INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
IASC PRINCIPALS MEETING

Refocusing on Internal Displacement

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A common view is that internal displacement has in recent times slipped from prominence on the international agenda. The 2017 General Assembly resolution on internally displaced persons urged the IASC to enhance coordination, effectiveness, efficiency and predictability in preventing, responding to and finding solutions to internal displacement.[1] The resolution provides a strong foundation for action and a rich agenda for the IASC to pursue in strengthening the global response to internal displacement.

The forthcoming 20th anniversary of the Guiding Principles and the 10th anniversary of the Kampala Convention provide opportunities to take evocative steps to this end. Drawing on the experience of global response to internal displacement over recent years, including that of UNHCR and other partners, as well as a review of the humanitarian landscape today, this paper highlights some key touchpoints and offers suggestions on refocusing attention and improving our collective engagement to meet these objectives.

I.   Key touchpoints

1.1   Strengthen coherence

A coherent and forward leaning interagency approach to strengthened engagement with internal displacement is needed, informed by the Secretary-General's ongoing reforms. Working together, the IASC can integrate and harness the separate initiatives different agencies have pursued recently in this area. It is important for humanitarian actors to ensure that we speak with one voice to safeguard humanitarian space and focus on preparedness and rapid action in the first phase of an emergency. While internal displacement continues to grow in size and complexity, Member States and other actors need to see the international community pulling together strategically with a focus on preventing and resolving IDP situations.

1.2   Elevate protection

The IASC Principals stated clearly[2] five years ago that protection must be central to preparedness efforts, as part of immediate and life-saving activities and throughout the duration of humanitarian response and beyond. The IASC Protection Policy followed.[3] While Humanitarian Coordinators, Humanitarian Country Teams and Clusters are accountable for developing comprehensive protection strategies, fewer than half have them in place. Protection activities, moreover, are often not deemed "life-saving" when making critical resource allocation decisions at the country level.

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[1] http://undocs.or g/A/C.3/72/L.46/Rev.1
[2] https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/principals/content/centrality-protection-humanitarian-action
[3] https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/protection-priority-global-protection-cluster/documents/inter-agency-standing-committee-policy

The IASC should consider what actions are needed to better communicate the meaning and importance of the centrality of protection – in simple, human and relatable terms – and to make it actionable by all actors on the ground as the unifying concept that guides humanitarian action.

1.3   Catalyse solutions

Leveraging development for solutions to internal displacement has been an elusive goal. The Secretary-General's 2011 Policy Committee Decision[4] provided a useful framework, complementing IASC guidelines, but implementation has been uneven. More recently, OCHA's *Breaking the Impasse*[5] study and the GP20 Plan of Action offer an inclusive approach emphasizing the fundamental importance of government and multi-stakeholder engagement and ownership. At the same time, although focused on refugees and host communities, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) launched with the New York Declaration is relevant by analogy and offers many lessons learned, including in relation to the engagement of non-traditional partners. Solutions for internally displaced people and refugees are frequently linked and must be pursued in an integrated and comprehensive way, as recent experience in Somalia and current planning for Syria clearly demonstrate.

1.4.   Lighten coordination

The Humanitarian Reform and Transformative Agenda strengthened the coherence and effectiveness of our work but the coordination architecture has become overly complex and demands an undue share of limited human and financial resources. Heavy and mandatory procedures make coordination an end in itself rather than – as should be the case – a mechanism for supporting and improving operational effectiveness and life-saving action, while generating the information needed to "tell the story" and mobilize support. The emphasis on international actors also crowds out national and local government and civil society partners, working against localization and responsible disengagement. The Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) tools need to be reformed and simplified and brought to the IASC Principals for endorsement with a view of ensuring a focus on response, rather than process. .

1.5   Facilitate transition

The Humanitarian Reform and the Transformative Agenda focused on improving coordination in emergencies. The protocols for activating clusters, however, are not mirrored by clear criteria for deactivation and transition to more adapted coordination arrangements, with the result that clusters remain in place well beyond their 'sell by' date. The current humanitarian coordination architecture lacks a natural interface with national development planning and relevant government agencies, development partners and international financial institutions. While continuing conflict and sensitive protection issues may prevent a more integrated approach, an adapted and holistic model is needed for situations in transition.

1.6   Share data

The humanitarian community lacks a coherent approach in the field to collecting, validating and analysing data on internal displacement to support protection analysis, strategy development, integrated and area-based programming, operational response and monitoring. Different actors put forward conflicting figures that reflect specific perspectives and priorities. The solution is to join forces and not build "garrisons" around datasets that – subject to data protection

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[4] http://www.refworld.org/docid/5242d12b7.html
[5] https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Breaking-the-impasse.pdf

considerations – should be shared, combined and "triangulated" to provide an integrated view of displaced populations and host communities.

The collaborative approach must extend to the global level and ensure complementary action among agencies and initiatives, including OCHA's Centre for Humanitarian Data, IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre and the planned World Bank-UNHCR Joint Data Centre, as well as the work of key partners, including the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) and others. Data also provides the "bridge" between humanitarian and development partners, as the basis for shared analysis and complementary action, making it essential that these worlds can "speak to each other" through common standards and methods that facilitate data sharing.

1.7   Resource equitably

Humanitarian response in many internal displacement situations is facing serious, chronic funding shortfalls, with dire human consequences. Levels of donor support are also often driven more by national interests and geopolitical considerations than by the protection risks and humanitarian needs. The Grand Bargain process can increase resources, if all parties fulfil their commitments. Anchoring internally displaced people in national development planning, supported by development partners and international financial institutions, can also free up scarce humanitarian resources for emergency response. Nevertheless, complacency risks accepting the unacceptable. More joined up and effective advocacy is needed to secure equitable donor support for forgotten emergencies and protracted crises, particularly in Africa.

1.8   Build consensus

The recently launched GP20 Plan of Action for Advancing Prevention, Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced People 2018—2020[6] aims to refocus interagency attention on internally displaced people and bring in more stakeholders, such as development actors. The Plan of Action emphasizes protection, an end-to-end approach from prevention through to response and solutions and four main themes: (i) participation by internally displaced people; (ii) data; (iii) law and policy; and (iv) solutions. As States are engaged, the Plan of Action can help build the political will needed to elevate internal displacement on the global agenda. In addition, high level initiative such as a global conference or the recently flagged high level panel could also be discussed, provided that they are properly framed, timed and include strong participation by countries with significant internal displacement.

II.   PROPOSED ACTION POINTS

The IASC Principals are invited to consider and agree to:

   i. **Develop a common agenda, led by the ERC,** for strengthening interagency coordination, coherence and engagement with internal displacement for consideration by the IASC Principals.

   ii. **Translate the commitment to the centrality of protection to action** and agree to call upon Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators and UN and Humanitarian Country Teams to engage agencies with relevant expertise to develop comprehensive strategies that place protection at the centre of humanitarian action in practical and concrete ways.

   iii. **Strongly catalyse a "forward leaning" approach to solutions for internally displaced people** before situations become protracted and continued learning and adaptation to

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[6] http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/_assets/files/20180410-draft-gp20-plan-of-action.pdf

promote **their inclusion in national development planning**, with the engagement of development partners and international financial institutions and the private sector. **This should include clear criteria for responsible disengagement of clusters.**

iv. **Undertake a light review of current humanitarian coordination architecture** for internal displacement contexts, including a focus on transition and criteria for the responsible disengagement of clusters. This should **acknowledge the ongoing work, led by OCHA, to make the tools (assessments, HNO, HRPs) under the Humanitarian Programming Cycle simpler and less process heavy**. Ensure that this ongoing review process remains supportive of delivery and adapted to context, including urban settings and the transition to solutions. The new programming tools and guidance should be put forward for endorsement by all IASC members as soon as possible before dissemination to the field operations.

v. **Call on all agencies to find mechanisms for effective interagency coordination and collaboration in collecting, sharing analysing data** on internally displaced populations to strengthen understanding, improve programmatic responses and monitoring and build credibility with governments responding to internal displacement and those that support our work.

vi. **Request a dedicated reflection, led by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and engaging donors, on adequate and equitable funding** that draws on the lessons learned from the Grand Bargain that is aimed at a clear and targeted strategy for chronically underfunded humanitarian crises with significant internal displacement and which is aimed at holding donors accountable for "their part" of the bargain.

vii. **Endorse the GP20 Plan of Action** and call upon IASC members to support implementation and engage in collective action, particularly at the country level.

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