

THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL'S ACTION AGENDA ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

Follow-Up to the Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel
on Internal Displacement



22 Dec 2021

DRAFT FOR EXTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

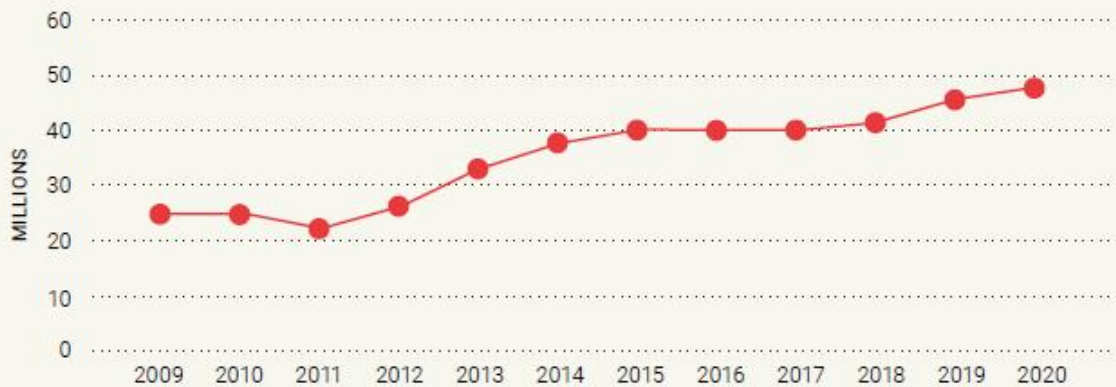
1 INTRODUCTION

The world is at a breaking point. Conflicts are lasting ever longer and human rights are routinely and systematically violated. Climate-related disasters are growing in frequency and intensity. COVID-19 brought the world to its knees and has placed many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) even further out of reach. Where these threats intersect – and they often do – the dangers multiply and become mutually reinforcing.

In all these crises, **record numbers of people have been forced from their homes and entire communities remain trapped in protracted displacement.** The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has doubled over the last ten years, with women, children and marginalized groups often facing the greatest impacts.

Total number of people internally displaced by conflict and violence by year

Source: IDMC, GRID 2021



Breakdown of IDPs by age group

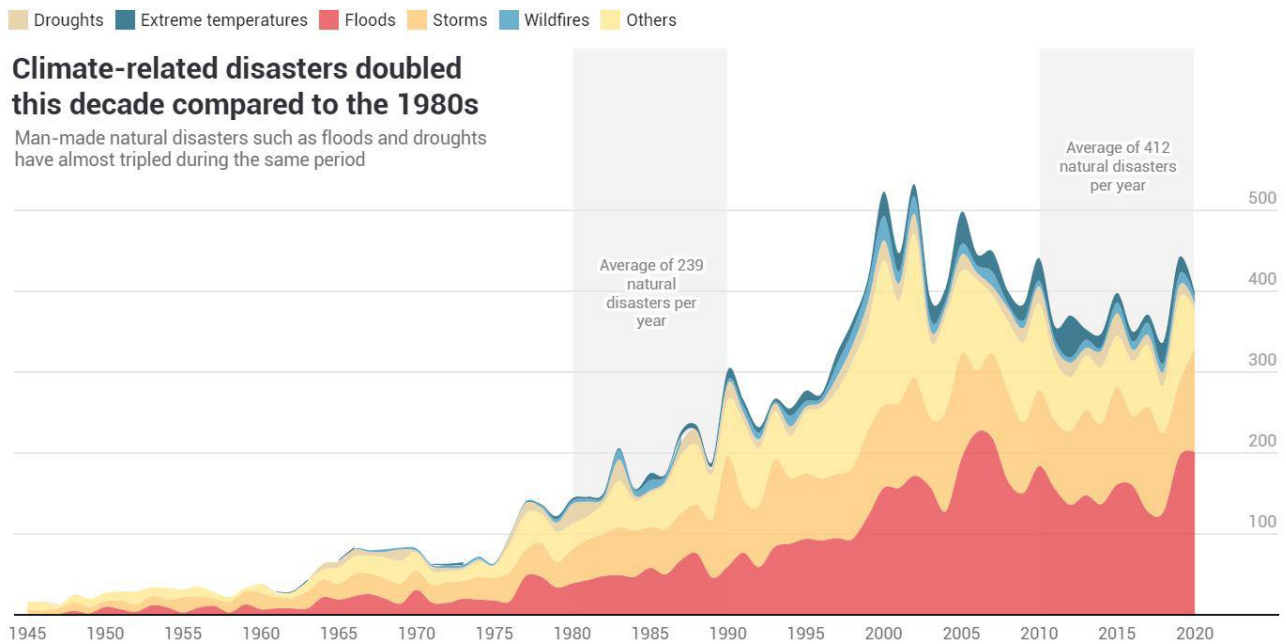


Estimated number of people of different age groups living in internal displacement as a result of conflict, violence and disasters globally at the end of 2020

Source: IDMC, GRID 2021

The United Nations Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement

The urgency to prevent and find durable solutions to internal displacement is particularly acute in light of climate change, which is not only a driver for displacement but also a risk multiplier. The World Bank estimates that **216 million people could be forced to move internally by 2050 in just six regions due to climate change** if immediate action is not taken.



Others: Earthquakes, Epidemics, Infestations, Landslides, Mass movements and Volcanoes

Chart: Global Humanitarian Overview 2022 • Source: [WTO/CRED](#)

We face an untenable situation. It is untenable for those who are internally displaced and long to reestablish a lasting home. It is untenable for host communities whose capacities to meet their own needs often become overstretched. And it is untenable for countries and cities for whom having large numbers of IDPs constitutes a major hurdle to meeting the SDGs.

Recognizing this crisis, and building on an appeal from 57 States, I established a High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement at the end of 2019. Over the course of 19 months, the Panel consulted widely and sought out new ways to drive change. The Panel presented its [final report](#) on 29 September 2021 with 10 overarching recommendations for improved action. **The task now falls to all of us to deliver on the changes that are so urgently needed.**

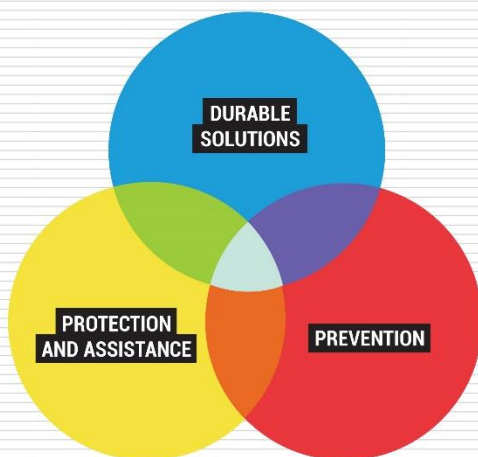
2 GOALS OF THE ACTION AGENDA ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

Building on the findings and recommendations of the High-Level Panel, **my message is simple: more of the same is not good enough.** As I set out in Our Common Agenda, there is an urgent need for a renewed social contract between governments and their citizens and residents – including those who are displaced – to restore trust and ensure that rights and needs are met. I also called for stronger international solidarity to address global challenges, including internal displacement. The world committed to Leave No One Behind in achieving the SDGs, but we cannot deliver on this promise if millions of people remain uprooted from their homes with no end to their displacement in sight.

We have the tools and expertise at our disposal to support IDPs, host communities, and those at risk of displacement to find a better future. Today I am setting out my plan for how we can work together to realize this ambition. Informed by Our Common Agenda and my Call to Action for Human Rights, and building on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the report of the High-Level Panel, my **Action Agenda on Internal Displacement** has three overarching goals that I believe the UN, States, and other actors must work jointly to achieve:

1. Help IDPs find a durable **solution** to their displacement
2. **Prevent** new displacement crises from emerging
3. Ensure those facing displacement receive effective **protection and assistance**

Three Interlinked Goals



These three goals are interlinked. No solution is sustainable if another crisis is looming. No assistance will be sufficient if underlying drivers remain unresolved. And prevention cannot succeed if past crises have not been addressed. We must thus go beyond thinking about phases of action on displacement and instead recognize that **we must work towards prevention, response, and solutions simultaneously** as part of a comprehensive approach. There are, however, specific shifts that are needed in how we deliver on each of these goals, with particularly significant adjustments needed in how we approach solutions.

The Action Agenda sets out the UN's commitments to realizing these three goals. We will have to step up our efforts and, in some cases, fundamentally change our ways of working if real progress is to be achieved. The goals can likewise only be met if the UN works in close partnership with IDPs, local communities, national and local authorities,

donors and development finance actors, civil society and the private sector. The Action Agenda thus also includes calls to many of these actors, and I encourage them to use this document to guide their actions and embrace it as a shared plan for driving change.

Guiding Considerations for the Action Agenda



1. **IDPs are citizens and residents** of their country and States have the primary responsibility to protect their rights and respond to their needs. **Sovereignty comes with responsibility** and States should put in place and implement relevant laws and policy frameworks to address IDPs' rights and outline how displacement will be addressed as a whole-of-government priority.



2. Action to address internal displacement must recognize the **rights and agency of IDPs and host communities** and ensure their **active and informed participation** in decision-making. Approaches should be guided by the knowledge of local communities and address the specific needs of people of different ages, genders, abilities and diversities, including by promoting gender equality and the best interests of the child.



3. Addressing internal displacement is critical for delivering on the promise to **Leave No One Behind** in achieving the SDGs and for attaining lasting **peace and prosperity**. In view of this, action on internal displacement must be embraced as cross-cutting and part of humanitarian, development, peacebuilding, human rights, climate change action and disaster risk reduction efforts, ensuring a coherent and continuous response.



4. Action on internal displacement must be part of a **whole-of-displacement approach** that also considers the rights and needs of individuals who fled across international borders, individuals who returned after cross-border displacement, and host communities.



5. **IDPs are increasingly settling in urban areas** and response strategies must take into account the urban ecosystem and engage urban authorities while also responding to the specific needs of individuals displaced from and to rural areas.



6. A **whole-of-society approach**, including strong involvement of civil society, national human rights institutions, and the private sector, is critical to ensuring action is locally owned and informed and that it draws on the full spectrum of available capacities.



7. Action should be based on high-quality and trusted **data and analysis**. Increased efforts are needed to ensure the right data is gathered and that it is collected, managed, and used responsibly and in an inclusive and collaborative manner.

3 FINDING SOLUTIONS TO INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

When I formed the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement in 2019, I called on it to direct particular attention to how to better resolve situations of protracted internal displacement. Millions of IDPs are left languishing in camps and crowded urban settlements for years, often facing continued threats to their safety and well-being. We have a collective obligation to help them find a durable solution to their displacement by supporting them to **reintegrate into their places of origin, local communities, or other areas of the country**. We must work creatively and collectively on this path from the outset of displacement, drawing on globally recognized standards like the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons.

Durable Solutions to Internal Displacement

RETURN **LOCAL INTEGRATION** **SETTLEMENT ELSEWHERE**

IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for IDPs: 8 Criteria

Long-term safety and security **Adequate standard of living** **Access to livelihoods and employment** **Access to remedies and justice** **Family reunification**

Accessible mechanism for restoration of Housing, Land and Property **Personal and other documentation** **Participation in public affairs**

Source: IASC Framework and RedSS

The United Nations Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement

There are real opportunities to facilitate solutions in many internal displacement contexts, opportunities which can and must be seized. This is achievable if we **go beyond treating internal displacement as just a humanitarian problem and recognize it as a priority for development and peace**. We must work towards nationally and locally owned solutions as part of a renewed social contract to ensure that IDPs, along with other members of the local community, are protected and supported by the State and empowered as rights-holding citizens and residents of their country.

Delivering more effective solutions begins, crucially, with recognizing the rights and agency of IDPs of all ages, genders, and diversities, including in respecting their right to choose the solution that is best for them and to meaningfully participate in decisions that affect them. The engagement of host communities and communities in areas of return or future settlement is also vital. I commit that the UN will **redouble its efforts to ensure strong and inclusive participation of IDPs and local communities in all our solutions work**, including by promoting strengthened use of community-based planning.

Leadership by national and local authorities

States bear the primary responsibility to facilitate durable solutions to internal displacement. Sovereignty comes with responsibility and displacement-affected States must recognize action on internal displacement as a national, whole-of-government priority with the rights of IDPs as citizens and residents at the centre. I urge States to work to create a safe and conducive environment for solutions, put in place measures to ensure IDPs can participate in voting and civic processes without discrimination, and proactively address displacement in national and local development action, urban and rural development planning, and disaster risk reduction and climate change plans. They should also invest in sustainable agriculture-based livelihoods to enable solutions and help prevent displacement driven by food crises. States should also ensure IDPs benefit from a clear legal and policy framework in line with international human rights standards. These steps are crucial for ensuring that IDPs of all ages, genders and diversities have equitable access to the systems and services of the State without discrimination.

Achieving solutions to displacement requires **high-level leadership and a whole-of-government approach**, bringing together all relevant line ministries, service providers, and rule of law and judicial actors. Given that an increasing number of IDPs are displaced to **urban areas** and prefer to remain there, it also requires greater action from and support to local and city authorities. Local and national offices that support livelihoods, skills training, as well as secure tenure of housing, land and property will likewise be essential partners.

I encourage displacement-affected States to put in place a **mechanism coordinated by a high-level focal point** that draws together all these actors to ensure collaboration at the national and local levels. Their work should be guided by a **whole-of-government solutions strategy** that is developed through a consultative and inclusive process, which, most crucially, draws on the views, capacities, and preferences of IDPs and local communities. The strategy should set out how relevant ministries and different levels of government will work together to facilitate solutions that are locally led and nationally supported, including in responding to the needs of other displacement-affected groups, such as host communities. I encourage Governments to work closely with the UN Resident Coordinators in developing this strategy and to establish a mechanism to **facilitate strong collaboration with international actors**.

UN engagement on solutions at global and country level

Many national and local governments will need targeted assistance in scaling up their work on durable solutions. Along with the continued vital contribution of humanitarian organizations in laying the groundwork for solutions, there is an urgent need for **stepped up, earlier and more predictable engagement of development actors**.

I express my full support for a shift towards a strengthened development approach to solutions and confirm the UN's commitment to deliver on this direction. Resolving displacement is critical for delivering on the promise to Leave No One Behind in achieving the SDGs and for attaining lasting peace and prosperity. In this context, the search for solutions must be embraced by development, peacebuilding, human rights, climate change action and disaster risk reduction efforts. **Adopting this more integrated approach will require concerted efforts from**

across the UN system, including to make sure that protection and human rights remain at the heart of our solutions work, as outlined in my **Call to Action for Human Rights**. We must also ensure that preparedness and prevention efforts – of conflicts, disasters, and the adverse effects of climate change – are approached hand in hand with solutions to ensure truly sustainable outcomes.

To help drive this shift in approach, and to provide a clear point of engagement for States and actors at global level, I am appointing a **Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement** for a period of two years who will act with my authority to mobilize relevant expertise from across the UN system and lead collective efforts on solutions in follow-up to this Action Agenda. The Special Adviser will have no operational functions but will assume the role of the UN's prime advocate on solutions, working to mobilize governments and International Financial Institutions to advance solutions to internal displacement at global and country level. The Special Adviser will work in concert with a **Steering Group on Internal Displacement Solutions**, consisting of a small group of relevant UN entities (DCO, IOM, OCHA, UNDP, and UNHCR). The Steering Group will work both at global and country level to drive stepped-up action and one-UN approaches to solutions. At global level, the group will be chaired by the Special Adviser. At country-level, it should work under the oversight of Resident Coordinators. (For more details on the Special Adviser and the Steering Group, see the box on the right). The Special Adviser and Steering Group will work closely with the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs, who continues to mainstream human rights into UN responses to internal displacement and draw on the support of the UN and civil society through initiatives like GP2.0 and its multi-stakeholder network on internal displacement.

To embed a more joined up and development-oriented approach on the ground, I am designating **UN Resident Coordinators (who in many places also act as Humanitarian Coordinators) as the UN's lead on solutions at country-level**. They are to proactively engage with national and local authorities on solutions, ensure solutions are reflected as a shared priority in UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), and work with the authorities to make sure a dedicated and

Special Adviser and Steering Group on Solutions to Internal Displacement

The **Special Adviser**, to be appointed for a period of two years, will help jump-start and drive implementation of this Action Agenda, with a focus on solutions. S/he will regularly brief the Executive Committee on progress that has been achieved. The Special Adviser will have no operational functions but will assume the role of the UN's prime advocate on solutions, with three core responsibilities:

- 1 Galvanizing political will through high-level advocacy at global level and through field visits and advocacy support at country-level in discussions with national authorities
- 2 Strengthening linkages with development actors, including IFIs, around solutions at global level
- 3 Incentivizing collaboration within the UN system to ensure that solutions are more effectively addressed within the UN's existing processes and mechanisms

The **Steering Group on Internal Displacement Solutions** will consist of DCO, IOM, OCHA, UNDP and UNHCR. It will work both at global and country-level to drive stepped-up action and one-UN approaches to solutions and will assume both operational and policy functions. At global level, the group will be chaired by the Special Adviser. At country-level, it should work under the oversight of Resident Coordinators to whom it will provide predictable support in line with the "champions" approach advocated by the Panel. At both global and country levels, the Steering Group will follow a hub and spokes model, including in its deliberations with other stakeholders as necessary in an effort to link up to and mobilize other relevant actors from inside and outside the UN, including NGOs and multi-stakeholder forums. It will also draw upon the expertise and advice of other development actors as relevant, including the World Bank and other multilateral development banks.

The United Nations Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement

costed solutions strategy is in place. In UN mission settings, the Resident Coordinator must also work closely with the head of the mission to ensure that solutions are reflected in missions' political engagements and other mandated activities. These strengthened responsibilities build on the UN development system reform and efforts to improve harmonization across the humanitarian-development-peace pillars of the UN system.

Enabling Resident Coordinators to fulfill their solutions function requires providing them with enhanced access to support and capacity. This begins, first and foremost, with all **UN agencies and entities offering their full collaboration, expertise and assistance to the Resident Coordinator** in carrying out their solutions leadership role, with the Steering Group meant to act as a motor and mobiliser. Resident Coordinators will also work closely with NGOs and civil society, who have a critical role to play in supporting and grounding solutions at the local level. The UN will also provide **targeted support to Resident Coordinators** through ensuring they can draw on advice and support from the global and regional level, including through initiatives like GP2.0, and – where relevant – dedicated capacity at country-level to support them on development-oriented approaches to solutions and working across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

To harness the full potential of different actors' contributions to solutions, Resident Coordinators will, with the support of the Steering Group, be expected to **ensure effective coordination of internal displacement solutions efforts at the country-level**. This should be done in partnership with the government wherever possible, and include IDPs and local community representatives, NGOs, donors and development finance actors, and civil society. Having a whole-of-society approach to solutions is essential. The coordination model should be tailored to the local context but should ensure that humanitarian, development, peace, human rights, and disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation actors are involved wherever possible.

To ensure this reoriented approach to solutions is embraced by the whole of the UN system, I am also tasking the senior management of all relevant UN agencies and entities across the development, peace, humanitarian, human rights, and disaster/climate branches to **develop a global, institutional plan by the end of 2022 for how they will reinforce their internal capacities and engagement on solutions to internal displacement**. This would align with broader efforts to place protection considerations at the centre of our collective engagement. The plan should provide an overview of how their operations will support Resident Coordinators' leadership on solutions and should include details on how they will build the necessary expertise in their organization to address displacement realities – including, for example, urbanization and climate change trends and projections, and continued needs for strengthening age, gender, and diversity-sensitive approaches. The Special Advisor will assist in bringing together different actors on these plans to ensure they are complementary, mutually reinforcing, and work in strategic partnership wherever possible.

UN Commitments

1. Redouble efforts to ensure **meaningful participation and systematic inclusion of IDPs and local community members** of all ages, genders, and diversities in decision-making on solutions, including by scaling up community-based planning; advocate with States to put in place measures to ensure IDPs are heard and included in solutions planning
2. Support States to develop and implement **whole-of-government solutions strategies** with measurable progress indicators that are guided by the views and capacities of IDPs and local communities, and to embed solutions within national and local development plans
3. Advocate with States and international actors for **stepped up attention to urban displacement** and for support to local and city authorities in responding to the needs of urban IDPs and host communities
4. Strengthen UN leadership and accountability on internal displacement by appointing a time-bound **Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement** to work in concert with a **Steering Group on Internal Displacement Solutions**, which will operate at global and country-level

5. Designate **Resident Coordinators to serve as the UN's lead on solutions at country-level**, including to: proactively engage governments on this issue; ensure solutions are reflected in UNSDCFs and HRP; ensure a dedicated and costed solutions strategy is developed as needed; and ensure relevant and inclusive coordination mechanisms are in place
6. Provide **additional support to Resident Coordinators** through ensuring they can draw on advice and support from global and regional level and – where relevant – dedicated capacity at country-level
7. Task UN development, peacebuilding, humanitarian, human rights, and disaster risk reduction and climate change actors to develop **global institutional plans**, by the end of 2022, for how they will reinforce their internal capacities and engagement on solutions to internal displacement

Financing for solutions

I echo the High-Level Panel's strong call for bilateral donors and International Financial Institutions (IFIs), including regional multilateral development banks, to put in place measures to **address internal displacement proactively and systematically as part of development financing**. Financing partnerships with national and local authorities are invaluable and I believe embedding greater attention to displacement within these efforts could drive real change, including in achieving the SDGs. There is an urgent need to scale up flexible and long-term financing for IDP-inclusive services, including by facilitating access to finance for local governments and service providers. I also encourage solutions to displacement to be proactively incorporated into the implementation of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus.

In addition, there is a need for predictable, catalytic funding to help jumpstart the solutions process. To address this, **the UN will convene an ad hoc forum of relevant development finance actors and affected States** to explore how catalytic financing could be made more readily available. I am requesting this forum to agree on the most appropriate model by mid-2022 and to work to expedite its establishment.

In addition, I recommend that the **UN Joint SDG Fund become a key financing mechanism behind UN-supported solutions initiatives** and that it hosts a dedicated thematic window, which will receive contributions that will be committed to joint solutions-focused programs identified by United Nations Country Teams.

UN Commitments

8. Work with development financing partners to **ensure solutions are pursued proactively and systematically as part of development financing**, based on analytics including socioeconomic data, and incentivize the inclusion of action on internal displacement within national and local development plans and associated budgeting
9. Convene **an ad hoc forum of relevant development finance actors and affected States** to explore how catalytic financing could be made more readily available for solutions and, by mid-2022, agree on the most appropriate model and expedite its establishment
10. Host a **dedicated thematic window for solutions to internal displacement within the UN Joint SDG Fund** that supports joint, solutions-focused programs identified by UN Country Teams

Engaging the private sector on solutions

Resolving displacement will also benefit from strengthened engagement by local, national, and international private sector actors, which often have untapped capacities to resolve impediments to solutions – particularly in supporting the recovery of livelihoods and contributing to resilience. Engagement of the private sector can be beneficial for both IDPs and businesses alike, and there is a need to better explore the potential for mutually beneficial engagement that supports IDPs while also serving core business objectives. To this end, the UN will work with relevant partners to **identify 3-4 contexts where there are opportunities to pilot means of strengthening engagement with the private sector**, working with Resident Coordinators and ideally also drawing on a Global Compact Local Network or other business association. Building on these initial test cases, the UN will seek to scale up opportunities for strengthened private sector engagement across relevant internal displacement contexts. These efforts will also build upon the work of the UN Global Compact and the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which remains a core framework for ethical private sector action.

UN Commitments

11. The UN will work with relevant partners to **identify 3-4 contexts where there are opportunities to pilot means of strengthening engagement with the private sector**, working with Resident Coordinators.

Data for solutions

To strengthen collective action on solutions to internal displacement, there is a need for an improved understanding of IDP numbers, demographics, socioeconomic dynamics, and associated trends. The High-Level Panel Report noted that **attention is needed both to the type of data gathered and to how it is collected, managed, used and protected**, and called on States to put in place internal displacement data systems. The Panel also called on international actors to better coordinate their data efforts and to support the strengthening of States' data capacities, where possible.

I agree with each of these points and also emphasize the importance of harnessing data to better anticipate future displacement risks and to ensure data-informed responses to current displacement needs. The endorsement by the UN Statistical Commission of the International Recommendation on IDP Statistics (IRIS) represented a major step forward in offering common standards and definitions. We must continue to build upon this. We also need to understand the opportunities and barriers to more effective use of data to inform internal displacement responses and solutions efforts, and to find ways to overcome data coordination challenges. To this end, I have asked that a time-bound taskforce of relevant data actors from the UN, NGOs, IFIs, and other relevant actors be convened to further clarify the obstacles to improved data collaboration and to examine the Panel's recommendation for the establishment of IDP data working groups. **The taskforce will, by mid-2022, generate a proposal for a fit-for-purpose process or coordination model** that can address data-specific issues and gaps, including in how international actors can better support National Statistical Offices and other national and local data efforts in line with relevant international standards.

UN Commitments

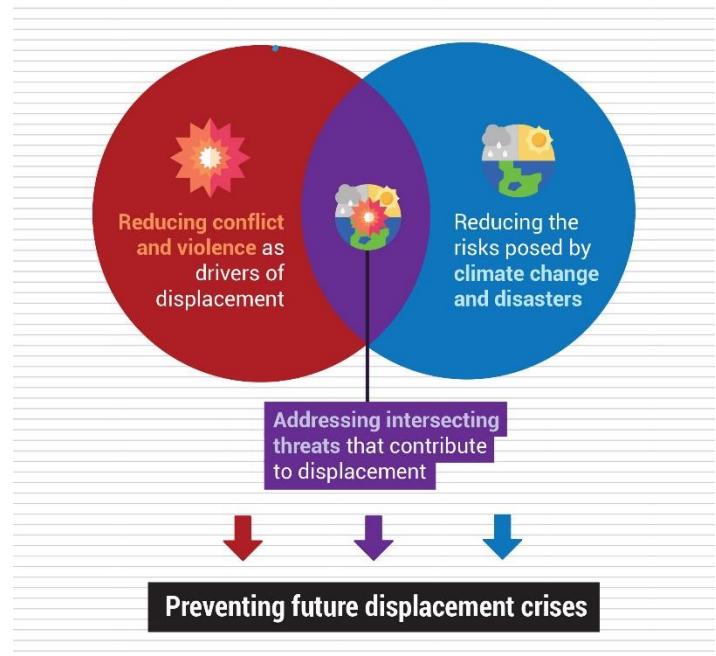
12. Support States to **put in place relevant mechanisms to harness internal displacement data** in line with the International Recommendation on IDP Statistics and other relevant international standards
13. Convene a **time-bound taskforce of relevant data actors** that will examine opportunities and barriers to more effective use of data for solutions and, by mid-2022, put forward a proposal for a fit-for-purpose process or coordination model to address data-specific issues and gaps

4 PREVENTING DISPLACEMENT CRISES

When I took office, I pledged that the UN would do more to prevent future crises. With ever more people fleeing wars, climate-related disasters, violence, and human rights violations, prevention remains an urgent priority and is a key part of Our Common Agenda. **We must do far more to prevent the drivers of displacement from occurring in the first place**, both by addressing root causes and by mitigating immediate risks and their impacts. Taking action now to address these drivers constitutes the best form of protection and contributes to ensuring that solutions are sustainable.

We look first and foremost to States for leadership on these issues: for demonstrating long-term vision in taking steps to meet climate change mitigation targets, and for having the courage to prevent and deescalate conflict and put human rights first. With almost 90 per cent of IDPs residing in countries or regions that host a UN Peacekeeping Operation or Special Political Mission, the UN has an important role to play at both the political and operational level, in close partnership with local communities, civil society, NGOs, the private sector, and donors and development finance actors.

Across all actors, we need perseverance in prevention, knowing that its results are often less visible and tangible but no less important. We must, in particular, **prioritize prevention and preparedness earlier and more predictably**, including by using data and information to take anticipatory action and by making prevention a priority even as a crisis is unfolding. We must also recognize that internal displacement is often the result of threats and vulnerabilities that intersect and overlap, which exacerbates displacement risks and requires careful attention from prevention through to solutions.



Reducing conflict and violence as drivers of displacement

Civilians continue to bear an unacceptable toll in situations of conflict and violence. Every day people are forced from their homes, lose loved ones, endure severe physical and psychological harm, and are torn from their livelihoods and support networks. Children face forced recruitment into armed groups, child trafficking, and child marriage, among other threats, while women and girls, as well as men and boys, are exposed to alarming levels of sexual and gender-based violence, further driving displacement as people move to escape these risks. International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (IHL) are violated repeatedly and flagrantly, with limited justice for the victims. While it is essential that people can leave safely if they choose to do so, we must all work to tackle the root causes that force people to flee.

To governments, I appeal in the strongest of terms: respect people's fundamental rights and choose the path of peace. The most effective way to protect communities from displacement is to respect human rights, prevent conflicts from occurring in the first place and resolve those that are currently unfolding. Five years ago, States came together under the General Assembly and the Security Council to express their commitments to building and sustaining peace, and I urge all States to take credible steps to live up to this pledge. This includes taking action to renew the social contract through respecting human rights and addressing root causes, including

The United Nations Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement

those related to land, and governance issues that can lead to violent conflict. States must listen and engage with local communities, including women, young people, community leaders, and faith leaders, and put in place measures to resolve grievances. The UN is ready to support States in their efforts, including through developing and implementing early warning mechanisms, promoting social cohesion and peacebuilding, assisting in recovery, and ensuring that development programming is conflict sensitive.

When armed conflicts do emerge, armed forces and other parties to conflict must abide by IHL and take all possible steps to avoid, minimize, and respond to harm and the reverberating effects of conflict. In 2018, I appealed to all States to put in place national policies for the protection of civilians in conflict. Too few States have heeded this call. Today I renew my appeal: **all governments should urgently put in place policies, trainings, guidance, and other measures to protect civilians during conflict and reduce displacement risks.** Where violations of IHL occur, national and international efforts to pursue accountability and provide essential support services for victims and survivors must be a priority.

Within the UN, we will be a steadfast protector of humanity's most vulnerable. I commit that **we will leverage the UN's full power to defend human rights and confront threats to civilians**, including by engaging proactively with the Security Council, delivering on my Call to Action for Human Rights, and establishing a framework to ensure continued and proactive delivery for protection in my forthcoming Agenda for Protection. I also call on other actors, notably Regional Organizations and States, to engage diplomatically and use their influence to promote human rights, prevent forced displacement and reduce threats to civilians. It is only by working together that we can achieve real change and improvements to the safety of communities living in areas affected by conflict.

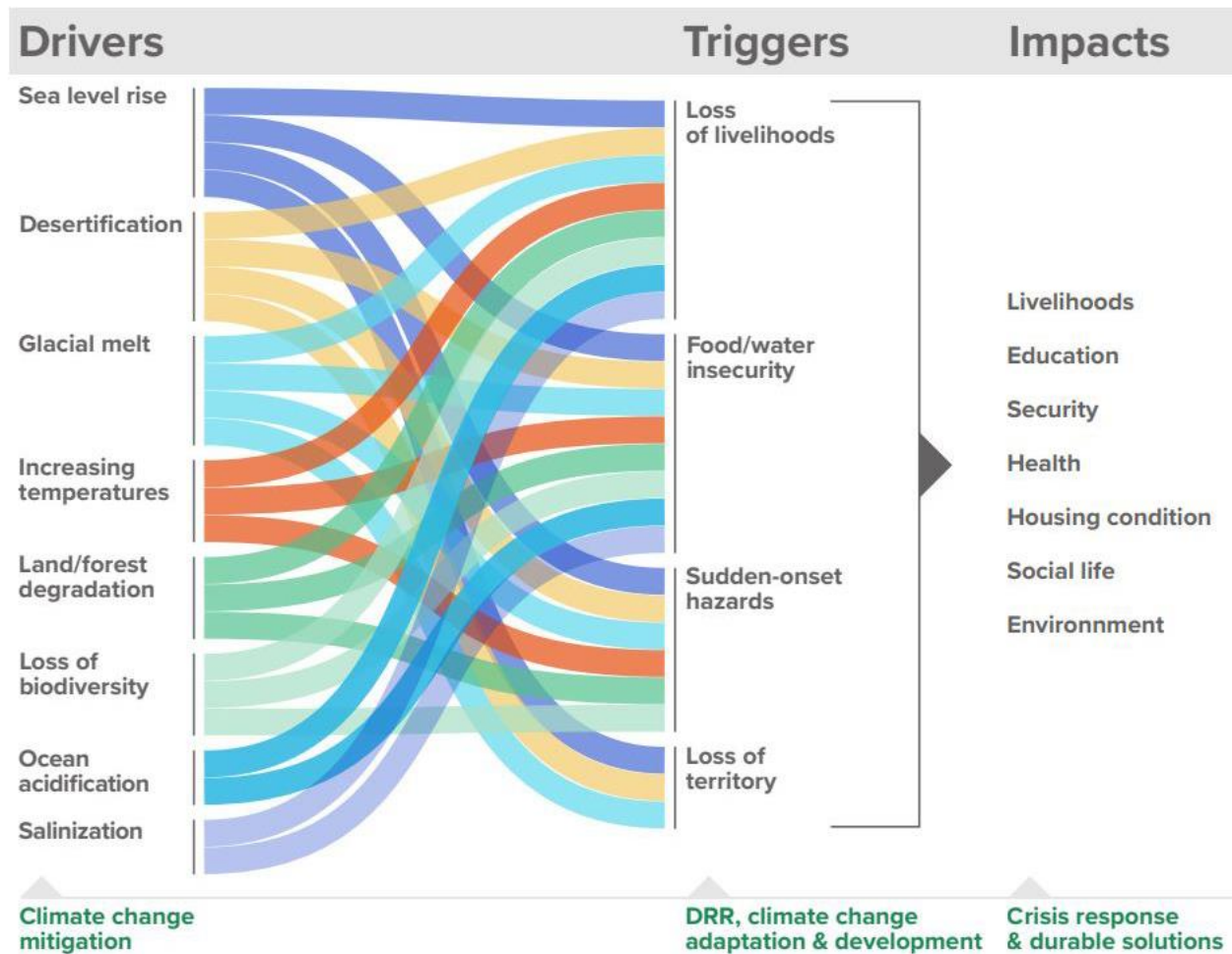
UN Commitments

14. Work with Governments, local communities and civil society to **address the root causes of displacement** and to promote peacebuilding, social cohesion and mediation that considers displacement risks (and where present, includes IDPs)
15. To reduce risks of displacement associated with human rights violations and conflict, **drive forward implementation of the Call to Action for Human Rights** and address displacement specifically in my forthcoming **Agenda for Protection**
16. When there are early signs of conflict, renewed violence, or threats to civilians, **mobilize rapid action to support de-escalation, political negotiation and conflict resolution**, and systematically address internal displacement as part of these efforts
17. Advocate with governments to put in place policies and measures to **promote the protection of civilians in situations of conflict and violence** in line with International Humanitarian Law

Reducing the displacement risks posed by climate change and disasters

Disasters and the adverse effects of climate change displace even greater numbers of people each year than conflicts. Extreme weather events are forcing more and more people from their homes, even in places that had previously been considered safe. Climate change is also leading to more severe and frequent droughts, sea-level rise, saltwater intrusion, and desertification, which fuel food insecurity and set in motion slow-onset crises that undermine resilience and devastate communities, driving further displacement. Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, at COP21 in Paris, established a Task Force on Displacement to develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change.

Linkages between drivers, triggers and impacts of internal displacement in the context of climate change, and policy action points



Source: IDMC, *No matter of choice: Displacement in a changing climate, 2021, p.7*

Our current fossil fuel consumption habits and environmental practices are pushing humanity to the brink. **We face a stark choice: either we stop it, or it stops us.** Governments must set bold, ambitious and verifiable climate change targets, and put in place new, concrete measures to reverse and adapt to the climate emergency already under way. If governments — especially G20 governments — do not stand up and lead this effort, we are headed for catastrophe.

In addition, **we must dramatically scale up our work on climate change adaptation**, with particular consideration for those countries that are highly vulnerable, whose capacities are overstretched, or that are already grappling with disaster displacement or other forms of loss and damage linked to the adverse effects of climate change.

In 2009, wealthy nations pledged to contribute \$100 billion per year by 2020 in climate finance to support developing countries, a pledge that still has not been realized. As high-emitting countries, these **Governments have an obligation to live up to this pledge** and I call on them to urgently do so. I further urge at least half of the funds to be dedicated to adaptation and resilience.

The United Nations Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement

As part of substantial expansion of adaptation and resilience, **we must collectively work to improve preparedness and early action for disasters and climate-related crises** to reduce displacement risks and their impacts, including by building on existing partnerships. We must greatly increase our use of forecast-based financing and anticipatory action, leveraging advances in data and analysis that make it possible to predict potential crises earlier and more reliably. It is also essential to expand the reach of early warning systems; currently, as one third of the world's population currently does not benefit from such mechanisms. I urge IFIs and State donors to ensure that vulnerable countries get timely access to these resources. Coupled with continued investments in early warning mechanisms and disaster risk reduction, these types of forward-looking approaches can be highly effective in mitigating the impacts of disasters and climate change.

Across disaster risk reduction, adaptation, and preparedness, **I urge national and local authorities to work closely with communities in developing their strategies and action plans.** Communities, including indigenous populations, often have a deeply attuned understanding of localized risks and threats, and invaluable knowledge of traditional prevention and preparedness measures. We must also listen to the young people, including those who are already on the move and adapting to the impacts of climate change, who will inherit this planet and bear the future impacts of today's decisions.

The UN is ready to do its part. We will **address displacement more systematically as part of our work on climate change** and will also work with **governments to ensure displacement is addressed within disaster risk reduction policies and plans** in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. We will also call upon the considerable expertise offered by NGOs, civil society, and the private sector in these efforts, as well as on donors and development finance actors whom I urge to provide robust funding.

UN Commitments

18. **Advocate strongly for States to deliver on the \$100 billion climate finance commitment** to support developing countries and to dedicate at least half of these funds to climate change adaptation and resilience
19. **Address displacement proactively and systematically** as part of the UN's work on climate change, including by supporting the work on the Task Force on Displacement under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage
20. Support governments to **ensure climate risks are integrated into policies and investment decision-making**, and to ensure that **displacement risks and associated protection needs are systematically considered within policies, strategies and plans** relevant to disaster risk reduction, climate change action, urban planning, and development, including by assisting in drafting or revising the policies in line with the State's commitments under the SDGs, the New Urban Agenda, the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change
21. Advocate for donors and development finance actors to utilize data and analysis **to dramatically scale up investments in forecast-based financing and anticipatory action** while continuing to support broader early warning, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian assistance, and community resilience programs, and to ensure countries are able to access this finance

Addressing intersecting threats that contribute to displacement

The tragic reality is that many countries are affected by both conflict and the impacts of climate change and disasters. In 2020, **37 countries and territories with new internal displacement associated with conflict or violence also experienced new internal displacement due to disasters.**

Risks from conflict, disasters, and climate change are often interconnected and mutually reinforcing: natural resource constraints caused by climate change may create tensions and lead to violence within communities, or communities displaced by conflict might not be able to return because of the impact of climate change in their areas of origin. Individuals and communities with pre-existing vulnerabilities are often most at risk of repeated harm.

As we move forward, we must do more to develop a nuanced understanding of the root causes of displacement crises, intersectional risks, and vulnerabilities, and reflect this in laws, policies and plans to reduce displacement risks and build the resilience of the most vulnerable. The UN will support national and local authorities in these efforts. Further, I commit that within the UN, the Steering Group on Internal Displacement Solutions and our agencies and entities that specialize in disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate change, and in peacebuilding will work together closely, including to support UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) **to undertake holistic analysis of how risks intersect and ensure that this analysis informs their strategies and interventions.** I call upon States, donors, and other actors to also take steps to ensure a fulsome understanding of risk interactions and to reflect this in their approaches.

UN Commitments

22. The Steering Group on Internal Displacement Solutions and specialist agencies and entities on DRR, climate change, human rights, humanitarian affairs development and peacebuilding will work within their organizations and together to **promote holistic understanding of displacement and risk intersections** and will support UNCTs and HCTs to reflect this in their work

5 ENSURING BETTER PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE FOR IDPS AND HOST COMMUNITIES

Every year, millions of IDPs and host communities do not receive the protection and assistance to which they are entitled. While many governments make commendable efforts to respond to their populations' rights and needs, capacities are often overwhelmed, competing priorities are given precedence, and some governments neglect their duties to their displaced citizens and residents altogether, including by failing to adequately prepare for displacement crises. In some cases, it is the governments themselves who drive displacement and create assistance and protection needs.

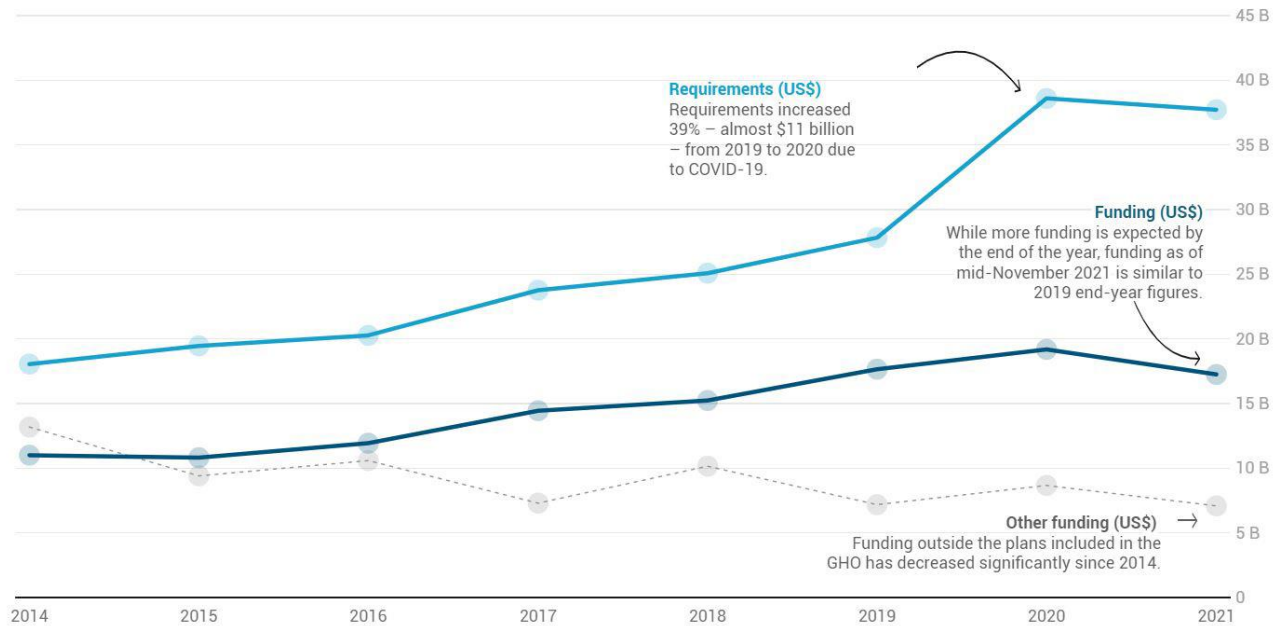
The world must do more to close the gap between humanitarian needs and the protection and assistance provided. After having already been torn from their homes, livelihoods, and support networks, IDPs should not have to endure further fear for their safety and well-being. We must strengthen the quality of assistance and protection, an effort that should be shaped and guided by a central focus on their human rights. This is in line with my Call to Action for Human Rights, which urged renewed efforts to protect human rights of all displaced populations, including in times of crisis.

States have a fundamental obligation to keep their populations safe, including when they are displaced. States must transcend grievances and make listening and responding to the needs of their citizens and residents – *all* citizens and residents – a priority and ensure people in need have a voice in shaping the assistance they receive. This must cross ethnic, political, and religious lines and include people of all ages and genders, as well as those of other diversities that face marginalization or exclusion. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement should continue to serve as a guide for all States in these efforts, and relevant laws and policy frameworks, such as the Kampala Convention, should be proactively implemented.

Where government capacities are overwhelmed or authorities are unable or unwilling to reach certain segments of the population, they should seek and welcome support. Impediments to humanitarian operations and attacks on civilians and humanitarian staff are unacceptable and should not be tolerated. All of us have a responsibility – whether as the UN, as regional organizations, as Member States, or as civil society – to engage strongly and proactively when principled humanitarian action and access to assistance and protection are under threat. I call on all actors to use their voice to protect humanitarian space and, within the humanitarian system, I reaffirm that **Humanitarian Coordinators are expected to coordinate and lead on these collective efforts, including as it relates to IDPs.** The IASC's Centrality of Protection Policy makes clear that the rights of crisis-affected populations are at the heart of what we do and we must all work towards ensuring they are respected. UN Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions will also continue to have a vital role to play in protecting civilians and facilitating humanitarian access.

It is important to recognize the generosity of humanitarian donors, whose contributions have steadily grown over the past 10 years. Although this increase has not succeeded in keeping pace with the rising needs, the contributions are nevertheless a symbol of the type of solidarity and commitment to multilateralism that we need today more than ever. I hope that we can continue to count upon this vital support. **I appeal to donors to continue innovating and striving for greater effectiveness in how financing is delivered,** including by strengthening efforts to implement Grand Bargain commitments such as increasing the use of flexible, multi-year financing, further scaling up the use of cash, and directing a greater proportion of funding directly to local responders. Funding investments must also go hand in hand with political commitments and engagement to sustainably resolve crises and prevent their recurrence.

Inter-Agency Coordinated Appeals: Funding gap (2014-2021)



All requirements and funding between 2014 and 2020 are as of end-year. Requirements and funding for 2021 as of 19 November.

Chart: Global Humanitarian Overview 2022 • Source: [Financial Tracking Service](#)

Within the UN, we must also continually reflect on our own ways of working to ensure we deliver the most effective response possible. In 2005, the Cluster Approach was established as part of a broader humanitarian reform process to strengthen coordination and leadership of humanitarian responses to internal displacement crises. While the IASC system has offered considerable improvements to international responses, the report of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement identified a number of challenges that merit further examination. To this end, I welcome **the decision of the IASC to commission and complete in 2022 an independent review of humanitarian response to internal displacement** and urge it to act upon its findings and recommendations, which should pay particular attention to how the humanitarian system can improve assistance to and protection of internally displaced persons and lay a better groundwork for solutions.

Even while the review is underway, responders can and should already make some adjustments. Within the UN, we will **promote understanding of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement** to ensure they inform all of our protection and assistance responses to internal displacement. We will also strengthen accountability to IDPs and host communities and **deliver on the Participation Revolution promised in the Grand Bargain**. Another essential element is to **work with and through local systems and local partners** as much as possible as part of a whole-of-society approach. Development actors should work closely with humanitarian actors in this process, particularly in exploring possibilities for strengthening local public systems to include IDPs. In urban areas, **urban profiling should be used more strategically** to understand capacities and vulnerabilities of displacement-affected communities and the urban ecosystem to better inform the response.

Investing in programmes and services that provide a foundation for solutions are also crucial and should be recognized as a priority from the earliest days of responses. The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator should provide leadership on this, including by ensuring that Humanitarian Response Plans promote a pathway to solutions and by strengthening coherence between the work of Humanitarian Country Teams and UN Country Teams. Operationally, **programmes that can support eventual solutions should be recognized as a priority**, such as supporting IDPs to recover civil documentation, promoting access to education and livelihoods, ensuring access to healthcare, and working towards access to adequate housing and land. Development and humanitarian actors should work together to lay the foundation for solutions, and peacebuilding and disaster risk reduction actors should likewise be engaged to assist in mitigating the risks of future crises or deteriorations.

UN Commitments

23. Call upon **States to protect the rights and respond to the needs of their displaced citizens and residents** in line with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and relevant laws and policy frameworks such as the Kampala Convention
24. Advocate for States to work proactively to ensure **IDPs of all ages, genders, and diversities have access to public systems and services**
25. Strongly **advocate for unimpeded humanitarian access and continue to provide neutral, impartial, and independent protection and assistance** to crisis-affected populations when Governments are unable or unwilling to respond
26. Work with donors and UN agencies on **strengthening the effectiveness of financing modalities, including in implementing Grand Bargain commitments**
27. Complete in 2022 the **independent review of humanitarian response to internal displacement** currently being commissioned by the IASC, and act upon its findings and recommendations
28. **Promote understanding of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement within the UN and among its partners**, and ensure that the Guiding Principles are the foundation upon which our protection and assistance activities are carried out
29. **Continue strengthening accountability to IDPs and host communities**, including by redoubling efforts to deliver on the Participation Revolution promised in the Grand Bargain
30. **Work with and through local systems, local authorities and local civil society actors** as much as possible, supporting locally led responses and avoiding the creation of parallel structures
31. Take steps to **lay the foundation for solutions earlier in responses** by incorporating solutions into HRPs and recognizing solutions-enabling programming as a priority, while also simultaneously working to understand and mitigate future displacement risks

6 CONCLUSION AND FOLLOW-UP

There is a long road ahead, but together it is possible to achieve real change. As a first step, **it is important that all actors make commitments for how they will implement the elements of this Action Agenda that relate to them.**

Since the release of the report of the High-level Panel, **Member States and civil society** signaled their strong expectations that they would be consulted on follow-up and that a process would be put into place to ensure their longer-term engagement. **The Special Adviser on Solutions for Internal Displacement, with the support of the Steering Group, will take the lead in facilitating the follow-up to this Action Agenda** on behalf of the UN, including in engaging Member States, IDPs and host communities, civil society, and other relevant actors. The Special Adviser will rely on the active contributions of relevant UN Agencies, NGOs, and multi-stakeholder initiatives to this follow-up, including the GP2.0 platform.

In addition to the steps that will be taken by the UN, I also **call on governments to organize national dialogues** that draw together affected communities and relevant experts to assess the potential domestic application of this Action Agenda. **I make a similar appeal to regional and subregional organizations to convene discussions among their Member States.** It is my true hope that we can embrace this as a shared Action Agenda and that we will all work with determination and creativity in taking it forward to deliver a better future for IDPs.

Photos used in the title cover:

Photo 1: Father looks out from his home with his son in the Awá IDP settlement in Villagarzón, south-west Colombia. December 2017. Credit: UNHCR/Ruben Salgado Escudero

Photo 2: Displaced mother with her children in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique. April 2021. Credit: UNHCR/Martim Gray Pereira

Photo 3: Displaced children in Rakhine State, Myanmar. November 2012. Credit: OCHA/Nicole Lawrence

Photo 4: Mamboro fishing village in Indonesia after the 2018 Sulawesi earthquake and tsunami. October 2018. Credit: OCHA/Anthony Burke