

FAO Submission: UN Secretary General's High Level Panel on Internal Displacement

1. Introduction: FAO commitment to prevention, response and solution oriented action against internal displacement

FAO has a long history of working together with IDPs, their host communities in rural areas, and host governments, to manage the impacts of internal displacement, and address its root causes. FAO has a unique mandate which allows it to work across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus; providing life-saving, emergency support to IDPs and their host communities; assisting IDPs, including those returning to their homes, to become less dependent on food aid and move towards resilience and self-reliance; and contributing to sustaining peace.

With internal displacement becoming increasingly protracted and unacceptable numbers of IDPs suffering acute food and nutrition insecurity, FAO recognizes the urgent need to seek realistic and lasting solutions, which address and mitigate internal displacement, and mitigate its impacts on affected populations. Over the medium- longer term, for solutions to internal displacement to be durable, interventions must prioritise creating conditions that are conducive to building self-sufficiency, while people remain in displacement, and creating the conditions for safe, voluntary and sustainable return, when circumstances allow. Strategies to strengthen self-reliance of those impacted by internal displacement must help people seize opportunities, as soon as they appear, paving the way for durable solutions.

FAO commends the establishment of this High Level Panel on Internal Displacement, and stands ready play an active role in working together with its national, UN, NGO and civil society partners to find practical and durable solutions to improve the lives of the millions of IDPs who have been force to flee their homes, and the communities hosting them.

2. Key Issues, issues, problems or imperatives for prioritization

Imperatives for prioritization

Working efficiently and effectively across the humanitarian, development, peace nexus key to achieving durable solutions to internal displacement

With conflict and internal displacement increasingly protracted, and the complex needs of affected populations, FAO strongly encourages the HLP to place working across the **humanitarian, development, peace nexus** (HDP nexus) **at the heart of its agenda** to achieve durable solutions to internal displacement. Internal displacement has traditionally been viewed by both governments and non-government actors as a humanitarian affair, and at times, in competition with development investments, the legacy of which continues to reduce the effectiveness and efficiency of internal displacement responses, particularly in protracted internal displacement contexts. Humanitarian assistance remains fundamental. However, the ability of displacement affected populations to achieve self-reliance, a precondition of any durable solution to internal displacement, cannot be created without simultaneous investments in medium-long term development and sustaining peace-related responses. This is supported by successive Global Reports on Food Crisis, which demonstrate that despite significant investments in humanitarian response, acute hunger continues to rise in contexts experiencing conflict and displacement. Investments must therefore be in tandem with immediate humanitarian assistance, and address key issues and longer term needs identified by IDPs, including facilitating economic inclusion, access to sustainable livelihoods, reinforcing and ensuring portability of social protection programmes, as well as strengthening natural resource management, conflict resolution and governance.

As a UN agency with a triple mandate to work across all three “nexus” sectors, FAO is committed to exploring, together with the HLP, its members and partners, **new innovative ways of working across the nexus** through, community led and owned interventions, which are **multi-year and flexible** enough to adapt to rapidly changing internal displacement contexts. FAO recognises that in the many internal displacement contexts in which it works, there is an imperative to not only address the immediate needs of the displaced, and those who choose to return to their homes and communities, including urgent food security and nutrition needs, but also make significant long term investments in resilience and self-reliance. This includes ensuring interventions are conflict-sensitive, and wherever possible, contribute to sustaining peace, including promoting social cohesion between host and IDP/returnee populations.

FAO recognises, that for many IDPs and returnees, agriculture is the only source of livelihoods available that is capable of providing an income, as well restoring their food and nutrition security, and importantly, their dignity. FAO therefore believes **agriculture cannot be an afterthought when addressing the immediate and longer-term needs** of IDPs and of the community hosting them. To achieve sustainable outcomes, interventions often require **simultaneous and collective investments** in immediate humanitarian assistance, development and in sustaining peace. This includes development investments to support longer term self-reliance, including in sustainable livelihoods and addressing underlying

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poverty levels; as well as, where appropriate, approaches aimed at sustaining peace in the long term, for example, supporting local communities and governments to address issues relating to access to natural resources and climate change impacts, including water, forestry, and land access and tenure issues. In many internal displacement contexts, FAO believes simultaneous investment, coordination and cooperation across sectors, together with national government leadership and support, is most appropriate, and critical to achieving durable solutions to internal displacement, as well as addressing the root causes which contributed to displacement in the first place.

While working across the HDP nexus, and related humanitarian-development nexus (including Grand Bargain priorities) has garnered much attention from international organizations, NGOs and donors alike, the often siloed nature of humanitarian, development and peace related responses continues to impede the holistic, longer term responses necessary to creating durable solutions to internal displacement, addressing its root causes, and addressing the complex needs of affected populations. FAO believes there is space for the HLP to facilitate a much needed **action-oriented dialogue between national governments, humanitarian, development and peace actors**, and donors, to explore the creation of practical solutions and new modalities of working together, in order to help bridge the divide which remains between humanitarian, development and peace structures and actors. Likewise, FAO encourages the HLP to promote an understanding that “nexus” programming and coordination and cooperation need not refer to humanitarian, development and peace “phases” or timelines, but rather is an opportunity for these actors to work together, as early as possible, to maximise impact and the likelihood of achieving resilience and self-reliance for affected populations, and sustainable, durable solutions to internal displacement.

FAO believes there is also an opportunity for the HLP to act as a catalyst for highlighting, encouraging and facilitating **replication and scale up of good practices** of flexible, multi-sectoral, multi-year programmatic and funding approaches **to working across the HDP nexus**. This could include promoting and facilitating the creation of innovative funding mechanisms such as multi-sectoral, multi-donor trust funds, which are capable of funding short, medium and long term internal displacement measures, and which necessitate/incentivise, humanitarian, development and peace actors working collectively, towards **collective outcomes**, rather than in discrete “humanitarian”, “development” or “peace” phases or silos.

Practical and effective responses require a collective will, and **strong cross-sectoral coordination** both within national governments (through a “Whole of Government” approach), and the UN system, NGOs, civil society, and donors. Where possible, Governments should be encouraged to mainstream displacement portfolios (funding allocations and policy responses) across line ministries and development plans, including those earmarked specifically for internal displacement, when a Government is hosting both IDPs and refugees. For example, FAO’s experience in some contexts has shown, multi-sectoral HDP supportive investments, only became an feasible, with strong engagement of national governments and acknowledgment (including from Ministries of Finance or equivalent) of the importance of incorporating internal displacement and durable solutions

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oriented responses and considerations into development plans, and that the absence of such an inclusion would be detrimental to a countries' development plan overall.

Addressing and mitigating the impacts and root causes of violent conflict: a focus on strengthening resilience and self-reliance

Violent conflict and resulting displacement fuels food insecurity, and has been one of the primary causes of a rise in global hunger in recent years. According to the 2020 Global Report Against Food Crisis, **displaced people are often more vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition** having had to abandon their livelihoods and assets, undertake arduous journeys and settle in areas or camps with limited access to basic services or former social networks. Conflict and internal displacement can also be compounded by drought and other climate change induced shocks, exacerbating the impacts on rural food and nutrition security, livelihoods, and the ability of IDPs, returnees and host communities to achieve self-reliance.

With **agriculture the dominant form of livelihoods for the majority of IDP households** in conflict affected countries, any durable solution to internal displacement must **promote and invest in access to sustainable livelihoods** for IDPs and their host communities, both during protracted displacement and when conditions allow IDPs to safely return home. Strengthening livelihoods and food security in conflict affected areas, where conditions allow, and in the areas where IDPs are settled is not only cost-efficient, but it also leads to longer-term social and economic benefits once countries stabilize.

This approach recognises that building the self-reliance of IDPs is crucial in enabling them to **become agents of their own development** and of the communities hosting them, particularly when internal displacement is protracted. This requires substantial investment in strengthening agricultural livelihoods, which in many IDP contexts, despite significant challenges, often remain the backbone of rural economies. In this respect, FAO has decades of experience in strengthening rural livelihoods of IDPs during periods of displacement, and when it is safe to return to their origin communities.

FAO believes opportunities exist for interventions in support of food security, nutrition and agricultural livelihoods to contribute to prevention of conflict and internal displacement, and sustaining local-level peace, in order to address not only the symptoms but also the root causes of conflict and internal displacement. This includes **contributing to peacebuilding outcomes by building social cohesion** between rural communities, assisting former combatants reintegrate into societies, implementing joint host community-IDP/refugee livelihoods programming, and focusing on the inclusion of women and youth in rural livelihoods opportunities and community decision-making. For FAO, **working effectively and collectively with other humanitarian, development and peace actors** and partners, is **critical to achieving these longer term outcomes**. Here, support to affected IDPs and host populations also needs to be accompanied with medium-long term investments in the community of origin to avoid a relapse into conflict and to work towards durable and sustainable solutions for all.

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Furthermore, food security, sustainable and climate-smart agricultural practices, access to and management of natural resources, and employment and social protection benefits are all key in addressing and mitigating the impacts of conflict and internal displacement, sustaining peace efforts, mitigating the adverse impact of climate change, and supporting populations affected by internal displacement to transition towards durable and sustainable solutions. Likewise, maintaining food production and rebuilding the **agricultural sector** are fundamental, and **should be treated as an engine of stabilization and recovery** of IDPs living in or fleeing from conflict, or returning to their homes or communities of origin, when it is safe to do so.

[Climate change and disaster risk reduction responses: opportunities for addressing impacts and drivers of climate-induced internal displacement](#)

Climate change, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and disaster risk management (DRM) actions are crucial to addressing drivers of internal displacement. The causal relationship between internal displacement and climate change, while complex and involving a multitude of compounding factors and drivers, nevertheless **continues to influence patterns of internal displacement globally**. In the Horn of Africa, for example, IDPs displaced by climatic events, are often linked with precarious “pastoralist drop-out” trends (abrupt cessation of traditional pastoralist activities). This requires decisive action capable of investing in resilient livelihood diversification interventions, and climate change adaptation strategies, including climate-smart technologies and agriculture, as well as managing and addressing local natural resource related conflicts.

The effects of climate change also have the potential to exacerbate existing tensions, or trigger conflict and violence between communities and groups, often due to heightened competition over increasingly scarce natural resources. As such, FAO believes that **climate change adaption, disaster risk reduction and addressing climate change** as a driver of internal displacement, must not be approached in isolation, but must be **mainstreamed into resilience, self-reliance and sustaining peace related programming and policy**, both in terms of national government policy and planning, but also within humanitarian, development and peace mandated organizations. For FAO, this has included mainstreaming climate change adaptation and resilience strategies into programming in internal displacement settings, including rural livelihood and natural resource management programmes.

FAO also is investing its strong technical capacity in the **development and use of innovative, climate smart agricultural techniques** which can be **adapted to internal displacement** camps and settlements, and integrated into humanitarian responses to increase food and nutrition security of internal displacement affected households. In this respect, FAO believes there is an opportunity for the **HLP to provide a platform for members to forge and elevate new, multi-sectoral partnerships** between humanitarian, development and peace actors to **catalyse the incorporation of these innovative climate smart technologies**. This could include climate smart agricultural technologies and practices, which are capable of not only assisting affected populations in managing the immediate impacts and addressing immediate needs created by of climate-induced internal displacement, but also utilising these innovations to **assist climate change vulnerable IDP populations when they eventually return to their communities** and areas of origin. Working together with national, sub-

national and local governments should also be prioritised, to respond to the needs and voices of vulnerable rural and agricultural dependent populations, in adapting to climate change, and strengthening their longer term resilience to future climatic shocks.

3. Towards achieving preventative objectives

Regional and whole of government approaches needed to integrate prevention oriented measures and durable solutions into national, sub-national and local government structures

Most drivers of violence and conflict – and resulting cycles of internal displacement and protracted crisis situations – are due to structural, developmental, socio- economic and political factors. While addressing the impacts of conflict, climate change and resulting internal displacement are crucial, FAO recognises that **real and substantial improvements and gains can only come about by addressing the root causes of internal displacement**. In order to achieve substantial progress in addressing these root causes, there must be **state ownership of internal displacement discourse, planning and response**.

FAO believes there is a **need for paradigm shift** in terms of how international displacement is reflected in regular, national government planning processes. Coordinated regional governmental responses, including promotion of a common understanding preventative measures can be encouraged and promoted by the HLP, as well the adoption of a **Whole of Government approach** at a national, sub-national and local level, which promotes a common understanding of internal displacement, its impacts and the necessity of integration of preventative measures and measures promoting durable solutions to internal displacement across all levels of government and line ministries.

This can be facilitated through the use of approaches such as the use of **joint analysis between HDP actors and national governments**, to establish a common ground for understanding, not only for preventative measures, but to establish processes for finding solutions, after internal displacement has occurred, for example, the importance of investing in enabling economic environments, area-based planning and rural development strategies, including rural livelihood interventions and establishing linkages with markets. As mentioned in the previous section, inclusion of all relevant line ministries should be encouraged, including ministries of finance or equivalent to ensure processes and policies requiring longer term, multi-year programming are adequately resourced, and preventative measures, which address the structural, developmental, socio-economic, and environmental factors influencing internal displacement, are integrated into development plans.

Such approaches should also **capture IDP and returnee voices**, and highlight and elevate successful local/grass roots prevention and solutions-oriented practices, which can be replicated at a national-scale. In FAO's experience, in some contexts, sub-national governments, for example, are particularly well placed to develop tailored solutions. For example, in the Somali region of Ethiopia, the Regional Government has taken stock of durable solutions programming approaches to prioritise internal displacement concerns (IDPs in displacement sites, IDPs living in host communities and returnees). Upon request,

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Disaster Risk Management authorities in the region, and with the support of the Regional President and Steering Committee, developed a range of available options for and with IDPs, which allowed them to choose their preferred solutions, and which were then developed upon request with technical support of relevant UN agencies.

FAO would also like to acknowledge that in terms of **regional responses to internal displacement**, Africa has taken a leading role. We believe there is much to learn from this continent. The Kampala Convention, or the “African Union for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa”, which since coming into effect in 2012, has to date been ratified by 30 states, and FAO believes the HLP can play a leading role in encouraging the adoption of principles enshrined in the Kampala Convention. Furthermore, FAO would like to reiterate recommendations for action put forward by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and encourage the HLP to “push for **acceleration of ratification and/or implementation of the Kampala Convention**” and collaborate with members of the HLP as required, to support these processes. Likewise, the HLP can play a key role in promoting and encouraging dialogue with relevant governments with regard to the **domestic implementation** of the Kampala Convention and the adoption of an “inclusive process with key domestic actors, starting with IDPs and host communities and required mechanisms, using AU model law where appropriate” (IGAD, 2019). The HLP can also play a key role in facilitating **knowledge sharing and lessons learned** from this region through the Kampala Convention processes, which have the potential to be adapted to other appropriate contexts, globally.

4. Critical issues or questions: data and evidence

One of the key challenges to addressing and reflecting IDPs needs and voices continues to be the **absence of timely and relevant data** and information for decision making and responses, including not only data evidence on internal displacement in rural areas and communities, but also data on the food and nutrition security of IDPs and impacted host communities. FAO recognises that while there are many ways in which IDP, returnee and host community voices can be reflected in internal displacement responses, **appropriate and rigorous data and evidence is an integral part of ensuring these voices are captured and reflected.**

Of particular concern to FAO, is the current lack of **internal displacement related data** and evidence with respect to **rural communities and populations** which are, in many contexts, disproportionately impacted by and vulnerable to, internal displacement, both with respect to conflict induced internal displacement, and climate and disaster-induced internal displacement. Likewise, **food security and nutrition data** for displaced populations can be extremely limited in many cases, and this is particularly **pronounced for populations impacted by internal displacement.** For example, the recently published 2020 Global Report on Food Crises, for the first time provided a more in-depth analysis of food security outcomes for these populations for each country covered in the report, however a lack of reliable data meant that this was extremely challenging.

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FAO therefore encourages any efforts, actions and collaborations supported by the HLP and its members and partners, that seek to and **fill the data and evidence gaps with regard to the food and nutrition security of internally displaced populations**. This would be of significant value and have a great impact on the ability to better understand the impacts of internal displacement on food and nutrition security, and provide timely interventions to address the needs of these populations. In this respect, FAO stands ready to support and facilitate these important measures, as an active member of the HLP.

In FAO's experience, significant issues also remain with regard to the **ability to access certain key areas and contexts**, in order to collect important data and evidence with regard to internal displacement. For example, one of the key challenges experienced by FAO with respect to its Integrated Food Security Phases Classification (IPC) analysis (an tool, integral to measuring levels of food insecurity in internal displacement affected contexts), is the absence of disaggregated IDP and host community data and information in many countries, due to political and security related restrictions. This absence of reliable and timely data on IDPs food security, livelihoods, protection and security is crucial to understanding and addressing the needs of IDPs, returnees and the communities hosting them. In this respect, coordinated dialogue with host countries, with regard to the **provision of access for data collection and analysis** on IDPs, should be a priority.

In many protracted crisis and conflict affected contexts in which FAO works, secondary and repeated internal displacement, as well as the **changing status of displaced populations** between refugee and IDP, makes tracking and response very challenging. Data collection using new technologies, including artificial intelligence for tracking the IDPs living in camps and integrated with host communities, for example, are options to be explored, providing protection, privacy and potential for concerns regarding potential human rights violations are able to be adequately satisfied.

Furthermore, as conflict continues to be a primary driver of internal displacement, programmes, policies and tools which are capable of and delivering **conflict-sensitive programming**, an approach being adopted across FAO's internal displacement related policy and programming, is crucial to ensuring effective **evidence-based programming**. Likewise, monitoring key conflict drivers linked to internal displacement will be an increasingly important with regard to engaging with government actors and influencing prevention and durable solution related policy and decision making.

For FAO, data and evidence which assists in understanding **the relationships** (both social and economic) **between IDPs and their host communities** is also crucial to monitoring the impacts of internal displacement and facilitating integration-related durable solutions. Having the evidence base necessary to develop programmes and policies which not only promote social cohesion between IDP/returnee and host communities, but are also able to capitalise on opportunities to facilitate significant socio-economic gains, is crucial to strengthening **conflict-sensitive** programming in internal displacement contexts. This approach, has increasingly been a focus of FAO evidence-based programming and partnerships in internal displacement contexts. In this respect, FAO encourages the HLP to facilitate the exploration of new, multi-sectoral, multi-year partnerships and funding

opportunities, which integrate strong data collection and evidence based approaches to programming, and are capable of being scaled up across internal displacement contexts.

5. Private sector engagement

FAO considers the private sector to be a **key ally in addressing the impacts and root causes of internal displacement, including the fight against hunger**. Private sector partnerships must be integrated into the core policy and programmatic priorities of preventing and addressing the impacts of internal displacement. Any strategies and programmes to address internal displacement, must be about joining forces with the private sector to scale up successful programmes and linking actions for better results.

In recent decades, the governance of food and agriculture has been increasingly transformed on a global level by new technological, knowledge-based, financial and managerial resources and innovation. The private sector has been instrumental in driving these transformations. The dynamic nature of private sector innovation must be able to be capitalised upon, in order to explore new, innovative approaches. This includes capitalising on private sector innovations in relation to climate-change adaption, climate smart agriculture, the use of digital technologies to deliver assistance to highly mobile populations, and strengthening livelihoods through connecting farmers to markets. The HLP should take every available opportunity to solicit innovation and ideas, and connect private sector actors to governments, international organizations, NGOs and civil society, as well as **promote multi-stakeholder initiatives, through Innovation Symposiums or the like**, which allow sharing of experiences and proposing of innovative ideas and technologies.

6. Conclusion

FAO applauds the establishment of the High Level Panel on Internal Displacement, and wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the priorities already identified by the Panel in 2020, including the HLP's work plan of field visits and consultations with Governments, other stakeholders, IDPs and affected communities at national and regional levels.

FAO looks forward to continued cooperation with the HLP, and will take every opportunity to advance the work of the panel and its objective to find concrete, long-term solutions, to and raise global awareness of internal displacement in order to improve efforts to help all those affected, including both the displaced and their host communities.