

**ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NGOs**  
**1 – 3 JULY 2015 - International Conference Center Geneva**

**THEMATIC SESSION**

***BACKGROUND PAPER***

**Session Title:**      **Internal displacement: still waiting for solutions**

**Date:**                      Thursday 2 July 2015

**Time/Room:**              Room 3, 11h30 – 13h00

**Background**

In 2014, a record-breaking 38 million people were displaced within their own country by conflict or violence – a 4.7 million increase compared to 2013. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), which compiles annual global figures for IDPs, people had been living in internal displacement for ten years or more in nearly 90 percent of the 60 countries and territories monitored by IDMC in 2014. The Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement has come out with a similar stark finding; they estimate that 80 per cent of the world's IDPs have been displaced for more than five years. Protracted displacement, according to IDMC's 2014 report, is largely linked to a failure to anchor solutions for IDPs, namely return, local integration or settlement elsewhere, into broader development and peace-building programmes. In one in five cases, governance failures by absent states are also a major factor.

In December 2013, the annual Dialogue on Protection hosted by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (HC's Dialogue) focused on IDPs. This resulted in a number of commitments in relation to UNHCR's engagement in situations of internal displacement, including solutions for IDPs. This year's NGO consultations can thus be an opportunity to review and assess progress on these commitments, namely:

- placing internal displacement higher on the international agenda;
- reinforcing the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons;
- reinforcing UNHCR's operational engagement situations of internal displacement, including through more predictable programming, human resources, training, and presence in the field;
- an independent 'whole of system' review protection in humanitarian crises;
- reviewing and reaffirming UNHCR's internal policy on IDPs (taking into account the results of the December 2013 HC's Dialogue);
- strengthening UNHCR's partnerships: within the UN system, with NGOs, and with States (with States to work on development of international law on IDPs, on national law and policies on IDPs, especially on implementation and accountability).

Specifically on solutions, the December 2013 HC's Dialogue concluded that:

- a solutions approach needs to exist from the beginning of the response to an internal displacement crisis;
- the displaced people are themselves the key drivers of their solutions;
- education has to be much more important even at the start of an emergency;
- development actors need to be part of the solution from the start; and
- the coordination between development and humanitarian actors needs to be much stronger from the very beginning of a crisis response.

Following the HC's Dialogue, UNHCR released provisional internal guidance for its engagement in situations of internal displacement on 14 March 2014. Aiming to make UNHCR's operational response to IDPs within an inter-agency set-up more predictable, the guidance sets out areas to prioritize – areas where UNHCR has a particular expertise, experience and knowledge (the so-called 'IDP footprint'). Because all UNHCR operations with situations of internal displacement were instructed to adhere to the March 2014 guidance in designing their 2016 plans, this session will be an opportunity for UNHCR to report back on progress achieved with the IDP footprint, including its impact on the strategic direction of operations and the investment in solutions.

In 2014, the Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement undertook a study on "*How Are IDPs Faring Ten Years after Humanitarian Reform?*" The study, financed in part by UNHCR, sought to assess whether institutional reforms of the humanitarian system (such as those carried out through the cluster approach) have improved IDP protection and assistance, as well as the extent to which national authorities are protecting and assisting IDPs within their borders. Findings of the report are critical and revealing, namely that the "international commitment to addressing internal displacement seems to be diminishing – precisely at a time when the number of conflict-induced IDPs has never been higher and the prospect of even larger numbers displaced by disasters and climate change looms on the horizon." There is also inadequate attention being given to solutions. In view of its findings, the Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement recommends:

- maintaining the visibility of IDPs;
- emphasizing that governments are – or should be – the key actor in preventing, responding to and resolving internal displacement;
- consolidating progress in humanitarian reform;
- prioritizing efforts to find solutions to internal displacement and overcoming the challenge of engaging development actors;
- thinking boldly about protracted displacement; and
- devoting more resources and creativity to data-collection of IDPs to support policy and programming decisions.

#### **Objectives of the Session:**

Reflecting on the findings from IDMC, the Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement and similar initiatives and recalling the commitments made at the 2013 HC's Dialogue on Protection, this session would aim to:

- develop additional recommendations on how the follow-up to 2013 HC's Dialogue can be taken even further, in terms of concrete actions and deliverables, including through NGO engagement;
- provide an update on the status of UNHCR's internal guidance and 'IDP footprint', including the impact it is having in practice thus far (e.g. in 2016 operational planning) and its link to progress on solutions;

- identify and prioritize potential joint UNHCR-NGOs initiatives aimed at strengthening work on solutions for IDPs, including on rule of law, HLP and the Early Recovery cluster;
- sharing information and lessons learned on interventions that have been successful in achieving solutions for IDPs (which can in turn help to identify what needs to be prioritized).

UNHCR's Deputy Director for International Protection will open the session with an update on action taken and progress in relation to IDPs since the December 2013 HC's Dialogue on Protection, including the current and expected future impact of relevant internal guidance developed by UNHCR. This presentation will also include lessons learned in relation to UNHCR's commitment to and progress in promoting solutions for IDPs (including with regard to the SG's Framework on Ending Displacement in the Aftermath of Conflict) and how this will be incorporated into the 'IDP Footprint' and other guidance (e.g. the alternative to camps policies, upcoming solutions guidance note). Links will also be made to broader, global initiatives, such as the recently established GPC Task Team on Law and Policy. It will conclude with reflection on the changes UNHCR could bring to its operational approach to give more prominence to long-term solutions.

Continuing on from the presentation by UNHCR, two NGOs engaged in operational work and research on solutions for IDPs will share their experiences, expertise and views on enhancing solutions for IDPs. MIDEFEHOPS's Isidore Kalimira Cihimbire will consider what solutions mean for IDPs in the context of the Democratic Republic of Congo, offering lessons learned that have global relevance. This will be followed by a presentation by the IDMC's Director Alfredo Zamudio on findings from recent research on housing solutions for urban IDPs, country case studies, and monitoring of the development of durable solutions strategies in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Kyrgyzstan. It will conclude with reflections on how UNHCR's commitments and conclusions from the 2013 HC's Dialogue can be translated into solutions for IDPs, and what should be prioritized by UNHCR and NGOs in moving forward.

A plenary will follow the presentations so that participants have an opportunity to share their own views and experiences, including in relation to which interventions have been successful in achieving solutions for IDPs, and what concrete changes can be brought to current approaches, both from the perspective of policy, rule of law and operational engagement.

**Moderator:** Melanie TEFF, International Rescue Committee

**Speakers:** Louise AUBIN, Deputy Director, Division of International Protection, UNHCR  
 Isidore KALIMIRA CIHIMBIRE, MIDEFEHOPS (Democratic Republic of Congo)  
 Alfredo ZAMUDIO, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)/Norwegian Refugee Council

**Note taker:** IDMC