



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

“Towards a Global Compact on Refugees”

Thematic Discussion Five: Issues that cut across all four substantive sections of the comprehensive refugee responses and overarching issues

Panel one: How can we address the root causes of large movements of refugees?

In looking to address the drivers of large movements of refugees, focus must be placed on reducing the factors that force people to flee their homes, often in unsafe, desperate and dangerous conditions. A shift is necessary from a focus on conflict management and the immediate resolution of conflicts to including comprehensive and preventative approaches that address root causes and changed community dynamics, strengthen resilience and invest in the long-term to sustain peace.

Fundamental to IOM’s approach is that conflict is both a cause and consequence of forced migration. Displacement can only be resolved if conflict is resolved. To effectively prevent conflict and associated effects of displacement, prevention approaches must be adopted before, during and after conflict to include minimizing potential for escalation or continuation, and as part of conflict-sensitive recovery to prevent relapses into conflict. This approach implies developing longer-term programmes and actions, geared towards achieving stability and sustaining peace.

Effective prevention requires tackling the root causes of violence and instability. Typically, conflict drivers are complex, context-specific and multi-dimensional. Identifying and effectively addressing complex drivers requires more attention to context-specific and multi-dimensional conflict, risk and early warning analysis to inform timely and effective interventions. Conflict sensitivity is core to effective prevention and peacebuilding.

IOM addresses the drivers of conflict through a wide variety of programmes which strive to establish a sense of equity, through improved access to justice, restoration of essential services, community empowerment, economic recovery and livelihoods and mainstreaming protection. In undertaking these activities, IOM works horizontally across the humanitarian, development and peace continuum applying conflict-sensitive approaches. Further, strengthening social cohesion and including civil society is a central pillar underpinning all our prevention work, including by specifically addressing the vulnerability of women, youth and other marginalized groups.

IOM programming falls under three primary work streams: conflict prevention and peacebuilding, community stabilization, and disaster risk reduction, and it is geographically quite diverse. A full compendium of our activities to resolving displacement is available at:

<https://www.iom.int/progressive-resolution-displacement-situations>. Brief descriptions of our philosophy, approaches and some of the concrete results of our work are set forth below.

In the area of community stabilization, IOM programmes aim to (re)establish stability and security in vulnerable communities, including communities of return, and prevent further forced migration by mitigating factors that cause tension and displacement, restoring trust among community members, vulnerable populations and local authorities, laying the foundations for durable peace and sustainable Development. In **Uganda**, IOM conducted community stabilization programming directed at vulnerable and food-insecure households, ensuring equitable benefits that contribute to wider goals of community stability, recovery and self-reliance. In the **Central African Republic**, IOM undertook activities targeted towards initiating dialogue and promoting peaceful coexistence in mixed communities.

IOM peacebuilding initiatives include a diverse portfolio of activities that provide structural and community-based support. The former includes security sector reform, which entails supporting States in reforming or rebuilding their security sector in order to better provide State and human security as well as inclusive electoral support. Social cohesion entails government and community engagement and support to promote tolerance, reconciliation and conflict resolution, and to create opportunities for dialogue, collaboration, and participation within and across communities. A peacebuilding initiative in **Myanmar** focused specifically on empowering youths as peacebuilders through training, networking and dialogue. In **Sudan**, IOM worked to support the demarcation of a seasonal cattle migration corridor, reducing localized tensions and conflicts which had often resulted in loss of life.

The disaster risk reduction activities of IOM include efforts that contribute to reducing risks by analyzing the causal factors of disasters, reducing exposure to hazards and increasing the resilience of communities, and supporting sustainable development. In **Haiti**, a range of complementary initiatives, including support to construct safe shelters or reinforce existing community buildings to provide safe havens, constructing or rehabilitating key infrastructure, and/or participation in efforts to help reverse deforestation and to prevent floods, have contributed to risk reduction efforts. IOM partnered with national and provincial **Cambodian** authorities to facilitate and deliver disaster risk management training and support the establishment of Village Disaster Management Teams to mitigate the risks posed by natural disasters and to enhance coordination with local authorities in the event of disaster.

Recognizing the significance of global disasters as a root cause of forced movements and the interlinkages with conflict, IOM in 2017 launched an institutional Strategic Work Plan¹ to help guide and frame the Organization's work to reduce risk and build resilience in support of States' commitments under the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The work plan outlines core assistance priorities in support of strengthened disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

With respect to environmental degradation, IOM's approach takes into consideration that natural hazards and the adverse effects of climate change are an important 'threat multipliers' that can exacerbate vulnerability and fuel conflict and instability. In particular, localized disputes and tensions related to access to natural resources, such as grazing and water, can divide societies, and trigger local-level conflicts and force people to flee within and across borders. In light of this, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation measures can be important tools as part of wider conflict prevention and

¹ See: <https://www.iom.int/disaster-risk-reduction>

management, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected communities that are highly dependent on agricultural-based livelihoods and have weak capacity to cope with risks. Programming which provides for participatory systems for resource sharing, introducing water-efficient agricultural practices in drought-prone areas, reducing risks of recurrent flooding and building sustainable and diversified livelihoods to increase food security can make important contributions to preventing or mitigating flare-ups and promoting broader stability.

IOM recognizes that climate change, environmental degradation and disasters constitute increasingly important drivers of human mobility globally, posing numerous challenges to Governments, communities and individuals. These issues have been raised in numerous consultations related to a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (GCM). IOM has been actively engaged in this area of work since the 1990s and over the years it has developed a wealth of operational, policy and research expertise in this area by: **1) providing assistance** to persons affected by disasters, supporting community resilience building and harnessing the benefits of migration as adaptation to climate change (more than 1,000 projects since 1998); **2) collecting data and supporting research**, with more than 130 publications, including the flagship Atlas of Environmental Migration, Migration Profiles, MECC country assessments and policy briefs; **3) building governmental capacity and promoting intergovernmental dialogue and policy development** on these topics, including the inclusion of the topic in key global policy processes (the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Agenda for Humanity, the process elaborating the global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration); and **4) supporting key state-led initiatives** such as the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) and the implementation of the Nansen Initiative Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change; and the Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative (MICIC) and the implementation of the MICIC Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disaster.

Panel two: How can we ensure a whole-of-society response to large movements of refugees and protracted situations?

The focus on developing comprehensive responses involving multiple stakeholders and partners is a theme of the New York Declaration and is consistent with and complements efforts underway to formulate and operationalize the Global Compact on Migration, and reflects the ongoing work of IOM and many other organizations and networks in support of migration generally.

In particular we support the attention being given to cities and municipalities. Bringing in and working with cities is strategic for providing protection, opportunities and adequate support to refugees and migrants. Through the services they deliver to local populations, local authorities and cities facilitate access to rights, benefits and services. The close proximity of cities to their constituencies – their direct experience in implementing policy, their potential to initiate multi-stakeholder dialogue and participatory decision-making, as well as the range of skills that they have developed in spatial development planning make them a central actor. Cities are also pressed to deliver adequate services to all city residents, irrespective of their status. Cities therefore provide a unique opportunity to look at issues of protection, inclusion and integration across the refugee and broader migration spectrum and as such can provide a bridge between the provisions to be enshrined in the GCM and the GCR.

In further considering the proposal of to develop a *Global Network of Solidarity encompassing municipalities committed to refugee protection and solutions*, IOM encourages UNHCR to consult with and build upon the dynamic processes currently underway involving cities and localities in addressing the challenges and benefits of migration. These include:

The Global Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development, an annual gathering of mayors and city leaders serving to promote globally relevant policy dialogue, focuses on the exchange of experiences in governing migration and the formulation of strategies for collective action.² The Forum seeks to support new and innovative approaches to urban governance in contexts of greater diversity, and showcases city leadership in the implementation of migration policies for inclusive growth. The Mayoral Forum also connects city actors with the UN system and is therefore a strategic dialogue to be brought into the implementation of both the GCM and the GCR.

UNHCR is a member, along with IOM, UNDP and UNFPA, in **The UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI)**. The JMDI focuses on the importance of local realities and works in partnership with local stakeholders on the local-to-local dimension of the migration and development nexus. JMDI's main objective is to bring the development agenda forward by giving local governments, migrants and local actors a central role in the larger debate of migration and development. The programme's activities are geared towards sensitizing and mobilizing a wide range of actors to establish a framework that supports the mainstreaming of migration issues into local development planning.

This month, **The Global Conference on Cities and Migration hosted by the City of Mechelen**, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Belgian Federal Government, and coordinated by IOM, UCLG and UN-Habitat, and the Global Conference on Cities and Migration resulted in the issuance of the Mechelen Declaration on Cities and Migration:

https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/press_release/file/Mechelen-Declaration-final.pdf.

The Declaration will be considered as input to the preparatory process of the GCM ahead of the intergovernmental stocktaking meeting in Mexico in December 2017. It provides key insights into the interests of cities related to: international cooperation and governance, implementation of human rights, drivers of migration and building sustainable resilient and inclusive urban environments, smuggling human trafficking and irregular migration. It also calls explicitly for continued initiatives and collaboration around these issues.

In relation to the role of universities and the academic sector, IOM values the important contribution of the research community and welcomes the *Refugee Academic Alliance* concept. In supporting the GCM process, IOM has created the space for leading researchers and experts to put forward ideas and innovations that can help effect safe, orderly and regular migration. The Migration Research Leaders' Syndicate comprises 36 migration experts and 9 advisers from around the world as a means of drawing upon the latest evidence and analysis to inform effective responses, and hopefully avoid unintended negative consequences: <https://www.iom.int/migration-research-leaders-syndicate>. While the proposed Refugee Academic Alliance is framed around refugees, recognition of the migration of others in need of

² With the financial support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, this rotating city-led forum was organized in 2017 (4th edition) by the City Council of Berlin, in collaboration with IOM, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD), the International Organization for Migration and the UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI).

protection via various pathways would contribute to a better understanding of refugees' views, needs and aspirations in the development of better and more sustainable responses.

Panel three: In what way can regional institutions contribute to comprehensive refugee responses?

The historic opportunities presented by the New York Declaration simply would not have been possible without the collaboration and innovative contributions of regional organizations, dialogue mechanisms, forums and the approximately 30 regional, inter-regional and global consultative processes on migration that have been established during the past decades.

Pursuant to the modalities resolution governing the GCM, and as many of the panelists and participants participating in the thematic discussions mentioned, each of the UN Regional Commissions conducted consultations on the GCM. Numerous other regional and inter-regional consultative processes on migration also discussed the GCM at their high-level meetings over the course of 2017. In addition, on 10-11 October 2017, the 7th Global Meeting of Regional, Inter-regional and Global Consultative Processes on migration met in Geneva, during which 92 delegates, representing 22 RCPs, 10 regional organizations, including all five UN Regional Commissions, considered input to the GCM. The findings, outcomes, and recommendations from all these consultations have been shared with the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for International Migration and the GCM Co-facilitators.

The centrality of regional collaboration in managing migration has been proven, as has the effectiveness of the various state-led processes and regional convening authorities. The proposal for integrating the challenge of finding durable solutions for refugees into these state-led agendas holds great promise for the development of joint solutions, responsibility sharing and solidarity. IOM also looks forward to the continuing leadership role of regional institutions in the follow up to both historic Compacts.