



UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement

Submission by the Federal Republic of Germany

The Federal Republic of Germany welcomes the establishment of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement (“the Panel”) by the UN Secretary General. The IDP question is politically highly sensitive as well as multi-dimensional and we trust that the Panel will facilitate a transparent and inclusive process and build on the large number of lessons learnt around addressing internal displacement. At the same time, Germany is acutely aware that given the sheer number of IDPs and the complexity of challenges connected to internal displacement, the Panel faces a mammoth task in making recommendations that are realistic yet bold, and, most importantly, make a difference for the well-being of the people concerned – IDPs. The need for a more effective approach towards internal displacement is urgent and more than 50 million IDPs¹ do not allow us to do business as usual.

Institutional response

National governments have the primary responsibility for IDPs, which includes assisting those in need and designing durable solutions. They must be the drivers and leaders in the response to situations of internal displacement and in identifying solutions that are durable and sustainable. However, we are cognizant of the circumstance that not every country has the necessary capacity to address situations of internal displacement without international support. Hence, the 50.8 million IDPs around the world cannot simply be considered an internal affair of the countries concerned.

The Guiding Principles, whose 20th anniversary we celebrated in 2018, provide a much needed framework and important guidance on internal displacement, based on existing law. In the absence of 1) an international treaty (legally binding) on internal displacement, and 2) an international organization or institution mandated to address internal displacement holistically, it is particularly important that governments, humanitarian, development, and peace actors work together. This is an important step to ensure that IDPs enjoy their rights under international and national law to their full extent and that they receive appropriate assistance. Germany acknowledges efforts to translate the Guiding Principles into national law and supports the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs (OHCHR) in monitoring the implementation

¹ IDMC Global Report on Internal Displacement 2020: <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2020/>

of the principles. Germany further offers to support countries in their efforts to include IDPs and other displaced persons in SDG monitoring as well as in national development plans.

Where the respective government is not able, or unwilling, to protect and assist those who are displaced, the UN, inter alia through its humanitarian cluster system, should be in a position to ensure predictable and reliable protection and assistance to internally displaced persons in need. This may also require intensified efforts in the field of humanitarian diplomacy, to ensure access to persons in need and to uphold humanitarian space.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) should further intensify its efforts to facilitate and drive collaboration and synergies between UN agencies with a humanitarian mandate in situations of internal displacement. An update of IASC policies on internal displacement, a review of IASC coordination structures in IDP situations, and a review of the roles and responsibilities of the organizations involved in humanitarian responses to IDP situations should be taken into consideration in this regard.

With a view to promoting durable solutions for IDPs, adjustments will have to be made on the ground to improve collaboration in IDP situations between humanitarian response and development-oriented approaches, and the respective actors, including the World Bank Group, and relevant governments. But coordination and collaboration are instrumental across the entire displacement continuum, going beyond the dimension of durable solutions. This applies in particular to much needed preventive action and forward-looking, early assistance, e.g. through forecast-based action in contexts of disaster displacement.

Development and peace-building actors need to be engaged much earlier to prevent and end recurring humanitarian emergencies and to pave the way towards durable solutions. In many situations, internal displacement not only requires an approach that involves humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and peace-building according to their respective mandates (the so-called triple nexus). Durable solutions also require political will to end internal displacement.

Based on best practices and consultations, the Panel should therefore develop recommendations on how the UN system as a whole could address IDP situations more effectively, drawing on the whole range of instruments at its disposal. Furthermore, recommendations should include concrete steps on how such improved coordination could be ensured structurally. Of course, effective cooperation as a key element to address internal displacement has to go beyond the UN system, as situations of internal displacement require cooperation between the respective governments at all levels (including at the local level), the UN, International Financial Institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. In addition, meaningful participation of displaced persons themselves needs to be assured through effective mechanisms. Recommendations should further address how current obstacles to effective coordination can be overcome and outline how incentives can be created towards outcome-oriented collaboration.

Inclusive Approach

A critical factor for the success of the Panel's recommendations will be the full participation of, and comprehensive input from, countries affected by situations of internal displacement and IDPs themselves. Due to its combined political experience

and technical expertise, the Panel is in an excellent position to take such a comprehensive approach.

It is crucial that the High-Level Panel listens to what IDPs want and what solutions they themselves envision. We therefore ask the Panel to give sufficient space to those affected by internal displacement to partake meaningfully and to include recommendations for IDP-inclusive approaches towards achieving durable solutions. This could include creating a dedicated mechanism for consultation and participation of IDPs that can persist beyond the panel.

Recommendations must be, above all, in the best interest of IDPs and, at the same time, be supported and sufficiently feasible to be put into action by governments of countries with IDPs. As more research is becoming available on the relationships between IDPs, refugees and migrants and the entire displacement continuum, new approaches need to also be mindful of the often close connections between internal and cross-border displacement.

To ensure the largest possible degree of endorsement and implementation of the recommendations by governments, UN and other actors, it is crucial that the work of the Panel is completely transparent, and that the process of developing recommendations allows for full participation and comprehensive input by all actors concerned.

Children and Women

In line with the most recent Report (2019) by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, we ask the Panel to take into consideration the recommendations made with regard to children and youth and how the negative impact of internal displacement on them can be reduced. Special attention must be directed towards protection, assistance and solutions for children and youth in IDP situations as they are particularly vulnerable to abduction and sexual and gender-based violence. Their rights must be safeguarded and existing legal frameworks applied to protect them from harm.

In contexts of violence and conflict, internal displacement tends to further reinforce pre-existing discrimination and social and economic disadvantages for women and girls. Better data, aggregated by age and gender is necessary for many IDP contexts, followed by concrete action to more effectively protect the rights of girls and women.

Data

Reliable data on internal displacement is crucial for responses to the most urgent needs in situations of internal displacement. It must be the foundation for policy decisions, evidence-based planning, tracking impact and reporting. We therefore encourage the Panel to include recommendations on UN coordination around data collection and analysis for stronger collaboration within the UN system itself and with non-governmental organizations like the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center/IDMC. Recommendations should include measures leading to interoperability of data collected while keeping in mind the need for protecting the information at the individual level.

Outlook

Funding for humanitarian assistance and development cooperation will most likely not keep up with the increase of humanitarian and development-oriented needs of

IDPs, in particular taking into account the growing number of displacements. Therefore, it is crucial that existing funding is used more effectively. All relevant actors need to investigate further synergies in the delivery of services and make stronger efforts to reduce and end humanitarian needs by providing durable solutions.

In the near future, we will also see more people affected by sudden and slow-onset disasters triggered by natural hazards and the adverse effects of climate change, leading to further displacement. Germany therefore would like to draw the Panel's attention to the submission put forward by the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD). Already, IDPs in fragile countries are disproportionately affected by the consequences of disaster and crisis as their resilience strategies are often limited and they are not benefitting from institutionalized prevention and disaster risk reduction strategies. As called for by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR), it will be essential to recognize IDPs as a particularly vulnerable group to be targeted by existing and new DRR policies, as well as to integrate disaster displacement into disaster risk reduction strategies to the highest extent possible. As recommended by the UNFCCC Task Force on Displacement, we need to "strengthen preparedness, including early warning systems, contingency planning, evacuation planning and resilience-building strategies and plans, and develop innovative approaches, such as forecast-based financing, to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change".

Furthermore, rapid and increasing urbanization poses new and additional challenges for humanitarian, development and peace actors in their response to internal displacement. Urban environments require humanitarian and development-oriented solutions that benefit host and displaced populations alike.