

*Concept Note*  
**Transitional Solutions Initiative**  
**UNDP and UNHCR in collaboration with the World Bank**

Notwithstanding the political and security dimensions, the perception that displacement challenges can only be addressed by humanitarian means is ill-conceived which has either impeded or delayed in achieving the sustainability of solutions or resulted in protracted displacements finding difficulties to break from the cycle of dependence on humanitarian assistance and to move on with their lives and livelihoods.

There is greater recognition now that displacement has humanitarian as well as developmental challenges, and in order to find durable solutions, situation specific comprehensive approaches, similar to some good past practices, would be required with the engagement of government, humanitarian and development actors with additional bilateral and multilateral assistance.

The aim of the Transitional Solutions Initiative is to work towards including displacement needs on the developmental agenda for sustainability of interventions for refugees and IDPs and local community members well into recovery and development programming. In essence helping prioritize displacement needs on the development agenda of governments and international development donors and other actors.

As recognized through past experiences that a critical factor in supporting durable solutions is additional dedicated transition and development assistance supporting an integrated approach that targets both displaced, returnees, and local populations.

### **Background and Rationale for the Initiative**

- 1) UNHCR promoted *Refugee Aid and Development*, during the 1980s which formed the basis of the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA) in 1981 and 1984, and the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Central America (CIREFCA) in 1989. The ICARA process<sup>1</sup> and CIREFCA were notable international efforts in mobilizing development partners and additional funding to address socio economic impact of refugee situations and durable solutions. It demonstrated and to large extent created awareness and recognition that

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<sup>1</sup> GA Resolution 37/197 (1982), requests the Secretary-General, in close co-operation with the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to convene such a conference "...to consider the continuing need for assistance with a view to providing, as necessary, additional assistance to refugees and returnees in Africa for the implementation of programmes for their relief, rehabilitation and resettlement..." and to "consider the impact imposed on the national economies of the African countries concerned and to provide them with required assistance to strengthen their social and economic infrastructure to cope with the burden of dealing with large numbers of refugees and returnees".

displacement has development challenges which can only be addressed by linking relief and development.

- 2) Since the ICARA process a number of initiatives *albeit* ad hoc were introduced to address “the gap” between short-term humanitarian assistance and longer-term development”. In 1999 the “Brookings Process” was launched reflecting an emerging consensus on the need to address 'transition issues,' including linkages between short-term humanitarian assistance and longer-term sustainable development interventions. In 2003, building on the lessons of the Brookings Process, the *Framework for Durable Solutions<sup>2</sup> for Refugees and Persons of Concern* was launched which had three components: 4Rs for post conflict situations and DAR/DLI for development assistance for refugees and hosting communities in displacement, and where feasible for their local integration.
- 3) These initiatives generated mixed results but in the process all contributed immensely to the debate on the need to include displaced and their needs and solutions or search of solutions on the development agenda.
- 4) PRODERE<sup>3</sup> (Programa de Desarrollo para Desplazados, Refugiados y Repatriados) programme for reintegration and rehabilitation of war affected populations in Central America was a successful programme with UNDP playing a prominent role in engaging development actors. In the 1990's, the PRODERE model was replicated with adjustments in the Cambodia Reintegration and Resettlement Programme (CARERE), Rehabilitation Programme for the Jaffna District in Sri Lanka, the Umbrella Project for Reintegration in Rwanda as well as those in Bosnia, Croatia, Eritrea, Guatemala, Mozambique, Somalia, Tajikistan and many others. Along with UNHCR and the World Bank, UNDP also participated in the implementation of the 4Rs project with varied outcomes. More recent collaborations with UNHCR and other partners includes the Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas (RAHA) project in Pakistan that targets the large numbers of Afghan refugees still present in country and the host communities within which they reside.
- 5) UNDP's role on IDP reintegration stems from its mandate and its rights based approach to supporting democratic governance, addressing poverty and promoting sustainable human development towards the achievement of the MDGs. Additionally, UNDP's dual mandate<sup>i</sup>, near universal presence, decentralized structure, presence in crisis contexts, recovery expertise including leadership in early recovery and close government interactions are critical for an effective and sustained engagement on IDP reintegration. As a result of this, expectations for a more robust, coherent and sustained engagement by UNDP continues to grow from international and national partners.
- 6) In 2006 as part of the Humanitarian Reform process, the UN Interagency Standing Committee's (IASC) introduced the “cluster approach”. This aimed at addressing gaps and strengthening the predictability and effectiveness of humanitarian response to internal displacement through clarifying the division of labor among

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendocPDFViewer.html?docid=3f1408764&query=Framework%20for%20Durable%20Solutions>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/search?page=search&docid=3bd410804&query=PRODERE>

organizations, and better defining their roles and responsibilities within the different sectors of the response.

- 7) The early recovery cluster and the development of a UNDP policy on early recovery have greatly contributed to the increased recognition of IDP reintegration (durable solutions) as a critical element in the rebuilding of communities following a crisis. The early recovery provides a window of opportunity that ensures that displacement issues are addressed early within the humanitarian phase and coherently with humanitarian interventions. These interventions also allow for early engagement with IDP groups, national and local government authorities, NGOs and community based organizations, other parties to the conflict and other relevant stakeholders, all of whom will have some element of influence and impact upon the immediate and longer term IDP challenges and responses.
- 8) In parallel there were other major developments which brought improved predictability to respond to humanitarian and early recovery needs of affected populations. This includes the revision of the Durable Solutions Framework on the Human Rights of IDPs under the auspices of the Representative of the UN Secretary General on the Human Rights of IDPs which has seen the document transform from one of guidance to humanitarian and on to include development actors and national governments. As a result of such changes, there is a greater recognition now than ever that displacement is not just a humanitarian issue and that displaced persons have developmental needs which cannot be realized with short term humanitarian assistance only. To ignore these needs presents a real risk of undermining development strategies and recreating some of the elements of the crisis that caused the displacement in the first place.

### **The Key Issue**

- 9) However, almost three decades later since the GA Resolution 37/197 (1982) some fundamental questions still remain valid: why is it so difficult to include displacement on development agenda of donors, governments and development agencies' programmes and funds? Even where refugees and IDPs receive some assistance for return, why are the longer-term needs of the returnees not systematically integrated into the reconstruction planning? How can humanitarian agencies adapt their programmes further to facilitate early recovery without compromising humanitarian principles? How can additional, flexible and timely transitional and development assistance be ensured for refugees who are non-citizens?

### **Displacement related challenges**

- 10) Forced displacement means loss of housing, land and property, jobs, physical assets, social networks and resources, and changes in family dynamics and traditional gender roles. The World Bank<sup>4</sup> has also documented that too often displacement also results in food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, and social

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<sup>4</sup> World Bank note on forced displacement drafted by the Conflict, Crime and Violence Team in the Social Development Department in discussions with the Representative of the UN General Secretary on IDPs, UNHCR, and UNDP.

marginalization. Often access to services such as education and health becomes exceedingly difficult because the displaced may have left behind the necessary personal documentation, may not be recognized as having any entitlements under the local government authority where they now reside, or because they no longer have the means to pay for school fees and health services and often lack traditional support networks in their new environment. Together these conditions push the displaced into a cycle of vulnerability, which may grow even worse in those protracted displacement situations where successive generations are affected. The presence of large numbers of IDPs or refugees may have a negative impact on the development of host communities due to pressure on local resources, infrastructure and services, along with environmental degradation.

- 11) However, in situations where the host government - if supported in the spirit of burden sharing - allows refugees access to its educational and health facilities, and provides right to work or even opportunities for livelihoods, the resulting indicators are better and refugees contribute to the development of local economy.<sup>5</sup> For the displaced, the situation may create gains – e.g. with regard to education or economic activity in places of exile – that in turn may support the emergence of durable solutions either in exile as illustrated by the case of Guatemalan refugees in Mexico’s Yucatan Peninsula.<sup>6</sup>
- 12) As in the case for refugees, IDPs need commitment and action from governments to ensure access to educational facilities, health facilities, livelihoods, participation in local and national level democratic and peace building processes, land, and so on. In this sense the re-establishment of government presence and authority in areas of return especially in cases of protracted conflict situations or following devastating disaster scenarios where government presence is severely weakened or completely decimated is critical.
- 13) However, the inadequate response to the needs of IDPs and refugees, particularly to developmental needs continues to be the single major obstacle to durable solutions for displaced persons. The continued perception that concerns of displacement can only be addressed by humanitarian means is ill-conceived and has resulted in the protracted displacements of millions of IDPs and refugees, unable to find solutions for their displacement that can assist them to break from the cycle of dependence on humanitarian assistance and to move on with their lives.

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<sup>5</sup> The presence of Angolan refugees in the Western Province of Zambia since the 1970s contributed to local development, and their repatriation was paralleled by a decline in agricultural productivity in the Western Province. (A. Betts: *Development assistance and refugees: Towards a North-South grand bargain?*, Forced Migration Policy Briefing 2, Refugees Studies Centre, Univ. of Oxford, June 2009, p.7-8). Similar findings on the positive economic impact of refugees are reported from many other countries including Tanzania and Pakistan. (The Centre for study on forced migration: *The impact of the presence of refugees in northwestern Tanzania*, University of Dar es Salaam, 2003; UNHCR: *The economic impact of Afghan refugee settlement on the tribal areas of Northwest Pakistan*, TSS ,mission report 89/27, May 1989.)

<sup>6</sup> Guatemalan refugees in Mexico’s Yucatan Peninsula received assistance in the 1990s to promote self-sufficiency, which benefited both the refugees and their areas of exile (Betts, 2009, p.7).

- 14) The World Bank note<sup>7</sup> on forced displacement highlights that displacement triggered by violence and conflict is not only a humanitarian crisis, but is likely to affect political stability if left unattended or inappropriately or poorly governed, or unresolved politically through peace-building. Particularly in fragile and conflict affected countries the presence of displaced persons can add a serious strain on very weak national and local institutions, as well as potentially causing or exacerbating strained relations between the displaced and the host community. In both fragile and conflict affected countries, and in countries with robust institutional and governance frameworks, displacement can also become the setting for human rights violations and a breeding ground for serious grievances leading to conflict, general violence, crime and instability and further displacement.
- 15) Increasingly within its recovery programming in large displacement contexts, development actors including the World Bank and UNDP sees the need to incorporate the complex displacement challenges as central to its recovery and development response. The specific vulnerabilities of the displaced and their impact on post crisis recovery and development is increasingly understood. Issues such as the impact of protracted displacement on human and social capital, economic growth, poverty reduction, environmental sustainability, peace and security and sustained development are all critical elements to take on board in planning for the successful reintegration of displaced persons. Such impact can affect a host of issues including social cohesion, traditional and cultural mechanisms, gender relations, and so on, which will all have a direct impact on the recovery process and will all need to be taken on board if the deep rooted issues, including the causes of displacement, are to be adequately addressed.
- 16) It is important to note however that displacement may not only have negative impacts. Where those displaced are able to further develop and make use of their skills and coping mechanisms, displacement may contribute to economic growth benefiting both the displaced and the host region, and may also in the event of return, or successful local integration, or resettlement in third countries bring valuable human and economic capital to the recovery process.
- 17) It is widely recognized that finding economically and socially sustainable solutions to displacement situations constitute a significant development challenge for the countries with refugees and IDPs, and for the international community. Addressing displacement also has an important bearing on meeting the MDGs. Protecting and addressing the needs of the vulnerable is emphasized in the Millennium Declaration which was endorsed by 191 member states. The Declaration highlights a goal specifically aimed at strengthening “international cooperation, including burden-sharing in and the coordination of humanitarian assistance to countries hosting refugees, and to help all refugees and displaced persons to return voluntarily to their homes in safety and dignity and to be smoothly reintegrated into their societies.”
- 18) The MDG Report 2009 has again emphasized that conflict breeds poverty: “Conflict and persecution are major reasons why people flee their homes, either within or beyond the borders of their country. Typically, they lack employment and permanent residence and without a social safety net, quickly fall into poverty.”<sup>ii</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> World Bank note on forced displacement drafted by the Conflict, Crime and Violence Team in the Social Development Department in discussions with the Representative of the UN General Secretary on IDPs, UNHCR, and UNDP.

Achievement of the MDGs is further dependent on democratic governance<sup>iii</sup> that provides the 'enabling environment' for their realization, particularly for the elimination of poverty. Effectively addressing the needs of displaced populations is central to reducing country fragility (and sub-regional fragility in neighboring countries) and to enabling successful transitions from conflict to peace.

### **What is the Transitional Solutions Initiative?**

- 19) The inadequate response to the needs of IDPs and refugees, particularly to developmental needs continues to be a major challenge to durable solutions for displaced persons. The Transitional Solutions Initiative signifies collaboration between humanitarian and development, bilateral and multilateral actors, aiming to work together with national governments in finding solutions and sustainability of interventions, for displaced persons and local community members, well into recovery and development programming. The Transitional Solutions Initiative will strive to ensure the more long term engagement of development actors by working earlier to plan and strategize with key humanitarian partners and to see that displacement issues form part of the development agendas of national governments. In essence: helping governments prioritizing displacement on their development agenda through additional bilateral and multilateral assistance.
- 20) This Initiative will draw on the:
- a. global awareness created through the Secretary General's report on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of a Conflict, International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) report, and the IASC Humanitarian Reform process in particular the Early Recovery Cluster, and other on-going work and evaluation reports;
  - b. current conducive policy environment of linking humanitarian assistance to recovery and development, and crafting related operational and financing instruments;
  - c. greater global recognition that displacement has developmental challenges, not addressing of which has negative political and security consequences; and,
  - d. greater recognition of development challenges of displacement also through the work done by the World Bank.
- 21) The joint approach to this initiative will be an area based, one that allows for the complex needs of displaced persons and host community members to be addressed better by the different actors all of whom will be bringing in an added value to this approach. UNDP, UNHCR and the relevant government authorities will have an initiating and convening role whilst ensuring that key UN, World Bank and other humanitarian and development actors are available to intervene at key stages and on key issues. Initiation of such development interventions would require dialogue with host country government. This initiative would strive to put solicited situation specific groups of international partners to work together with local actors to achieve the above.
- 22) The initiative would aim at post conflict and protracted refugee situations to achieve lasting solutions and improve quality of life through development of situation

specific comprehensive approaches through the engagement of bilateral and multilateral, humanitarian and development actors. Each situation, depending on political interests and will, operational capacity and resource availability could have a set of actors drawn from bilateral governments, the UN system, the World Bank or Regional Development Banks, NGO, host governments and communities, including displaced or returnees.

### **Components of the Transitional Solutions Initiative**

23) The Transitional Solutions Initiative will draw lessons from several past experiences of ICARA, CIREFCA, Brookings Process, 4Rs, and on going experiences of Durable Solutions for IDPs and the work of the CWGER. The proposed framework for implementation of the Transition Solutions initiative will draw from the INCAF report and Secretary General's Report on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Aftermath of the Conflict and World Bank's forced displacement programme. The Transition Solutions Initiative will aim at translating policies and guidance into concrete actions in the following situations:

- selected post conflict situation with major displacement, and
- protracted refugee/IDP situation

24) As documented by NYU, the critical gap in the international response to displacement continues to be: i) the lack of early planning, and ii) inadequate resources to support a transition from humanitarian to development interventions that promote durable solutions for the displaced. The persistence of this gap seems to reflect general gaps in international post-crisis recovery efforts:<sup>8</sup>

- The lack of a shared (country level) recovery strategy that encompasses political, security, development, and humanitarian tools to guide the efforts of bilateral and multilateral international actors in support of a particular government.
- The lack of quickly available and flexible funding that can provide resources in response to early windows of opportunity for development interventions that support durable solutions for displaced within the broader recovery effort.
- The lack of assessments and joint follow-up action / implementation to address the capacity gaps with regard to human resources and systems for planning and implementation in governments that is in an early recovery situation.
- The lack of transition programmes, such as QIPs that can provide quick, visible and small scale development outcomes to communities hosting displaced populations.

25) A recent paper from the Refugees Studies Centre, University of Oxford, makes the case that a critical measure to overcome the reluctance of governments to engage in creating durable solutions for IDPs or for the refugee groups that they are hosting would be additional dedicated development assistance supporting an integrated

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<sup>8</sup> *Recovering from War: Gaps in International Action* by the New York University's Center on International Cooperation. The report was based on analysis of the six cases of Sudan, Afghanistan, Haiti, East Timor, Lebanon, and Nepal, and was presented at the DFID hosted *International Meeting on International Support for Post-Conflict Stabilization and early Recovery* held in London on July 11, 2008.

approach that targets both displaced, returnees, and local populations.<sup>9</sup> This assistance should not substitute for existing budget lines that would otherwise benefit country nationals (in the case of assistance to refugees) or groups that make up the governments primary constituency (in the case of assistance to IDPs). The potential benefits for donor countries of a stronger effort to create durable solutions for displaced would be in summary, to reduce potential irregular secondary movements of displaced to the donor countries (with the added costs, security concerns, and potential for social tension that this often entails), to help eliminate potential sources for destabilization and to reduce the long-term humanitarian budget. For the countries with displaced, addressing displacement as a development challenge would help lessen fragility by reducing social conflict and insecurity through benefiting local host communities, contributing to the development of marginal border and other regions, and strengthening government capacity and systems to manage inclusive development processes.

26) **Framework for engagement** (based on the INCAF report and recommendations) to be developed further with specific reference to country situations:

- **Key principles to drive engagement,**
  - National ownership as overarching goal - work towards identifying capacities and help build.
  - Decentralised decision making - operational decisions at country level with close consultations with embassies; flexibility in programming and budgeting.
  - Recognise key characteristics of transition – risky, political, takes time, non-linear, fluid and difficult to predict.
  - Avoid setting up parallel coordination structures and funding mechanism – use, optimize existing setups.
- **Country context**
  - Define country fact sheet with displacement perspective and mapping of with assessment of interested and willing bilateral and multilateral actors (see Sudan)
  - Strategies, planning and prioritising - realistic mid/longer-term objectives, strategic priorities based on needs assessments, and sequencing; and ensure a realistic projection of funding required.
  - Coordination - effective coordination between Government, and international actors, including donors and NGOs. Identify transition strategy from humanitarian coordination to development coordination
  - Funding instruments - application of humanitarian-like procedures for development funding allocations (risk tolerance, reporting requirements etc)
  - Funding - resources coming from bilateral and multilateral funding sources
- **Identify what needs to be done and what needs to be done differently**
  - Review on-going initiatives and identify gaps in capacity, strategy, financing and implementation and device what needs to be done differently
  - Identify new initiatives and agree on strategy, capacities required financing and implementation mechanisms to be put in place.

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<sup>9</sup> A. Betts: *Development assistance and refugees: Towards a North-South grand bargain?* Forced Migration Policy Briefing 2, Refugees Studies Centre, Univ. of Oxford, June 2009.



- Identify group of international actors and a bilateral lead engagement with government. The group to identify key issues and entry points.
- **Implementation and M&E**
  - Define clear indicators to measure the performance and impact of transition support
  - Allow for more flexible implementation; understand the impact that international procurement practices can have on the local economy
  - Involve local stakeholders (returnees, host communities) in monitoring and feed-back

**Outline specific role and recommendations for different actors**

- National and Regional/Local Government
- Bilateral actors
- UN agencies
- World Bank
- NGOs
- Communities – including displaced

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i UNDP's dual mandate roles are firstly, to support the coordination and enhancement of UN system efficiency and effectiveness at the country level, and secondly, to provide knowledge, policy advice, advocacy and technical support in four focus areas (poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, and environment and sustainable development), on the basis of good practice and comparative advantage. See UNDP Business Plan 2008-2011.

ii United Nations, Millennium Development Goals Report 2009, p.8

iii UNDP defines democratic governance as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels and includes mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. See Governance and Crisis Prevention and Recovery: A BCPR Concept Paper, February 2009, p.3.