CONCEPT NOTE

The United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) and Partners

21 – 23 May 2019

THEME: TOWARDS DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN AFRICA

THE YEAR OF REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS:
Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa.
1. CONTEXT

Africa hosts one-third of the world’s forcibly displaced population. By the end of 2017, the number stood at 24.2 million people, an increase of 4.6 million from 2016. By June 2018 Africa hosted 6.2 million refugees and asylum-seekers, representing one-third of the world’s refugee population, and 15.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs). The Secretary-General noted in February 2019 that he has drawn constant inspiration from African leadership, vision and compassion and that ‘Despite the continent’s own social, economic and security challenges, Africa’s governments and people have kept borders, doors and hearts open to millions in need’. Yet, he noted, while Africa has set the gold standard for solidarity, this example has not been followed everywhere.

At its 31st Ordinary session held in Nouakchott, Mauritania, July 2018, the Assembly of the African Union declared 2019 the “Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa”. During the 32nd Ordinary session of the Assembly held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 10-11 February 2019, the Heads of State and Government officially launched the AU theme for 2019 (Assembly/AU/Decl.8(XXXII)). The AU theme also coincides with the growing recognition of the humanitarian and development nexus, and the need for greater collaboration and coherent support by all stakeholders, particularly on the need for greater financing across the transitional period from humanitarian to development action. Addressing this nexus will help towards finding solutions to forced displacement in Africa, while also promoting conflict prevention and resilience to natural disasters, in line with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

Moreover, the African Union is commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the adoption of the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (OAU Refugee Convention) and the 10th Anniversary of the adoption of the 2009 AU Convention for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (the Kampala Convention). The Kampala Convention, the regional framework on internal displacement developed by the African Union, is in line with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, and is the cornerstone for the protection of IDPs in Africa, with over 27 African Member States being party to the Convention. Towards this end, the AU has called on the United Nations and its partners to support Africa, through global advocacy and actions, to find durable solutions to forced displacement on the continent, while also supporting the leadership of African Member States in ensuring ratification and adoption of the pivotal African and Global legal instruments on refugees and IDPs.

With the foregoing, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Union Development Agency (AUDA), UNHCR, OCHA, UNDP, ECA and the Department of Global Communications (DGC), will organize the next edition of the African Dialogue Series (ADS), and create a platform for policy dialogue on the AU theme. The ADS will also bring about global awareness and advocacy on solutions to forced displacement in Africa, while showcasing best practices of African solidarity in addressing solutions to forced displacement. In addition, the ADS will seek to mobilize support for the AU, its Member States and its partners during the course of 2019 and beyond, including, but not limited to, the ongoing regional consultative meetings and promoting the ratification of the OAU Refugee Convention and the Kampala Convention. Last, but
not least, the ADS will provide a platform to discuss innovative ways for financing transitions from humanitarian to development in African countries hosting refugees and IDPs.

The ADS 2019 will be held on the 21-23 May 2019 at the UN Headquarters and will coincide with the celebration of Africa Day on the 24th May 2019, organized by the AU Permanent Observer Mission to the UN.

2. OBJECTIVES

The African Dialogue Series 2019 will:

- Exchange best practices and lessons learned in African countries hosting refugees by citing good examples of protection of refugees, including for women and girls, education and skills training, and opportunities that will eventually result in a sustainable, safe, and dignified durable solution, especially in the context of the 1969 OAU Convention;

- Discuss shared responsibility and the role of the UN, humanitarian and development partners as well as the private sector in support of the AU and its Member States in implementing their international obligations not least in the context of the Global Compact on Refugees and financing infrastructure;

- Raise the profile of the issue of internal displacement in Africa, in particular protracted internal displacement, to coincide with the AU theme of the year on forced displacement and 10th anniversary of the Kampala Convention;

- Provide a platform for displaced populations to highlight their successes and challenges;

- Identify concrete areas for practical and coherent international support, including by the UN, its Member States and others towards refugee and IDP hosting countries in Africa.

FORMAT

This year’s African Dialogue Series will be held with the overarching theme: “Towards durable solutions for forcibly displaced persons in Africa”.

In line with this overarching theme, the African Dialogue Series will be structured into the following sessions:

The first two days will include the main sessions of the Dialogue Series, with an Opening Session setting the stage for the theme of the year, as follows:
Session 1: African solidarity: Best practices and lessons learned in African countries hosting refugees

During this session, African countries hosting refugees will present their best practices and lessons learned. The AU and UN will also make interventions on their efforts to assist member States in easing pressure on the host countries; enhancing refugee self-reliance; expanding access to third-country solutions; and supporting conditions in countries of origin for the safe return of refugees.

Session 2: Internally Displaced Persons and the Kampala Convention

This session will consider ways and means of ensuring an effective implementation of the Kampala Convention through exchanges of experiences on IDP-related responses at national, sub-regional and regional levels, and the role of different actors towards a durable solution to the IDPs.

Session 3: Transforming the Narrative: The contribution of the Youth in Africa and the Diaspora to sustaining peace and development

This session will discuss the role of African youth and the Diaspora in changing the narrative for finding durable solutions. It will focus on building the resilience of forcibly displaced youth in Africa, and discuss ways to help develop their skills, including through the use of technology.

Session 4: Collaborating for Greater Impact and Durable Solutions for Forcibly Displaced Persons in Africa

The session will identify practical and coherent UN and international support towards finding durable solutions for forced displacement in Africa.

Session 5: Shared responsibility and the humanitarian and development nexus: Financing for Transitions

This session will discuss the role of financial institutions and development partners in supporting the AU and its member States in finding durable solutions, including through financing for transitions from humanitarian to development assistance.

Session 6: Presentation of the Summary Outcome of the ADS 2019
The third day will consist of side events organized around the theme by partner organizations.

- **UNHCR** side event on South Sudan: “A call for solidarity to Africa’s largest forced displacement crisis”.

- **UNFPA** side event on “Emerging issues from Africa ICPD Regional reviews (Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development +5): Linkages between mobility, human dignity and refugees, returnees and IDPs: Celebrating successes and addressing challenges”.

- **OCHA** and **UNDP** side event on “Addressing climate change, disaster and environmental degradation: development solutions for displacement in Africa”.


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### 3. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The expected outcomes of the Africa Dialogue Series 2019 are:

1. Increased awareness of the solutions to forced displacement of refugees in Africa.

2. A showcase of best practices and lessons learned on African solidarity in dealing with forced displacement in Africa, including those to support women and girls.

3. Bring out the voice of IDPs in finding solutions to forced displacement in Africa;

4. Concrete and action-oriented recommendations and UN coherent support on the key issues emanating from the discussions.

5. Feed into the regional consultative conferences leading to the Global Forum for Refugees to be held in December 2019.
4. PARTICIPATION

Participants to the Africa Dialogue Series 2019 will include:

- The Organizing partners of the Africa Dialogue Series 2019: (i) OSAA; (ii) the African Union including the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD); (iii) the UN including UNHCR, UN-OCHA, UN-ECA, UN-DGC and UNDP.
- Member States
- Regional Economic Communities
- The United Nations System Entities
- Members of the Diaspora, Civil Society (including women and youth groups), Private Sector, Media and Academia.

5. DATE AND VENUE


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