



Executive Summary

Supporting Nationally Owned Durable Solutions Processes for Internal Displacement

10 February 2021

On February 10th, 2021, a high-level event on supporting nationally owned durable solutions processes for internal displacement was convened by the European Union and the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement. The event took place virtually and gathered more than 200 participants, including affected states, donors, UN organisations, NGOs, and civil society. The objective was to assist the High-Level Panel in refining emerging recommendations that it is considering for inclusion in its final report to the UN Secretary-General.

The Panel was represented by one of its Co-Chairs, Ms. Federica Mogherini. The EU was represented by Mr. Michael Koehler, Deputy Director-General, EU Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, and Mr. Martin Seychell, Deputy Director-General, EU Directorate General for International Partnerships.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Mogherini recalled that the conversation on durable solutions is not new and progress has been seen around the world. In many situations, governments have been taking steps towards sustainable change in response to internal displacement. However, Ms. Mogherini noted that durable solutions have not been systematically implemented as needed. The Panel has therefore sought to understand why efforts to find solutions have failed in the past and with its report will seek to provide recommendations on what needs to change for a more effective approach going forward. She highlighted that one issue that has come out clearly is that internal displacement is often still perceived as a solely humanitarian problem. Ms. Mogherini emphasized that while humanitarian aid is indispensable, it alone cannot bring about solutions to displacement. She also noted that attention frequently focuses on international actors and their respective roles and responsibilities, but there are fewer discussions on how international actors can work with governments and to achieve nationally owned solutions. The Panel believes strongly that this national ownership is key to effective solutions.

Three sessions followed the opening remarks, and looked at the following issues:

- How to better motivate and cultivate national engagement and nationally owned processes;
- How to link the international response coordination system with national coordination structures;
- What financing options are the most effective to support durable solutions.

The Secretariat of the High-Level Panel shared a [Background Paper](#) ahead of the event that outlined ideas and potential recommendations on these three topics. Speakers and participants were invited to react to the content in the paper and also share their own ideas, reflections, and experiences.

Session 1: Nationally owned durable solutions processes

The first session was moderated by Mr. Nigel Fisher, Former UN Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis, and had three opening speakers: Ms. Zahra Abdi, Head of the Durable Solutions



Unit in Somalia's Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, Mr. Martin Taschner, Head of Unit, Southeast Europe and Eastern Neighbourhood in the EU Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), and Ms. Aude Galli, Head of the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS).

As a starting point, a number of speakers recalled that the primary responsibility for solutions to internal displacement sits with governments, and IDPs are citizens with rights under national and international law. The importance of effective leadership from all, including the Government, the UN, NGOs as well as the World Bank, was stressed as essential to be able to make progress on this issue. Speakers and participants noted, however, that political will is key to government's effective fulfilment of these responsibilities, and where political will is absent, there is a need to consider not only how it can be generated, but also how it can be sustained over a prolonged period of time. Data and evidence were highlighted as valuable tools in helping to generate this political will by demonstrating the scope of the displacement challenge, its current and potential impacts, and why action is needed. It was also noted as essential in enabling governments to design and deliver an effective solutions approach. Other speakers noted the value of diplomacy and engagement with affected states, as well as the need for international actors to "accompany" governments and work with them to support effective responses to displacement. One speaker noted the usefulness of solutions markers to measure how programs contribute to solutions.

Speakers stressed that policies and legal frameworks provide a valuable foundation to guide action on internal displacement. The Kampala Convention, for example, has been an important tool in the Africa region, and ratification and normalization of it into a state's legal framework is an important step in building national ownership for solutions. The incorporation of durable solutions into development plans at both national and sub-national levels was likewise highlighted as indispensable for promoting a long-term, development orientation to solutions and recovery. It was suggested that legal frameworks and development plans can also assist in providing a structured approach to resolving issues such as housing, land distribution, and pensions. By focusing on national development plans and solutions, actors can look beyond humanitarian assistance, focus on long-term development, and unite under a shared vision. Investing in platforms between the national and local levels to plan jointly, share lessons learned, and discuss difficult issues was highlighted as a good practice. In addition, state-to-state dialogue was outlined as a useful tool to exchange good practices and building momentum to address IDP issues, policies, and solutions.

Representatives of some affected governments, however, indicated that they felt their priorities are often not taken sufficiently into account by international responders and there is sometimes a lack of information sharing on assistance delivery. It was noted that whereas international actors have, in some cases, been more proactive in engaging with authorities at local level, engagement at the national level sometimes still constitutes a challenge. There was likewise a broad agreement that solutions processes need to position IDPs in the centre and allow for their meaningful participation, as only a truly participatory process can lead to meaningful results.

Speakers noted that international actors should support long-term solutions that adopt a development approach and leverage the role of the private sector – for example, by encouraging public-private partnerships.

Existing and possible future repositories of good practices were also outlined as being useful tools, including the database of national laws and policies compiled by the Global Protection Cluster, as well as the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre's initiative to map good practice on nationally owned processes.



Session 2: Coordination for solutions

The second session was moderated by Mr. Peter de Clercq, Senior Advisor on Internal Displacement at UNDP. Mr. de Clercq was followed by three speakers: Mr. Sultan Ali Javid from Afghanistan's Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, Ms. Sybille Katharina Sorg, Director General for Germany's Crisis Prevention, Stabilisation, Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Assistance, and Ms. Allegra Baiocchi, UN Resident Coordinator in Costa Rica.

Building on the first session, this second session started with a strong call for coordination for solutions to be more squarely anchored in the principle of national ownership. In particular, speakers called for the adoption of approaches that promote the fundamental role of states as duty-bearers. Speakers noted the limitations of humanitarian coordination mechanisms in this regard, which particularly in conflict settings, often do not involve government actors. It was noted that for solutions, coordination must involve the government far more centrally.

In addition to strengthened engagement between national and international actors, speakers highlighted the importance of strengthening coordination across humanitarian, development, and peace actors in pursuing solutions to internal displacement. The speakers noted that operationalisation of nexus approaches for solutions is still lagging. They reiterated that durable solutions should be integrated into responses from the start of a crisis in order to avoid the risk of displacement situations becoming protracted. In this regard, fostering peace and peacebuilding was reiterated as an integral part of the solutions process.

Speakers suggested the need to work towards the adoption of collective outcomes that are jointly defined by governments and the international community in order to achieve a coherent and consistent vision with a roadmap across all types of actors over several years. Participants highlighted the need to create and invest in a common understanding, which includes common programming principles to operate under a multi-stakeholder framework, and is based on a solid political economy analysis. It was pointed out that there are currently rigid silos between humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding actors and meaningful progress will require leadership and commitment from all to come together. The need for markers of success, both in reaching outcomes and working together, was noted by speakers.

Speakers also reiterated the need to more strategically engage and utilize local structures and capacities. To this end, it was suggested that better use could be made of area-based approaches. Speakers also shared positive views on the potential value of solutions working groups at national and local levels that can assist in bringing together all relevant types of actors to work towards solutions.

In considering leadership for solutions within the international system, a number of participants supported placing solutions more squarely under the responsibility of Resident Coordinators. They also noted, however, that Resident Coordinators would need to be supported to be able to effectively take on and fulfil this responsibility; in this regard, the availability of qualified advisors on solutions processes was raised as an issue that requires attention.

Session 3: Financing for solutions

The final session was moderated by Ms. Stine Paus, Director of Institutional Partners for the Norwegian Refugee Council. Ms. Paus was joined by three speakers: Mr. Clement Belizaire, Director of Haiti's Unit for Construction of Housing and Public Buildings, Mr. Hans Christian Stausboll, Head of Unit for



Regional and Multi-Country Programmes for Africa in the EU Directorate General for International Partnerships, formerly known as DEVCO, and Mr. Xavier Devictor, Practice Manager of the Fragility, Conflict, and Violence Group at The World Bank.

The session highlighted the challenges posed by the current lack of clear funding channels for durable solutions, in part because solutions do not fit neatly into humanitarian or development funding mechanisms. Solutions to internal displacement are also frequently not included in national development plans, which creates difficulties in directing resources to solutions from existing development financing mechanisms. Multiple participants highlighted the need for long-term, multi-year funding, whether through existing channels or new ones, including by learning from the Global Fund for TB, Malaria and AIDS.

Participants highlighted that coordination is of essence in order to avoid duplication and inefficient use of resources. Speakers suggested the need to look beyond standard partnerships and better maximize collaboration with actors such as local governments and the private sector, which are often overlooked. Speakers highlighted the comparative advantage of International Financial Institutions to ensure the inclusion of IDPs in national systems in the medium to long-term. Participants noted a context specific approach is also needed, with a balance between humanitarian response and development initiatives that support resilience building.

Among other suggestions made by participants, the following can be highlighted: displacement-affected states should allocate funding to local municipalities on basis of real population figures rather than census data; the establishment of specific pooled funds / funding tools for solutions could be considered depending on the context; stronger involvement of international financing institutions to systematically support solutions to internal displacement could be encouraged; and more systemic use of cash transfers for social safety nets should be explored.

Closing Remarks:

After the three sessions, there were closing remarks by Ms. Elizabeth Ferris, High-Level Panel Expert Advisory Group member, Mr. Michael Koehler, Deputy Director-General, EU Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, and Mr. Martin Seychell, Deputy Director-General, EU Directorate-General for International Partnerships.

Ms. Ferris gave a thorough summary of the sessions, highlighting key issues and common trends such as the need to create political will and the almost universal calls for sustained multi-year funding. Mr. Koehler highlighted it was important to not only build political will, but to continually sustain it as well as the need for coherence among international actors to have a shared national vision. Mr. Seychell recalled the role of development actors in supporting IDP solutions as well as the importance of working across the nexus, supporting national responsibility, and maintaining a needs-based approach.