergency funding facility for IDP's be established to address urgent unmet or unforeseen needs. This facility would be administered by the ERC to support operational humanitarian agencies and could comprise agreed drawing rights on resources to be made available by donors (including non-traditional sources) as well as the possible use of the CERF on a non-reimbursable basis. Consultations with potential donors and agencies would need to be undertaken to this end.

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