

## ReDSS Submission to the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement

### 1. Background – Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat

The Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) was created in 2015 with the aim of maintaining focused momentum and stakeholder engagement towards durable solutions for displacement-affected communities in East Africa and the Horn of Africa. ReDSS is comprised of 14 NGOs: Action Against Hunger (ACF), Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), Care International, Concern Worldwide, Danish Refugee Council (DRC), International Rescue Committee (IRC), INTERSOS, Mercy Corps, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Oxfam, Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK), Save the Children, World Vision, and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). The DRC, IRC, and NRC form the ReDSS steering committee.

The overall goal of ReDSS is to improve programming and policy in support of durable solutions processes so that displacement-affected communities live in safety and dignity in the East and Horn of Africa. ReDSS is not an implementing agency. It is instead 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. For more information see: <http://www.regionaldss.org>.

### 2. Internal displacement – trends and dynamics in the East and Horn of Africa

The search for durable solutions to the often protracted displacement situation in East Africa and the Horn of Africa is a key humanitarian and development concern. This is a regional and cross-border issue, with a strong political dimension, which demands a multi-sector response that goes beyond the existing humanitarian agenda. Driven by a combination of conflict and climatic shocks, and underpinned by poor governance and poverty, displacement in the East and Horn of Africa region is consistently high, protracted, and dynamic. By the end of 2019 [an estimated total of 14.1 million people](#) were displaced in the region, with the majority of displaced people coming from or inside South Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia. This includes 4.6 million refugees and asylum seekers and 9.5 million IDPs. Somalia and Ethiopia host two of the largest Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) situations worldwide at the end of 2019 with 2.6 million and 1.4 million IDPs respectively according to the [Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre](#) (IDMC). While 2019 saw some efforts to restore peace and stability (including Ethiopia and Eritrea re-establishing ties), elections planned in Ethiopia and Somalia in 2020 could result in further instability. The first few months of 2020 have seen new displacement caused by conflict and violence in Somalia, and the COVID-19 pandemic and desert locust invasion increasing the likelihood of further displacement this year.

The situation for most IDPs in the region remains often highly politicised making principled action more difficult and a key urban challenge in Somalia. In Somalia, the government faced a huge transition over the recent past, with the formation of Federal Member States (FMS) and the increased presence of local authorities with which to coordinate. The country has taken a number of important steps to ensure that vulnerable communities including IDPs are incorporated in the National Development Plan 9 (2020 – 2024) under the broader durable solutions agenda. The Somali government has also developed significant coordination architecture at all levels of government. Somalia has also adopted an impressive array of new policies, including a new Social Protection Policy, the National Policy on Refugee-returnees and IDPs, the Interim Protocol on Distribution of Land to IDPs and Returnees, and a National Evictions Guidelines - to name a few – and has recently ratified the Kampala Convention. Somalia has a lot of positive practice to showcase in terms of area-based solutions to ensuring integrated and comprehensive programming for host and displaced populations and its 'whole of government' approach to address the issues facing displacement-affected communities through the newly formed Durable Solutions Secretariat at the national level as well as similar structures at the state and municipal levels. Although there are strong advances on building the architecture and cross-government approaches to sustain durable solutions, there remain

questions around division of responsibilities and coordination between the different emerging structures in Somalia.

### **3. Key learning from addressing early and long-term durable solutions approaches in Somalia**

The ReDSS submission presents good practice, key challenges and recommendations that have emerged from durable solutions approaches in Somalia. A key recommendation is the need to address internal displacement with a broader ‘displacement-affected communities approach’ inclusive of IDPs, returnees and hosts.

#### **Adoption of a common vision through durable solutions programming principles in Somalia**

In 2016-2017, ReDSS and its partners first formulated a set of common programming principles to inform programme design and implementation. In 2018, these principles were revised jointly with NGOs and UN agencies, coordinated by ReDSS and the Somalia UN Resident Coordinator’s Office (UNRCO) with the objective to harmonise them. These principles draw on partner experiences and learning in relation to the implementation of durable solutions projects and programmes. The [Durable Solutions Programming Principles](#) are: government-led; area-based; collective and comprehensive; participatory and community-based; rights- and needs-based; sensitive to gender, age, disabilities and marginalisation; and sustainable. In 2019, the principles were endorsed and adopted by the FGS.

Over time, these principles have proven to be a good tool for increased coherence in the design of projects and programmes and to support a displacement-affected communities approach inclusive of IDPs, refugee-returnees and host communities. The principles have been recognised as [good practice in the East and Horn of Africa region](#). In 2020, ReDSS and the UNRCO will document progress towards the operationalisation of these principles by the FGS and durable solutions partners.

#### **Increased use of area-based approaches and coordination on durable solutions processes**

In Somalia over the last few years, the emerging Durable Solutions coordination groups and units, in particular at the municipal level in Mogadishu, Baidoa and Kismayo, have encouraged increasing [multi-stakeholder coordination and ‘whole of government’ involvement and ownership of the process](#). These coordination structures have opened up spaces for humanitarian, development, resilience, state-/peacebuilding actors and urban planning specialists to come together under the leadership of municipal authorities to allow for more coherent and longer-term engagement. Even though meaningful coordination that goes beyond just information sharing to actually achieving coordinated, incremental responses is only just starting, this is the beginning of an important process that has the potential to [shift urban responses from cluster based coordination to genuine multi-stakeholder approaches](#).

These coordination platforms have also provided a space for bringing actors together to conduct joint analysis of existing and new data – a process that is essential to generate common understanding of key issues as well as resource allocations. The [ReDSS solutions analysis process](#), a yearly, multi-stakeholder analysis done jointly with the local authorities is a good example of how such a process, done with adequate time investment in dissemination and uptake, can inform common understanding as well as resource allocation, policy and practice. Durable solutions consortia have, for example, ensured that displacement/solutions indicators have been included in local and federal level development plans, including the Somali National Development Plan and the recently launched Benadir Regional Authority (BRA) Durable Solutions Strategy.

#### **Consortia programming on durable solutions and new ways of working together**

[Consortia programming approaches to durable solutions](#) have gained momentum with now six active initiatives in Somalia and one in Somaliland, funded by multiple donors with multi-year financing. They have been the result of increasing donor coordination and alignment around a common vision and common

approaches to durable solutions. They have also allowed partners with different strengths and areas of expertise – across the humanitarian/resilience/peace and state-building spectrum to come together and work towards sustainable reintegration and with area-based approaches – even though in practice humanitarian actors often still dominate and lead on coordination. Consortium partners have been able to engage more constructively with government and development counterparts in area-based planning, capacity development and displacement related policy and strategy development.

### **Measuring collective progress towards sustainable (re)integration**

A key challenge remains that there is a [lack of evidence and a lack of consensus among actors on how to measure progress related to durable solutions processes](#). In particular, different actors still use different tools. (Re)integration is a highly difficult concept to measure, given it is contextual, includes multiple dimensions such as economic, social and psychological elements and is partly based on subjective perceptions of different groups such as returnees, IDPs and hosts. For indicators to be useful they need to look at both pathways and thresholds towards (re)integration.

There are currently a number of initiatives in Somalia being piloted that could provide useful learning. For example the Danwadaag Solutions Consortium in Somalia is working towards a local (re)integration index (LoRI) that builds on the eight Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) indicators. This approach places strong emphasis on social cohesion. The World Bank is also looking at how to better measure changes as part of its broader poverty assessment for Somalia. Despite these efforts, programme level conversations around measurement and indicators still need to be linked up to national development plans. Similarly, it would be useful for (re)integration progress to be monitored and measured across regional plans. There is also some movement in this direction. For example, the Somali authorities now include IASC criteria and indicators in National Development Plan 9 and in the pledges they presented for the Global Refugee Forum (GRF). The Somali government is also developing a Durable Solutions Strategy Performance Matrix that incorporates the IASC Framework to measure the achievement of durable solutions. It remains critical for humanitarian and development partners to come together to discuss and work on common standards to measure and monitor progress towards sustainable (re)integration. This should be done both at the programmatic level and across regional and national levels, including links to wider discussions around the poverty agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### **Focus on housing and integrated settlement approaches in Somalia**

Displacement in Somalia is primarily an urban challenge with the majority of IDPs living in urban and peri-urban areas. With resources overstretched Somalia's cities struggle to cope with the demands of their fast growing populations and IDPs living in often informal settlements. In Somalia, security of tenure is fragile as there are poor land registries documenting ownership of land and limited capacities from administrative and judicial institutions to protect the various agreements of land and housing through the court system. As the majority of IDPs live on private or unregistered land they face a continuous threat of forced eviction with in 2019 alone more than 170,000 individuals evicted across Somalia. Forced evictions remain a key obstacle to achieving durable solutions for displacement-affected communities. They undermine local integration and social cohesion by eroding living standards, livelihoods, and a sense of belonging among IDPs and others living in informal settlements. As highlighted in the HLP sub-cluster eviction trend analysis from January to August 2019, there is also a growing trend of development-induced displacement in which the main causes of evictions are related to the increase in privately owned developments.

The [centrality of HLP \(housing, land, and property\) assistance, as opposed to the shelter approach](#), is increasingly recognised as key for sustainable (re)integration. Based on key learning from the Somalia solutions analysis update in 2019, ReDSS aims to continue working with its partners to shift from the prevailing tendency to implement humanitarian shelter interventions towards more sustainable housing approaches. In January 2020, a 'Housing and integrated settlement planning for new sites in Somalia' joint

workshop adopted a set of common principles to inform housing approaches and integrated settlement planning in Mogadishu, Baidoa and Kismayo.

### **Addressing early solutions and long-term planning simultaneously**

There is a constant struggle to work on long-term goals and urban planning to address displacement as a development challenge, while at the same time answering immediate large-scale humanitarian needs. Investing in early solutions and urban preparedness responses by humanitarian and development actors is key to supporting municipalities to be able to tackle both at the same time. For instance, while humanitarian actors focus on rapid response to support the capacity of cities to absorb new residents, development actors should complement those efforts by bringing in urban planning experts at the outset. The deployment of urban planners, along with socio-economic and governance experts, from the outset is a critical but often overlooked resource.

In 2020, it will remain key for all stakeholders to support durable solutions programming in urban contexts and to work in complementarity with resilience programming in rural areas. This dual focus will support both local integration in urban areas and the voluntary, safe, and dignified return and reintegration of IDPs and refugee-returnees in rural areas, as the security situation allows.

### **Strengthening accountability to displacement-affected communities**

Social accountability to communities and displaced people is still weak in Somalia despite some recent improvements in programming such as the use of [Community Action Plans \(CAPs\)](#) to develop durable solutions strategies in some municipalities in Somalia. CAPs have been adopted by many aid actors in Somalia, albeit with different community engagement models and structures. While they have proven an important tool to ensure more participatory and inclusive prioritisation and planning processes, they have often been uncoordinated and disjointed, with many parallel processes in the same locations. Building on learning from this, several durable solutions actors have adopted a more coordinated approach together with the municipalities, on which it is possible to build. For example, the IOM/UN-HABITAT Midnimo project has developed community action plans for Baidoa and Kismayo. The Danwadaag Solutions Consortium then supported the municipalities in Baidoa and Kismayo to consolidate these and other existing CAPs into integrated district-level plans. These have become an important tool for the local authorities to coordinate activities of various humanitarian and development partners in their area and ensure avoidance of duplication. While not all actors base their engagement on these plans yet, and many aid actors continue to have different community engagement modalities, several development partners such as the World Bank, Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and UN-HABITAT have now started using the CAPs when designing and planning their urban infrastructure and resilience programmes.

Another example from Somalia has been the [Common Social Accountability Platform](#) which is a digital platform developed by Africa's Voices Foundation (AVF) and launched with ReDSS and BRA in Mogadishu. It aims to strengthen social accountability in Somalia by connecting citizens and displaced people with decision makers and other authorities through media dialogue and public opinion gathering. The platform cuts across sectors, programmes and mandates with the aim to build sustainable spaces for discussion, through which participants can directly impact decision-making that affects their lives. It is built on an interactive radio method developed by Africa's Voices, which allows people to input by SMS or text messaging. The pilot is currently being extended to Baidoa and Bossaso by the UNRCO and has been highlighted as [good practice in the region](#).

## **4. Key ReDSS resources**

### **Publications**

[2019 Annual Report: Key achievements, challenges, and way forward \(January 2020\)](#)

[Advancing Multi-Stakeholder to Sustain Solutions \(December 2019\)](#)

[Lessons learned from the EU RE-INTEG Durable Solutions \(October 2019\)](#)

[Somalia Solutions Analysis Update \(October 2019\)](#)

**Other resources**

[Multi-stakeholder approach to urban displacement in Somalia, Forced Migration Review Article \(March 2020\)](#)

[Understanding housing, land and property rights in Somalia tutorial \(March 2020\)](#)

[Durable solutions and displacement in the East and Horn of Africa \(2019\)](#)