

His Excellency Mr. António Guterres  
Secretary-General  
United Nations  
New York

Date: 10 May 2019

Dear Secretary-General,

We refer to the joint letter sent to you from a number of Member States on 25 July 2018 and to your reply of 18 October 2018, regarding the need for increased global attention in support of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

In line with the recommendations outlined in your letter and consultations with the Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Mark Lowcock, a cross-regional group of Member States have conducted outreach to broaden support for the initiative. We are in agreement that the perspectives of affected communities and governments from a broad and diverse set of Member States are crucial for the success of a High Level Panel.

Since our previous correspondence, the formal Member State support for this initiative has increased from 37 to 57 states, and now includes representation from every regional group, and most fitting, several states affected by internal displacement. We have worked to spread the word to all Member States and make them aware of the High Level Panel and its purpose. Our delegations continue to meet on a regular basis to discuss this initiative and the way forward.

We have also developed a concept note for the High Level Panel (please find attached to this letter) on which Members States that have endorsed this letter are in agreement.

We firmly believe that there are best practices to be shared amongst many Member States, who hold the primary responsibility in the provision of assistance to IDPs and host communities at the local, national and international level. We very much agree that practical and durable solutions for internal displacement must go beyond humanitarian assistance. Internal displacement has significant effects on the economic and social development of affected countries. In order to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda, the needs of IDPs and their host communities must be taken into account in the development of policies and funding mechanisms, including from the outset of a response. This should be done in a comprehensive and holistic manner, involving the UN, Member States, and other relevant stakeholders.

The High Level Panel should build on and support the ongoing efforts related to IDPs both by Member States and within the UN System. As an example, it should complement the planned activities surrounding the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kampala convention on internally displaced persons in Africa, as well as, the

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African Union's declaration of 2019 as the year of "Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa" and build on last year's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the adoption of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, an important milestone in our collective international response to IDP challenges.

The High Level Panel, at its foundation, should have a goal of strengthening the capacity of Member States, the UN system and other relevant stakeholders to holistically respond to IDP situations. In order to best support durable solutions, within the humanitarian, development field and peace and security field, there should be broad consultation and cooperation amongst Member States, the UN System and other relevant stakeholders in this process.

We believe that a High Level Panel, under your supervision, is the most suitable format for garnering support and improving the international community's approach to addressing IDP situations and should be realized by the opening of the 74th General Assembly.

As Member States, we look forward to supporting and working with you to undertake this most pressing issue.

Sincerely,

Signatures from page 3 onwards

**cc:**

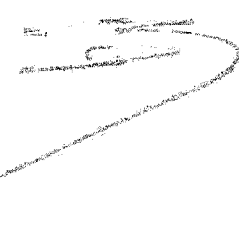
Mark Lowcock, United Nations Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs

Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees


António Vitorino, Director General, International Organization for Migration

Achim Steiner, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme


 <p>Ambassador/PR Issa Konfourou Mission of Mali</p>	 <p>Ambassador/PR Adonia Ayebare Mission of Uganda</p>
 <p>Ambassador/PR Max Hufanen Rai Mission of Papua New Guinea</p>	 <p>Ambassador/PR Kaha Imnadze Mission of Georgia</p>
 <p>Ambassador/PR Mauro Vieira Mission of Brazil</p>	 <p>Ambassador/PR Jürg Lauber Mission of Switzerland</p>
 <p>Ambassador Joao Pedro Vale de Almeida Head of Delegation of the European Union, on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States</p>	 <p>Ambassador/PR Mohammed Hussein Bahr Aluloom Mission of Iraq</p>
 <p>Ambassador/ PR Mona Juul Mission of Norway</p>	 <p>Ambassador/PR Adela Raz Mission of Afghanistan</p>



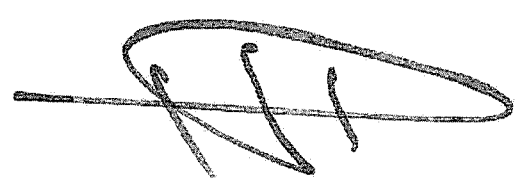
Ambassador / PR  
Omar Hilale  
Mission of Morocco



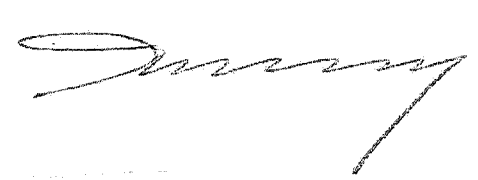
Ambassador / PR  
Milenko E. Skoknic Tapia  
Mission of Chile



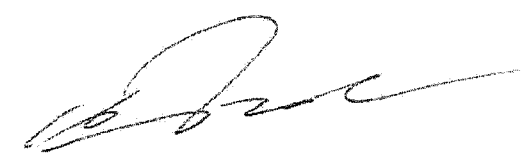
Ambassador / PR  
Gillian Bird  
Mission of Australia



Ambassador/ Chargé d'affaires  
Elmahdi S. Elmajerbi  
Mission of Libya



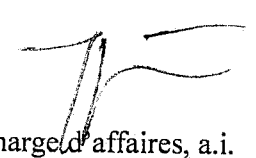
Charge d'affaires  
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Mission of Azerbaijan



Ambassador / PR  
Cho Tae-yul  
Mission of the Republic of Korea

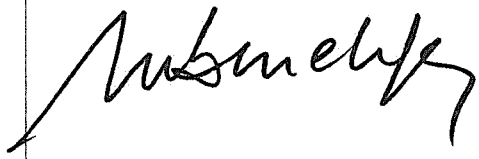
**Sami Bougacha**  
Deputy Permanent Representative  
Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the UN  
New York

Charge d'affaires  
Sami Bougacha  
Mission of Republic of Tunisia

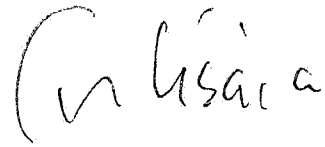


Charge d'affaires, a.i.  
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Mission of the Republic of the Philippines

 <p>Minister /DPR Irma Alejandrina Rosa Mission of Honduras</p>	 <p>Ambassador/PR Juan Ramón de la Fuente Ramirez Mission of Mexico</p>
 <p>Ambassador/PR Marc-André Blanchard Mission of Canada.</p>	 <p>Ambassador/PR Satyendra Prasad Mission of Fiji</p>
 <p>MARTIN GARCIA Ambassador Permanent Representative</p> <p>Ambassador/PR Martín García Moritán Mission of Argentina</p>	 <p>Ambassador Jonathan R. Cohen United States Mission to the United Nations</p>
 <p>Ambassador/PR Lazarous Kapambwe Mission of Zambia</p>	 <p>Ambassador/PR Tijjani Muhammad Bande Mission of Nigeria</p>
 <p>Ambassador/PR Koro Bessho Mission of Japan</p>	 <p>Ambassador/PR Abukar Dahir Osman Mission of Somalia</p>



Ambassador / PR  
Moustapha Ali Alifei  
Mission of Chad



Ambassador / PR  
Aliioaiga Feturi Elisaia  
Mission of Samoa

**High Level Panel (HLP)**  
**Internally Displaced People (IDPs)**  
**Concept Note**  
**May 2019**

Background

- 21 years after the UN General Assembly adopted the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the number of conflict-induced Internally Displaced People (IDPs) has not gone down, but roughly doubled to around 40 million people. Meanwhile, the number of natural disaster-induced IDPs continues to grow, and now stands at around 24 million per annum on average.
- There is now a growing understanding that internal displacement has significant effects on economic and social development and peace and security in affected countries. There is a need to reassess international approach to IDPs, and particularly, how the UN can engage from a whole-of-system perspective.
- The 2030 Agenda's imperative of "Leaving no one behind" entails not only that the needs of IDPs and their host communities are taken into account; it also calls for a comprehensive and holistic approach by the UN, Member States and other relevant stakeholders when developing policies and funding mechanisms.
- In December 2017, Member States asked the UNSG through UNGA resolution A/RES/72/182 to "to work with Members States and the United Nations system to explore ways to better address the long-term needs of internally displaced persons, support communities that host them and improve the lives of many millions of internally displaced persons"
- A number of Member States, including Member States with IDPs, believe that the international attention to internal displacement has been insufficient in comparison with the rising needs. The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement in 2018 and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kampala convention offer appropriate occasions to draw greater attention to the issue, as a complement to other existing initiatives.
- There is a desire to establish an independent panel that would assess how Member States, the UN system and other relevant stakeholders can improve their strategies for responding to, and reducing internal displacement. The format of a High Level Panel, set up by the UN Secretary General, is considered as the most suitable approach.
- A number of Member States representatives discussed ways to create momentum around the issue, which resulted in an official letter to the UN Secretary General in July 2018. The following countries signed the letter and expressed support for the establishment of a High Level Panel: Afghanistan, Argentina, Georgia, Iraq, Mali, Nigeria, Norway, Switzerland and Zambia as well as the EU and its 28 Member States.

- Since then, additional Member States have expressed interest and conducted outreach to broaden support for the initiative.
- In his reply on October 18, the UN SG recognized the importance of the topic and encouraged signatory states to :
  - 1) mobilize broad support of a diverse set of Member States from all regions
  - 2) consider the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, an opportunity to include IDPs in national development plans and
  - 3) follow-up with USG/ERC Mr. Mark Lowcock as the SG's focal point on the issue
- A meeting between the USG/ERC Mark Lowcock and the signatories of the letter took place on 7 December 2018 to discuss the path ahead. The key take away from the meeting is to continue broadening the support for the initiative, in particular among IDP-affected Member States and to define the design and structure of the HLP.
- Relevant UN agencies have been consulted, invited to meetings, and have expressed general support for the idea.

#### Objectives

- The High Level Panel initiative has the following objectives:
  - 1) Strengthen the Member States', UN system's and other relevant stakeholders' capacities to holistically respond to internal displacement and better support durable solutions, including within the humanitarian and development field.
  - 2) Facilitate the exchange of good practices and focus on opportunities and solutions, thereby creating a positive narrative around the issue, while building on existing approaches.
  - 3) Mobilize more attention and support Member States in addressing and reducing internal displacement
  - 4) Outline strategies for the inclusion of IDPs in the realization of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.
  - 5) Strengthen data gathering and analysis.

#### Focus and guiding principles of the High Level Panel

- The focus of the HLP should be on durable and practical solutions. It would identify and address gaps in the response to internal displacement and provide recommendations to ensure a more effective response.



- While responsibility for the protection of IDPs rests first and foremost with national governments and local authorities, it is also important to build on best practices regarding the way in which international assistance can be most useful to IDPs and affected Member States and populations.
- The initiative should also build on and complement ongoing efforts related to IDPs (GP 20 Plan of Action, IDMC, JIPS and other organizations' work on collection of data, IASC light review of the current responsibilities across UN agencies as well as the African Union's declaration of 2019 as the year of "Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa" ).<sup>1</sup>
- The 2030 Agenda seeks to address the needs of the most vulnerable, including IDPs. The link between IDP response and socio-economic development should be assessed with a view to identifying effective strategies of assistance and protection that may be beneficial also to the affected states and (host) populations.
- Recognizing the important contribution by national and local authorities as well as host communities for the protection and assistance of IDPs, acknowledging that the hosting or large groups of IDPs can put pressure on them, and further recognizing the importance to support host communities as well as local capacities to address their needs (Res. A/C.3/72/L.46).

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<sup>1</sup> The main recent high-level processes where commitments in support of IDPs were made, includes the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Nansen Initiative's Protection Agenda, the World Humanitarian Summit/SG Agenda for Humanity, the New Urban Agenda and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. GA Resolution 72/182 on IDPs also encourages the Secretary-General to work with Member States and the United Nations system to explore ways to better address the long-term needs of IDPs, support communities that host them and improve the lives of the many millions of IDPs.

### Structure of the High Level Panel

- The high-level panel (HLP) would be composed of experts appointed by the SG. The number should not exceed 8 members.
- The HLP needs to be regionally representative and gender balanced.
- The HLP needs to include high level qualified persons that are able to draw global attention to the issue of IDPs.
- HLP members should ideally have a background on foreign policy / humanitarian affairs /development assistance.
- The mandate of the HLP should be limited to 18 months.
- The HLP should be under the supervision of the SG.
- Secretariat: the panel would be supported by a small secretariat, ideally multi-stakeholder and with representation including, but not necessarily limited to, UN personnel seconded from pertinent entities (e.g. OCHA, UNHCR, IOM, UNDP).

### Outcomes of the High Level Panel:

- The panel of experts will conduct dialogues and consultations with :
  - UN Agencies and mechanisms, internally displaced persons, civil society, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders.
  - Member States and local governments faced with the phenomenon of internal displacement and regional organizations sharing their best practices / response to the situation of IDPs. The panel will carry out visits to Member States affected by internal displacement – upon invitation by the concerned Member State – as well as regional organizations.
- Based on these consultations and on already existing normative frameworks, literature and research (including the UN Guiding Principles), the panel will:
  - Prepare a report to the UNSG with concrete, action-oriented recommendations to the UN, Member States and other stakeholders, such as the World Bank and civil society on improvements in the international response to internal displacement.
  - Shed light on Member States' good practices in addressing internal displacement and in finding durable solutions to internal displacement, and promote exchange and dialogue among Member States.