

59th Meeting of the Standing Committee
Oral Report
Follow-up to the 2013 High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges
Item 7 (a)

- This sixth High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges focused on a range of operational issues relating to the protection of internally displaced.
- It was the largest dialogue ever organized. Well **over 400 people attended the event**, including the Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, representatives of UN member states, I/NGOs, academics, national and local officials, and individual experts.
- The Dialogue highlighted **the gap between the normative frameworks that exist [such as the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement], and the actual practice on the ground**, notably when civilians are the target of violence and human rights violations.
- Since 2007, UNHCR has gained in experience in coordinating our operational response in cluster settings:
 - We have aligned our emergency response with the Transformative Agenda protocols;
 - We have noted the need to strengthen protection information gathering, analysis and strategy setting to better inform humanitarian responses;
 - The number of wide-scale emergencies have impacted on our internal response structures and guidance to the field.
- UNHCR's response complex emergencies in the Philippines, the Central African Republic, and most recently in South Sudan, has confirmed the High Commissioner's commitment to UNHCRs robust engagement in IDP situations.
 - In each situation UNHCR substantially contributed to the interagency response, led by the Emergency Relief Coordinator.
- This dialogue explored how we can work together to better protect the displaced.
 - It is heartening that both Yemen and Afghanistan have set in place policies and legislation relating to IDPs. UNHCR is today also providing support to the Nigerian authorities in this regard.

There were four additional points of **follow-up**; I'd like to give you some information today on a few of our initiatives in this regard, knowing that the June Standing Committee will provide an occasion for a more detailed overview of our plans.

1. Review UNHCR's policy on internal displacement based on the outcomes of the Dialogue, institutional learning, and good practice examples:

- We are in the process of finalising a **revision of UNHCRs policy on its engagement with internal displaced persons**.
- Given the interest of a number of key stakeholders, we will be consulting a number of you before issuing.
- Beyond the policy, we recognise that **operational guidelines** to flesh out some aspects of the policy will be needed [for example, including guidance on solutions for internally displaced persons and responses outside camp settings].

2. *Strengthen UNHCR's engagement with IDPs (both institutionally as an operational agency and in its role as lead of the Global Protection Cluster):*

- We are in the process of strengthening our IDP operations in terms of staffing (more **dedicated staff**, not just to coordination functions but focused on agency response – e.g. South Sudan, CAR), and **training** (new e-learning on Protecting and Assisting IDPs, training on Coordination and Leadership, WEM, SELT).
- The nature of complex emergencies today has meant that **access to displaced or at risk populations** is most critical and often lacking. Working through and with communities to help build or strengthen their protection capacity has become a lynchpin to our protection strategies.
 - Safe and sustained access to displaced populations is essential to understanding their needs, and translating this information into meaningful interventions.
- As part of its **work with the IASC**, the GPC has drafted a short '**Statement on the Centrality of Protection**' which was recently endorsed by the Principals.
 - Focusing on the strategic and cross-cutting nature of protection to inform decision-making and help prioritize collective efforts in addressing the most critical needs of populations caught up in conflict or natural disasters.
- The Senior Management Committee of UNHCR also analysed most of our current IDP operations and identified core components of our responses, in order to develop **operational guidance for the 2015 planning cycle**.
 - This is a basis for guidance to help field operations prioritize interventions based on assessed needs of internally displaced persons, UNHCR's added value, and taking into account the capacity and expertise of other actors.

UNHCR plans to undertake 2 evaluations:

- One will be led by the GPC, and carried out in cooperation with the Interagency Standing Committee, and will look at the whole-of-system approach to protection of IDPs. It will be an important look at protection in the cluster system.
- In parallel, the High Commissioner was eager to look at UNHCR's performance in the clusters it leads. Discussions have begun with UNHCR's Policy, Development and Evaluation Service on issues such as the timing, scope and terms of reference for this.

3. *Support to develop and implement IDP legislation and policies, for example in close consultation with the African Union and the current mandate-holder*

- UNHCR supported the strengthening of national protection systems for the protection of and assistance to IDPs:
 - Technical assistance in legal and policy development was provided in Afghanistan, Georgia, Somalia, Nigeria, the Philippines and Yemen.
 - National policy instruments on internal displacement were successfully developed and adopted by authorities in Yemen and Afghanistan.
- UNHCR continued to support the ratification and implementation of the Kampala Convention.
 - A total number of 39 have signed the Convention.
 - In 2013, Angola, Cote d'Ivoire, Malawi and Zimbabwe ratified the convention bringing the number of ratified 22.
 - UNHCR together with its key partners held a major training workshop for 15 governments from English speaking African Countries.
- UNHCR together with the Inter-Parliamentarian Union and other partners has developed and launched the first handbook on internal displacement for members of parliament.

4. ***Strengthen partnership with a range of stakeholders, especially development-related actors, to intensify the solutions potential of IDP interventions***
- UNHCR now has MOUs with NRC and DRC, and will devise co-facilitation agreements with partners.
 - UNHCR's community-based protection strategy has been launched and is in the process of being rolled-out
 - Guidelines on dealing with urban IDPs will be developed alongside the revised IDP policy.

This year's High Commissioner's Dialogue will be held on the 10-11 December 2014 on the theme of Protection at Sea.