Institutional Architecture

Does the International System Support Solutions to Internal Displacement?

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About the High-Level Panel

The High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement was established by the UN Secretary-General to find concrete solutions to internal displacement. The High-Level Panel will work to increase global attention on internal displacement, while developing concrete recommendations for Member States, the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders. The Panel will build on ongoing efforts related to internal displacement by Member States and relevant stakeholders within the humanitarian, development, and peace communities. The Panel's report is expected to identify innovative and concrete recommendations to better prevent, respond, and achieve solutions to internal displacement.

1. Introduction

Ever since the issue of internal displacement was placed on the international agenda in the early 1990s, there have been questions about how the international system should respond to internally displaced persons (IDPs). For more than 20 years the main question was one of international institutional responsibility; recognizing that IDPs are first and foremost the responsibility of the state, the question remained about which UN agency should take the lead in responding to them when there are humanitarian needs beyond the state's capacity. Francis Deng, then the RSG for IDPs framed three alternatives: create a new international agency for IDPs, give responsibility for IDPs to UNHCR, or work out a collaborative mechanism for existing agencies to work together. The clear preference was – and still is – for the latter approach. From 1999-2005 agencies worked together through what was known as the collaborative approach,[1] but its shortcomings became clear in Darfur in 2003-4. In 2005, the InterAgency Steering Committee (IASC) decided to establish a new system based on clusters which was intended to respond to the gaps in IDP assistance and protection, but have since morphed into coordination structures for international humanitarian assistance generally (see below for further discussion of the clusters).

While questions about accountability for IDPs and the efficacy of clusters remain, the focus of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement (HLP) is on solutions for IDPs. This short background paper thus seeks to address the following questions: Do our existing institutional mechanisms support solutions for IDPs? Do they work in protracted displacement? Who in the international community is responsible for solutions for IDPs? How do international actors relate to national authorities?

Most of the world's 41 million conflict- and violence-induced IDPs live in protracted displacement. While there are different definitions of what constitutes protracted displacement, in this paper, we use the definition used by Kälin and Entwisle Chapuisat:

A protracted IDP situation is one 'in which tangible progress towards durable solutions is slow or stalled for significant periods of time because IDPs are prevented from taking or are unable to take steps that allow them to progressively reduce the vulnerability, impoverishment and marginalization they face as displaced people, in order to regain a self-sufficient and dignified life and ultimately find a durable solution.'[2]

Despite the fact that the majority of the world's displaced live in protracted situations, the international architecture developed in 2005– and which responds fairly well – is rooted in the humanitarian system and designed to respond to short-term emergency needs. However, finding solutions for IDPs requires a different kind of intervention. It is less about the provision of shelter and food, and more about supporting livelihoods and restoring economies. It is less about speedy action and more about sustainable results. It is less about singling out the displaced as objects of concern and more about community engagement. Moreover, displacement is dynamic and needs change over time. A recent five-year longitudinal study of Iraqi IDPs found, for example, that while IDPs perceived themselves to be safer over the course of the five years, their standard of living fell as their savings were depleted and humanitarian aid was scaled back. And after four years, about 35 percent of the

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[1] https://www.refworld.org/docid/41ee9a074.html

[2] Walter Kälin and Hannah Entwisle Chapuisat, 'Breaking the Impasse: Resolving Protracted Internal Displacement as Collective Outcome,' OCHA Policy and Studies Series, p. 20, 2017, https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/Breaking-the-impasse.pdf

IDPs were no longer living in their initial place of displacement, nor had they returned to their home communities.[3]

Caveats: The issue of institutional architecture is fundamentally about structures and particularly about the way that international actors structure their work. This is an important issue, but in terms of finding solutions for IDPs, it is almost certainly not the most important issue. When governments have strong political will to support solutions for IDPs, they will find a way to do so, regardless of the particular international institutional arrangements. A focus on international architecture not only excludes important actors such as municipal authorities, local civil society organizations, and IDPs themselves, but it also usually bypasses issues such as organizational culture, interagency competition, and power inequities. Even so, looking at institutional architecture – particularly at how it functions on the country level – is a mammoth undertaking and the researchers are conscious that this effort only scratches the surface of a complicated question.

This paper begins with an overview of the present UN system for solutions for IDPs, identifies its strengths and weaknesses and sets out issues the HLP might want to include in its recommendations. It is based on a review of the extensive literature as well as some 20 interviews with UN and international agencies, NGOs, donors and academics (but it should be noted, not with IDPs). The paper is intended to be considered together with other background papers prepared for workstream 3 – the 'solutions/nexus' – notably papers on humanitarian-development and humanitarian-peace/security collaboration, as well as on the concept of durable solutions. Issues addressed in papers in other workstreams – particularly on political will and data – are also key components of assessing the international system's support for solutions.

The Humanitarian and Development Actors

The *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* say that governments should facilitate the provision of humanitarian relief and that such interventions should not be seen as political.[4] There are a large number of humanitarian agencies that have worked with IDPs over the years, including OCHA, UNHCR, IOM, WFP, ICRC, IFRC, UNDP, many international NGOs and many more local civil society organizations. In the last five years, development actors such as the World Bank and regional multilateral banks, and UNDP have become more engaged with IDPs.[5] Some of these organizations – like UNICEF, WHO and Oxfam – work in both development and emergency response.

But the system developed to deal with IDPs – the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)'s cluster system led by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) – was established to address humanitarian coordination needs, not to promote solutions to internal displacement. The section below begins by looking at the cluster approach, then to efforts by the UN Secretary-General to have a more inclusive approach to durable solutions and then to promising developments at the country level.

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[3] IOM-Iraq and Georgetown University. *Access to Durable Solutions in Iraq: Moving in Displacement.* IOM-Iraq. 2019. https://iraq.iom.int/publications/access-durable-solutions-among-idps-iraq-moving-displacement?fbclid=IwAR0FIAITCiu0rFZqx2lUE1z-OLm5lTIdUsM0rs3f2c-WgLNdfMT_3-AnhWs

[4] 'The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement,' Principle 30, OCHA, 1998, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/GPEnglish.pdf

[5] For more, see the HLP humanitarian-development paper (forthcoming).

The Cluster Approach

The clusters were created in 2005 to address gaps in what was a relatively *ad hoc* system of responding to internal displacement. [6] They eventually sought to improve system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies *writ large*, and to ensure clear leadership and accountability in the main areas of humanitarian response.[7] Clusters are made up of UN and non-UN actors who share information and coordinate their actions in specific sectors of humanitarian action.[8]

The clusters and their lead agencies are designated by the IASC and have clear responsibilities for coordination.[9] At the country level, the cluster approach aims to strengthen partnerships as well as the predictability and accountability of international humanitarian action.   Global cluster leads offer support to the Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) including technical surge capacity and expert assistance. There are also cluster leads at the country level, or sometimes co-leads where leadership is shared between a UN agency and an NGO, coordinated by an inter-cluster coordinator who oversees all cluster coordination and supports the RC/HC in coordinating the relief and development actors. But while the cluster system has spawned an impressive array of sub-cluster and inter-cluster mechanisms, it should be stressed that the clusters were not intended and do not have a mandate to find durable solutions for IDPs. At its core, the Cluster Approach is a coordination mechanism for humanitarian actors.   Although an Early Recovery cluster was established in 2005 to bring in development actors to support longer-term recovery, presumably including durable solutions for IDPs, it was disbanded by 2020 in recognition of its lack of effectiveness.

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[6] 'IASC Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Response,' IASC 2006, https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/working-group/documents-public/iasc-guidance-note-using-cluster-approach-strengthen-humanitarian

[7] 'What Is the Cluster Approach,' https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/about-clusters/what-is-the-cluster-approach

[8] IASC Guidance on the Concept of 'Provider of Last Resort,' https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/IASC%20Guidance%20on%20Provider%20of%20Last%20Resort.pdf

[9] 'What Is the Cluster Approach,' https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/about-clusters/what-is-the-cluster-approach

There have been two IASC-commissioned evaluations of the cluster system, in 2007[10] and 2010[11] as well as evaluations of specific countries, such as DRC (2010)[12], Chad (2010),[13] Uganda (2010)[14] and Ukraine (2017).[15] After 2010, the cluster approach was further refined and developed through the transformative agenda, which focused on leadership, coordination and accountability. The transformative agenda made no mention of IDPs but rather referred to 'affected populations' which presumably included IDPs. Since then, humanitarian efforts at reform have focused on protocols for 'humanitarian system-wide scale-up activation' (2018) [16] and empowered leadership. [17] These evaluations have led to an impressive set of operational guidance offered to humanitarian actors, such as the Accountability to Affected Populations Framework[18], the Guidance on Cluster Operation at the Country Level[19] and the Implementation of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle.[20] They also offered guidance on specific issues ranging from sexual and gender-based violence[21] to more recent guidance on applying IASC disability guidelines in the COVID-19 response[22] and mental health response to

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[10] Stoddard, Abby, et al. *Cluster Approach Evaluation Final Report*. Humanitarian Policy Group, Overseas Development Institute, 2007.
https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/Cluster%20Approach%20Evaluation%201.pdf

[11] Steets, Julia, et al. *Cluster Approach Evaluation 2 Synthesis Report*. Global Public Policy Institute, Groupe URD, 2010.
https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/Cluster%20Approach%20Evaluation%202.pdf

[12] Binder, Andrea, et. al. *Cluster Approach Evaluation 2nd Phase: Democratic Republic of the Congo*. Global Public Policy Institute, Groupe URD,
2010.https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A4CCE7E05C9A210BC12577370030E456-Full_Report.pdf

[13] Grunewald, François & Sokpoh, Bonaventure. *Cluster Approach Evaluation 2nd Phase: Chad*. Global Public Policy Institute, Groupe URD, 2010.
https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A4CCE7E05C9A210BC12577370030E456-Full_Report.pdf

[14] Steets, Julia & Grünewald, François. *Cluster Approach Evaluation 2nd Phase: Uganda*.Global Public Policy Institute, Groupe URD, 2010. https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/USA-2010-020-1_Uganda-IASC.pdf

[15] Conoir, Yvon, et. al. *Evaluation of UNHCR's Ukraine Country Programme*. UNHCR, Universalia, 2017.
https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/59bfd2907.pdf

[16] IASC, Protocol 1 for System-wide scale-up activation. IASC. 2018.
https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-transformative-agenda/iasc-protocol-1-humanitarian-system-wide-scale-activation-definition-and

[17] IASC, Protocol 2 for Empowered leadership in system-wide scale up activation. IASC. 2018.
https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-transformative-agenda/iasc-protocol-2-empowered-leadership-humanitarian-system-wide-scale

[18] IASC, Accountability to Affected Populations Framework, IASC. 2015.
https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/legacy_files/AAP%20Operational%20Framework%20Final%20Revision.pdf

[19]IASC, Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at the Cluster Level, IASC. 2015.
https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-transformative-agenda/iasc-reference-module-cluster-coordination-country-level-revised-2015

[20] IASC, Implementation of the Humanitarian Programming Cycle. IASC. 2018.
https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/hpc_reference_module_2015_final_.pdf

[21] IASC, Guidelines for Implementing Gender-based Interventions in Humanitarian Action. 2015 (updated April 2020). https://gbvguidelines.org/en/

[22] IASC, Key messages in applying IASC guidelines on disabilities in COVID-19. 2020.
https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-task-team-inclusion-persons-disabilities-humanitarian-action/iasc-key-messages-applying-

COVID-19. Many of these guidelines and reference materials are helpfully collated in an IASC Product Catalogue.[23]

While it is difficult to generalize from these thousands of pages of evaluations and guidelines, it is clear that minimal attention has been paid to IDPs, let alone solutions for IDPs. For example, the 30-page Implementation of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle devotes only one paragraph to exit and early recovery, while the most recent entry on IDPs in the 98-page IASC Product Catalogue is the 2010 adoption of the IASC Framework on Solutions for IDPs.

In May 2020, the IASC published Light Guidance on Collective Outcomes[24] which is intended for UN senior management of humanitarian, development and peace actors at the country level. Although it doesn't specifically refer to durable solutions or to IDPs, it does provide a useful framework for joint action in support of collective outcomes which could serve as a framework for collaborative action to support solutions for IDPs at the country level. This collective outcomes approach has been used in several countries such as Ukraine and Mali. Also promising is the work of the IASC's Operational Policy and Advocacy Group, which set up five results groups: 1) operational response, 2) accountability and inclusion, 3) Collective advocacy, 4) humanitarian-development collaboration (which took the lead in developing the Light Guidance), and 5) humanitarian financing.[25]

Beyond humanitarians: UN efforts toward a more comprehensive approach to durable solutions

In 2011, the UN Secretary/General, in Decision 2011/20 [26] called for the UN Resident Coordinators/Humanitarian Coordinators (RC/HC) to develop a strategy for durable solutions for displaced people with the inter-cluster group working on Early Recovery, together with the Protection Cluster to serve as the coordinating mechanisms for durable solutions. UNDP and UNHCR in their capacities as global cluster leads for Early Recovery and Protection were asked to provide necessary technical expertise to the RC/HCs. While this decision was piloted in several countries, there was no systematic follow-up, nor was the 2014 review called for in the Secretary-General's decision carried out – or at least not publicly reported. Although this decision represented a new approach to durable solutions, none of those interviewed for this paper referred to this initiative or to the Secretary-General's 2011 decision. [27]

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[23] IASC, Product Catalog, 2020. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-07/20200728%20IASC%20Product%20Catalogue.pdf

[24] IASC, Light guidance o collective outcomes: planning and implementing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in contexts of protracted crises. IASC. May 2020. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-task-team-inclusion-persons-disabilities-humanitarian-action/iasc-key-messages-applying-

[25] See IASC Results Groups Priority Areas of Work for 2020. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2019-12/IASC%20Results%20Groups%20Priority%20Areas%20of%20Work%20for%202020_1.pdf

[26] UN Secretary-General. "Durable Solutions: Follow-up to the Secretary General's 2009 Report on Peacebuilding," Decision 2011/20. 4 October 2011. https://www.refworld.org/docid/5242d12b7.html

[27] However, UNHCR refers to the role of the RC/HCs as responsible for deeloping durable solutios strategies for HCs/RCs in its 2016 *Operational Guide to Durable Solutions,* UNHCR, 'Durable Solutions,' p. 9, https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/57441d774.pdf

However, the idea that durable solutions for IDPs should fall under the responsibility of the RC/HCs resurfaced in reforms of the international development systems – which are currently in the process of implementation.

These stem from the 2017 actions of the UN Secretary-General António Guterres to initiate reforms in both the UN development system and the UN's peace and security architecture. [28] These include the UN Development System and Sustaining Peace initiatives – both of which could have an impact on how durable solutions are sought. The Development System reform did not touch the humanitarian system and the assumption was that the clusters would continue to function in the humanitarian sphere. The reforms aimed to create a more accountable and effective UN system that delivers better on the ground, by adopting a needs-based approach centered on developing country-contextual responses.'[29] Under the Sustaining Peace initiative, among other actions, a Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and a Department of Peace Operations were created.

The UN Development System reform de-linked the RC from UNDP and empowered the RCs, giving them greater capacity and responsibility. The UN development architecture is now centered on a strategic UN Development Cooperation Framework (replacing the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) alongside the more empowered role or resident coordinators (RCs). These RCs, who in some cases may double as humanitarian coordinators, are intended to be impartial and independent, and better able to provide leadership and accountability to align humanitarian operations with development and peacebuilding efforts.[30] Unfortunately in the HC/RC reform there is no specific reference to the role of the RC/HC on durable solutions for IDPs. It also should be noted that while the HC is linked to the clusters, there is no such connection between RCs and the clusters. Indeed, many of those who offered comments for this paper emphasized the importance of more empowered RCs as a way to bring humanitarian and development actors together to work toward solutions. However, whether RCs will actually wield more power, seniority and authority to pull together all actors—relief, development and peace/security—will take resources and political capital.

We should also mention the *New Way of Working* (2017) which emerged from the World Humanitarian Summit sought greater 'coherence' in the UN system, and to 'address the fragmentation and bureaucratization of the UN system, which causes gaps, duplication of work, and resource drainage.[31]

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[28] https://reform.un.org

[29] Ana Maria Lebada, 'An Annotated Guide to the UN Secretary-General's Reform Proposals.' International Institute for Sustainable Development, January 23, 2018. http://sdg.iisd.org/ commentary/policy-briefs/an-annotated-guide- to-the-un-secretary-generals-reform-proposals/

[30] 'The reinvigorated resident coordinator system: Explanatory note,' February 2018, https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/qcpr/2_%20The%20reinvigorated%20Resident%20Coordinator%20system.pdf

[31] https://www.un.org/jsc/content/new-way-working

See also Tennant and Russell's discussion of humanitarian reform. Tennant, Vicky and Simon Russell. 2014. 'Humanitarian Reform: From Coordination to Clusters.' In *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, edited by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Gil Loescher, Katy Long and Nando Sigona, 302–14. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

2. Durable Solutions Initiatives at the Country Level

While the international system is still struggling to implement comprehensive changes at the systemic level, a range of working groups and other bodies have emerged with the explicit aim of promoting durable solutions for IDPs. A Durable Solutions Working Group is a technical group tasked with developing a durable solutions strategy. In some cases it takes the place of sectors or the early recovery cluster, in others it is present only because clusters are not in place,[32] and in still others, it coexists with the cluster system.

Some of these are explicitly tied to the new empowered RC model while others have emerged in more ad hoc fashion. Some regional and country examples include:

Somalia: *Midnimo* (Unity) is a project that began in December 2016 as a joint project between IOM and UN-Habitat to strengthen local governance, find durable solutions for IDPs and refugee returnees, and improve social cohesion through integrated humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programming. The UN Peacebuilding Fund and the UN Trust Fund for Human Security offered support and helped the project expand across regions and to partner with UNDP, as well. The initiative falls under the Durable Solutions Initiative and JIPS was instrumental in bringing actors together and supporting the provision of data through an extensive profiling exercise.

Midnimo focuses on community empowerment and social cohesion; urban resilience; and livelihoods and employment. It also includes the private sector's capacity, and uses market systems assessments and sector analysis to identify projects that diversify income-generating opportunities for both IDPs and host communities. Promising IDP youth were also trained and received start-up grants for business innovation. The program is overseen by a Joint Steering Committee that includes a range of government officials. *Midnimo* is also marked by a local level intensive five-day workshop, which increases government involvement in planning with partner agencies on planning and funding.

Ethiopia: The Durable Solutions Initiative (DSI) has extensive coordination mechanisms, ensuring inclusivity and transparency across development, humanitarian, and peace/state-building actors at all levels of government. In Ethiopia's Somali Region, the DSI has facilitated a shared commitment amongst relevant government line ministries, the UN Country Team, international financial institutions (IFIs), donors and NGOs to work towards achieving durable solutions to internal displacement.[33]

Iraq: The government, humanitarian organizations, development actors and local research organizations collect and analyze data on durable solutions for IDPs. The Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) has carried out urban-based profiling exercises in several governorates as a collaborative process involving a range of actors.[34] The Iraqi government also emphasized IDP returns, and thus IOM, the Returns Working Group, and Social Inquiry developed the Returns Index in 2018 to fill the

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[32] UNHCR, 'Durable Solutions,' p. 23, https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/57441d774.pdf

[33] Government of Ethiopia, 'Nation Launches Durable Solutions Initiative to Support IDPs' (*ReliefWeb*, 8 December 2019) <https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/nation-launches-durable-solutions-initiative-support-idps> accessed 23 January 2020. Also see the official DSI document https://ethiopia.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/DSI%20Ethiopia%20low%20res.pdf

[34] the Erbil Refugee Council (ERC), UNHCR, and a steering committee made up of ERC, the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCC), the Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO), the Erbil Statistics Directorate (ESD), IOM, UNFPA, UN-Habitat and OCHA
Displacement as Challenge and Opportunity: Urban Profile of Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and Host Community, Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq, April 2020, pp.4 Available at https://www.jips.org/uploads/2018/09/original_ErbilUrbanProfilingApril2016English.pdf

information gap on understanding the 'quality of returns. A system of Governorate level (area-based) meetings was established to coordinate durable solution efforts between the international actors and local authorities in an effort to develop solutions as close as possible to the problems. The system was supported by OCHA and IOM and reported to a national coordination entity housed in the Prime Minister's Office. To support these initiatives, donors have been meeting to coordinate diplomatic efforts towards the Iraqi Government to open opportunities to advance durable solutions, when local efforts failed. '[35]

Regional: The Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) operates in East Africa and the Horn of Africa, with a focus on durable solutions to internal displacement. It was created in 2015 and is made up of 14 NGOs.[36] It is a coordination and information hub that acts as a catalyst and agent provocateur to stimulate forward thinking and policy development on durable solutions for displacement. ReDSS seeks to improve joint learning and programming, inform policy processes, enhance capacity development and facilitate coordination in the collective search for durable solutions.[37]

3. Key takeaways

There is no desire to 'remake' the humanitarian system, or do away with the clusters as humanitarian coordination mechanisms.

Although not perfect, the clusters have generally worked well as a mechanism for coordination of humanitarian operations. At the same time, the cluster system still faces a range of coordination challenges, depending as it does on organizations with differing mandates, approaches, philosophies, budgets, and programming objectives. Some are in competition for funding from the same sets of donors, thus making cooperation more challenging.

Clusters are made up of agency staff who are charged with both supporting coordinated action and, at least unofficially, upholding their own agency priorities and interests. When there is a conflict between their own agency's interests and the collective good, it is perhaps natural that agency interests prevail. In some cases, NGOs serve a co-leads of clusters and sometimes find themselves mediating between UN agencies with competing views. This is an inherent weakness of coordination mechanisms. Humanitarian coordination depends on persuasion; there is no enforcement capacity. A former Emergency Relief Coordinator used to note that while he was expected to coordinate humanitarian work, he could not compel any of the humanitarian agencies to take a specific action – because they each have their own mandates, funding and accountability mechanisms. The clusters have no standard handover/closure procedure and little if any incentive to link up with other durable solutions initiatives. They were not set up to do that.

No single UN agency has a specific mandate to work with IDPs in the way that UNHCR is mandated to work with refugees or UNICEF is mandated to work with children. Rather many agencies work with IDPs to the extent that they can without compromising their core mandates.

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[35] Iraq Returns Index, Methodological Overview, May 2020, http://iraqdtm.iom.int/images/ReturnIndex/iom_dtm_Methodological_Overview_May_2020.pdf

[36] ACF, ACTED, CARE International, Concern Worldwide, DRC, IRC, INTERSOS, Mercy Corps, NRC, Oxfam, RCK, Save the Children, World Vision, LWF and ACF with DRC, IRC and NRC.

[37] ReDSS, https://regionaldss.org/index.php/who-we-are/about-redss/

While clusters are effective in coordinating crisis response, they have not been successful in promoting long-term solutions. Nor have they been successful in bridging the humanitarian-development divide. They were not set up to do that.

There is almost universal recognition that supporting durable solutions for IDPs requires the robust engagement and leadership of development actors, and there have been many efforts to bring development agencies into the humanitarian coordination mechanisms, including clusters. By and large, these efforts have not been successful as evidenced by the failure of the Early Recovery cluster. Development agencies have different ways of working – particularly in their close collaboration with governments -- and different perspectives on displacement than humanitarians. To over-simplify, while humanitarians tend to focus on how to aid IDPs, development agencies are more likely to focus on the stresses that displacement causes for national development plans. Development actors support governments; if governments do not support specific programs for IDPs, then it is difficult for development agencies to act. Humanitarian actors are concerned about compromises to humanitarian principles. Humanitarians also often envision a 'hand-off' of projects to development actors to take over for the long haul. But development actors see programming needs very differently, and not want to simply be an extension of humanitarian work for the long-term. Development actors are more likely to support IDPs through area-based approaches which do not single out IDPs as a particular set of beneficiaries.

Each context is different. There is no one-size-fits-all approach.

There is variation across countries with regards to which IDP-related durable solutions make the most sense and how they can be realized. In many cases, approaches depend on the leadership of individuals, the nature of the conflict, the role of the government or the level of international engagement. Working towards durable solutions, for example, will be different in situations with active conflicts where peacekeeping operations are deployed (e.g. South Sudan) than in places where conflicts have died down, but displacement remains (e.g. Azerbaijan or Georgia), or situations where there is a strong development architecture that could be used if/when conflicts break out (e.g. Burkina Faso).

Moreover, responding to disaster-induced displacement benefits from the cluster approach, but may require a different approach when it comes to finding durable solutions – particularly when it is physically impossible for IDPs to return (as when a landslide destroys a village). Indeed slow-onset versus sudden-onset natural hazards cause different types of internal displacement which require different solutions – even though slow-onset disasters usually interact with sudden-onset ones.[38]

When it comes to solutions, everyone recognizes that governments need to take the lead.

Cases that have had some success with IDPs finding durable solutions are ones where governments have been willing to lead. The DSI in Somalia, for example, was marked by extensive government involvement. Indeed, the very important first step is for government authorities to recognize the existence of internal displacement, and to be committed to understanding and resolving it. In these cases, international agencies can work productively to support the government's efforts. In other

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[38] IDMC, 'Disasters and Climate Change,' https://www.internal-displacement.org/disasters-and-climate-change

cases, where governments are not willing to recognize internal displacement -- much less commit political capital to its resolution -- the role of international agencies often becomes one of substituting for governmental aid programs or pressing the government to assume its responsibilities or deferring the issue of solutions until the government has a change of heart. In still other cases, a government may wish to resolve displacement in ways that humanitarians find objectionable as in the case of returns to areas which are not yet considered safe.

Similarly, a whole-of-government approach needs to be taken to seeking solutions to internal displacement, with buy-in across ministries and offices. While national commitment is critical, most of the work of supporting solutions falls on the shoulders of provincial or local authorities. For example, Somalia's *Midnimo* initiative saw the national and local authorities—not aid agencies—co-designing and initiating programs.[39] *Midnimo* was recognized for showing how to implement government-led, area-based responses for durable solutions that bridge the humanitarian-development divide, and how to work toward solutions even if the situation was still insecure.

Similarly, the DSI in Ethiopia exemplifies how a whole-of-government approach can be developed. It, too, moved away from a project-based humanitarian approach, instead identifying regions where development and humanitarian actors can leverage existing laws and systems, and looked to local and national officials to take the lead across ministries.

Engagement of peace/security actors in supporting solutions for IDPs has been fragmented and often carried out in isolation from present coordination structures.[40]

There are a variety of peace/security actors – from peacekeeping troops to trained mediators to military forces engaged in stabilization programs to the UN's Peacebuilding Fund, but it is probably fair to say that there has been inadequate coordination of humanitarian action with all of these bodies. As explained elsewhere, this is due in part to humanitarian agencies' concerns that humanitarian principles may be compromised through collaboration – for example, when humanitarian aid is used to further a political solution (e.g. return is encouraged prematurely to show political success). But it is also due to different missions and objectives, as well as to a lack of forums where all concerned actors can simply share information about what each is doing in particular areas. There are exceptions of course. In some cases social cohesion working groups work very well and civil-military coordination mechanisms may exist but focus on issues such as de-confliction rather than solutions for IDPs.

Especially when it comes to return of IDPs, re-establishing peace and security – as well as rule of law, security sector reform and physical reconstruction of housing – is essential for durable solutions. Stabilization programs are usually more closely aligned with the work of development actors, as in Iraq where UNDP is implementing a large-scale stabilization program. And yet frequently stabilization programs are carried out independently from other efforts to support solutions.

Peacebuilding is a complex process – involving much more than return of displaced people but encompassing demilitarizing armed groups, restoring utilities, supporting integration of IDPs in other parts of the country and fostering reconciliation. The Peacebuilding Commission works on the basis of proposals submitted by affected governments; while the Commission is more than willing to

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[39] United Nations Peacebuilding and others (n 11) 2.

[40] Note there is a forthcoming separate HLP paper on humanitarian-peace nexus.

support durable solutions for IDPs, if the governments do not prioritize it, then the Peacebuilding Fund is unable to support it.

Role of donors

While donors recognize the need for a coordinated approach to durable solutions for IDPs – and finding durable solutions is in their interests, given the huge drain on their budgets by protracted displacement – the fact remains that most aid agencies have separate departments for humanitarian and development assistance while funding for stabilization and peace support operations almost always comes through separate funding streams. Some donors, like DFID and JICA have moved to merge their humanitarian and development programs.

Other donors like Canada and Australia have also moved to bring their aid agencies into their foreign ministries as a way of strengthening the link between foreign policies and aid which may make sense for those governments, but which raises questions about the independence and neutrality of humanitarian assistance.

Indeed, donors play a key role in supporting solutions for IDPs, but here too there are major differences between development and humanitarian actors. Most humanitarian aid – 80 per cent -- goes through multilateral bodies while most development aid – 77 per cent-- is channeled bilaterally. [41] While there are weaknesses in the IASC model of humanitarian coordination, coordination among development actors is much weaker.

IDP participation is still limited and needs to be improved

At best, IDP input into planning for durable solutions is spotty. They are rarely included in either clusters or governmental coordination mechanisms – indeed it is difficult even for local aid providers to participate in these mechanisms, much less IDPs themselves. Beyond a general (though not universal) commitment to the right of IDPs to choose their preferred solution, IDPs are usually excluded from international coordination mechanisms.

There's no way around it. You get what you pay for.

The Grand Bargain came up with some unique action steps to strengthen humanitarian funding, calling for example, for multi-year funding with maximum flexibility. But much remains to be done to translate these recommendations into practice. At the national level, authorities constantly struggle for more funding as in both Ethiopia and Somalia. One positive development has been the use of pooled funds on the country level which tends to strengthen coordination; while OCHA pooled funds concentrate on humanitarian action, the Haiti Pooled Fund, managed by the World Bank and the Haitian government has invested in durable solutions projects.[42]

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[41] DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. 2020
https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/643/643.en.pdf
[42] Center on International Cooperation, The Triple Nexus in Practice, Dec 2019. Synopsis, p. 4.
https://cic.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/triple-nexus-in-practice-brochure-december-2019-final.pdf

Individual leadership matters (political savvy is important…)

Individuals and institutional partnerships matter. This was clearly the case in specific cases examined here. In Somalia's volatile environment, for example, successful project implementation required adapting to each operational context to identify which institutions and stakeholders are best placed to facilitate discussions on durable solutions, be it a local mayor or officials within the Ministry of Planning.[43]

4. Recommendations

Low-hanging fruit

Call for a thorough review of IASC architecture with respect to internal displacement including some in-depth case studies, including solutions for disaster displaced.

Call for development of an IASC policy on internal displacement, which recognizes differences between IDPs displaced by different causes, differences between rural and urban IDPs, and different stages of displacement. Such a policy could clarify the contributions which humanitarians can make to IDP solutions but is unlikely to produce the far-reaching changes needed to bring about durable solutions for IDPs.

Call for an analysis of the implementation of the UN Secretary-General's Decision 2011/20. What were the results of the pilots which were undertaken? Are there lessons which can be gleaned from this apparently unsuccessful effort? Should a revision of the 2011/20 decision be recommended? If so, how can weaknesses in implementation of the earlier decision be avoided?

Support the new empowered Resident Coordinator model by ensuring that they have the human and financial resources to provide needed leadership on coordinated responses and support more resources/capacity-building for governmental leadership or participation in such groups.

Commend the national-level government-led durable solutions working groups or units, and encourage the establishment of such units in other countries. Set in motion now a system of peer-to-peer support and learning.

Support improvements in data collection and analysis in ways that build capacity of both governments and international agencies to support and monitor solutions for IDPs [reference to workstream 6 report on data]

Encourage the use of new pooled funds – beyond existing humanitarian funds -- to support collective efforts and find ways for middle income countries to receive the support they need to support solutions for IDPs [also to come from humanitarian financing workstream 5]

More ambitious

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[43] GP20.

Develop a system of 'Solutions Champions' – individuals of high political standing who can work with governments of affected countries and international actors to move the process forward.

Call for the establishment of a well-resourced Special Representative of the Secretary-General who will have the clout to bring together development, humanitarian and peacekeeping actors. From 1992-2010, there was an RSG for IDPs who was successful in putting IDPs on the international agenda, in developing normative standards and operational frameworks, including through the IASC. The down-grading of this position to a Special Rapporteur for IDPs reporting to the Human Rights Council seems to be associated with a lessening of international attention to internal displacement. If the UN were to name an SRSG with the political clout that comes with the position and an adequately staffed secretariat, he or she would be able to convene meetings between peace, development and humanitarian actors and would have access to governments at the highest level. An SRSG would also be a convenient follow-up mechanism to oversee the recommendations of the HLP and could well-complement the empowered RC model at the national level. The main disadvantages of such a recommendation would be its financial cost, a reluctance to create new UN structures and possible opposition from large operational humanitarian agencies.

Call for the establishment of an 'IDP durable solutions window' in the Peacebuilding Fund. As these Peacebuilding funds depend on proposals from governments – who have many priorities – having a specific funding stream for IDP solutions could incentivize governments to prioritize finding solutions for IDPs in post-conflict contexts.

With respect to the architecture of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, there are several alternatives:

Continue to strengthen the cluster system, supplementing its strong humanitarian coordination objective with a new objective of supporting solutions. Clusters and humanitarian actors should be leveraged to use their expertise and financial resources to start the process and accompany IDPs in their first steps towards durable solutions

Recommend establishment of a new post-cluster system where coordinating bodies at the national level would be chaired by government ministries and include humanitarian, development and peace/security actors to enable better collaboration on a range of issues, one of which could be solutions for IDPs. This could take the form of a standing durable solutions initiative. This new coordination mechanism would likely be quite different in mandate, style and mechanisms from the present clusters and could build on the positive experience of durable solutions initiatives and the new empowered RC model on the UN side. Such a mechanism could envision active roles by IDPs themselves as well as by local civil society actors and NGOs.

Recommend that donors condition their assistance on the basis of collective efforts rather than to individual agencies, for example, by making funds available to Regional Coordinators' offices to support durable solutions in a specific country. In order to access the funds, the agencies would have to work together. This would probably be easier to achieve for humanitarian and development actors than for peace and security actors where 'high politics' are usually in play. There are already examples where strong groups of donors have played important roles in encouraging durable solutions initiatives at the country level.

Change institutional mandates to give responsibility to a single existing UN agency (most logically either UNHCR, OCHA or IOM), which would be responsible for finding solutions for IDPs and working out the appropriate relationships with development actors to make this happen. This could be instituted on a trial basis – say for five years – and if the agency fails to deliver on solutions, the

arrangement could be reviewed. While this would likely clarify accountability, it would be difficult for a single agency to provide all of the support needed to implement durable solutions. This would also be a controversial and highly political action.

Mandate a cut-off date for humanitarian aid, perhaps through a General Assembly resolution. Such a resolution could provide that humanitarian aid to a given situation could continue for no more than five years at which time responsibility would formally be transferred to development actors who would be charged with finding solutions for IDPs as well as providing long-term assistance as necessary to those who still have humanitarian needs. This too would be a controversial and highly political action.

Change the incentive structure within Human Resources systems of UN agencies so that individual career advancement depends on their contributions to collective outcomes rather than to solely advancing individual agency objectives.