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**The engagement of UNHCR with internally
displaced persons**

Summary

This paper provides an update on several of the latest developments in the engagement of UNHCR with internally displaced persons, including operational aspects and coordination leadership. The paper further highlights UNHCR progress made in relation to data, workforce management, strategic partnerships, programming, the facilitation of the centrality of protection and solutions in internal displacement situations.

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I. Introduction

1. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) constitute the majority of the world's forcibly displaced, a trend which has persisted over the past decade. As of June 2022, 59 million persons were internally displaced and over half were women and children. More than 12 per cent were currently living with either physical or mental disabilities, or both, and more than 6 per cent were older persons at risk.
2. Conflict and violence remained primary causes of internal displacement. In addition, criminal and gang activities, human rights violations and the impact of large development projects were also cause of new flight. Millions more were displaced due to disasters and adverse sudden and slow onset climate events. Large-scale new internal displacement occurred in several countries, including in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Myanmar and Ukraine.
3. Solutions to internal displacement remained largely elusive, however there were some positive developments in relation to voluntary return and integration. More than 3.2 million IDPs returned home during the year, with millions more benefitting from inclusion in national programmes.

II. UNHCR and internal displacement today

4. As part of the broader Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) framework, UNHCR is integral to ensuring coherent IDP protection and solutions activities. The organization leads the global protection cluster and co-leads the global shelter cluster and the global camp coordination and camp management cluster (CCCM), together with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), as well as partners from non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
5. UNHCR complements cluster leadership with operational delivery, with personnel on the ground, closer to persons of concern. This contributes to building credibility with cluster partners and strengthening the relationship with governments and internally displaced persons. Helping to meet critical humanitarian needs also builds the trust required for dialogue on sensitive protection issues. The overall response by UNHCR is diverse, ranging from delivering assistance and meeting basic needs, such as shelter, to preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence, providing legal aid and documentation, ensuring child protection and working to preserve housing, land and property rights.
6. From the onset of an internal displacement situation, UNHCR prioritizes finding solutions. The organization collaborates closely with governments, national human rights institutions and civil society to develop and promote legal and policy frameworks and to expand capacity to prevent and respond to internal displacement.
7. The protection and assistance of IDPs, as well as achieving durable solutions for them is primarily the responsibility of States. With this in mind, UNHCR contributes to the global response to internal displacement in cooperation with States and in support of national efforts, grounded in the priorities identified by the displaced persons and communities themselves.
8. The demand for UNHCR emergency response capacity greatly increased in 2021. UNHCR responded to a record 11 IDP emergencies, mobilizing resources and engaging a range of stakeholders. More than 150 deployments were undertaken.

III. Strengthened UNHCR engagement in internal displacement settings

9. In 2016, UNHCR undertook an internal operational review to identify the changes needed to realize the High Commissioner's vision in relation to the organization's engagement in IDP situations. The review affirmed that protection and solutions are the key drivers shaping the work of UNHCR, as well as the organization's distinct area of

comparative advantage. The review also produced a comprehensive set of recommendations, including the need to update the IDP policy from 2019. A report is scheduled to be released in September, which will provide further detail on the recommendations.

A. Facilitating centrality of protection

10. The IDP Protection Expert Group was established in collaboration with the IDP Special Rapporteur at the end of 2021. Comprising the current and former mandate holders on the human rights of IDPs, as well as senior-level thought leaders, and former RC/HCs, the IDP Protection Expert Group aims to enable political will and national leadership through senior-level international support for strengthened protection responses.

11. Fostering the legal and policy environment for the protection of IDPs remained a strategic focus, including through technical assistance and capacity-building of relevant government stakeholders and others, including in collaboration with the African Union on the Kampala Convention, as well as legal analysis and the management of a global database of IDP law and policy.

12. UNHCR supported governments in the development of relevant legal and policy frameworks for the protection of people displaced in the context of disasters and climate change, including Mozambique's "Policy and Strategy on Internal Displacement Management".

13. The globally recognized GP20 Plan of Action was succeeded by the GP2.0 Global IDP Platform, co-hosted by UNHCR as an informal platform for joint initiatives and sharing good practices. For more information, see the *Note on International Protection* (EC/73/SC/CRP.10).

B. Cluster coordination

14. Advocating for the rights of 113 million people, UNHCR led the global protection cluster and 29 out of 32 national protection clusters. In addition, the organization provided legal aid, psychosocial support, child protection services and response to gender-based violence for some 23 million people.

15. The multi-agency operations cell and task teams provided support in various areas, including disability inclusion, age-appropriate services, combatting trafficking, psychosocial support, climate impact, human rights, cash assistance, protection advocacy, law and policy, the humanitarian programme cycle and protection coordination.

16. The global protection cluster defined an operational footprint on COVID-19 and issued flagship reports, such as the centrality of protection review, global protection updates and the protection funding review. Operations were supported in their advocacy with authorities, agencies and humanitarian country teams while frontline perspectives were amplified globally. Demonstrating the coherence of the global protection cluster, the global protection forum brought together over 5,000 humanitarian, peace and development partners, and briefed member States.

17. UNHCR led 16 out of 31 activated shelter clusters and 19 cluster-like mechanisms and provided shelter and core relief items to over 10.6 million IDPs through 470 partners, representing 54 per cent of all assisted IDPs. Earmarked support also allowed the global shelter cluster to mobilize efforts towards climate-smart humanitarian shelter and settlement responses, including changes in specifications, recycling, energy solutions, environmental profiles and localized market-based interventions. The cluster hosted its annual meeting online, under the theme of "shelter in a changing environment" with 26 events and over 1,400 participants.

18. UNHCR led or co-led 18 of the 22 CCCM clusters, with new activations in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso and Ethiopia. More than half of the 224 CCCM partners were local. Over 12 million people were reached through the humanitarian response plan (HRP) by CCCM partners in which 107 international and 117 national cluster partners participated.

C. Strategic partnerships

19. Within the IASC, UNHCR has co-led the sub-group on localization with the Somalia NGO Consortium and achieved expanded IASC membership for NGOs.

20. UNHCR has increased its engagement with regional multilateral development banks to ensure that forced displacement situations are reflected in their policy and programme development. In Mozambique, UNHCR is working with the African Development Bank on IDP projects related to agricultural production and electricity. Together with the World Bank, UNHCR is pursuing opportunities to bolster strategic interventions in different situations, including Afghanistan, Cameroon, Central Sahel, and the Sudan/South Sudan situation, with socioeconomic data and analysis.

21. A joint global initiative between UNHCR and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which aims to strengthen cooperation on matters related to internal displacement, is currently under preparation. The two organizations also organized a joint side event on IDP solutions at the European Humanitarian Forum in March 2022, and in the Syrian Arab Republic, the reintegration technical working group is co-chaired by UNDP and UNHCR. Together with UNDP, UNHCR is promoting the application of development financing in areas affected by internal displacement. A roundtable forum with bilateral donors, international financing institutions, multi-lateral development banks, and other stakeholders is being planned for the near future. UNHCR is also leading efforts to strengthen private sector engagement, building on our experience of the refugee context. With IOM, a joint task team is under development, which will focus on how to better coordinate support to resident coordinators for IDP solutions.

22. Recognizing the importance of solutions and of practical ways to address the humanitarian, peace and development nexus, UNHCR sought to prioritize efforts to promote IDP self-reliance and livelihood access. To this end, support was provided for skills-building activities, the provision of start-up grants for new businesses and the reconstruction of infrastructure in Colombia, the Philippines and South Sudan.

23. The use of cash assistance was expanded to improve socioeconomic conditions and increase social cohesion, through greater financial inclusion and access to national services and livelihood opportunities. In 2021, UNHCR assisted more than 2.1 million IDPs in 27 countries with some 120 million in cash assistance. The top five countries included Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Somalia and Yemen.

24. UNHCR is a core member of the steering group on internal displacement solutions, tasked with enhancing the “delivering as one” United Nations approach both at global and country levels. In this regard, UNHCR has proactively supported Resident Coordinators in their leadership, including through protection and solutions analysis. An institutional plan for the Secretary-General’s action agenda on internal displacement is currently under development. UNHCR has also directly supported the five regional consultations on the action agenda, including a session at the extraordinary African Union Humanitarian Summit.

D. Programming for internally displaced persons

25. UNHCR’s results-based management system underwent a significant transformation in 2021 to enable more integrated and equitable programming. The new approach further facilitates the area-based programming by focusing on impact and outcomes across all population groups.

26. UNHCR has undertaken significant reforms to be better equipped to help meet the sustainable development goals. Central to this transformation is COMPASS, UNHCR’s results-based management approach. All UNHCR operations have finalized their 2022 strategies with the new COMPASS approach, using the new global results framework.

27. The IDP Principal Advisor continues to undertake a systematic series of consultations with bureau and field staff to help identify challenges and remedial measures. A consistent IDP programming approach is being developed to help UNHCR provide priority interventions in country operations, ensuring that the IASC commitments as ‘providers of last resort’ and ‘port of first call’ are predictably delivered.

E. Data and information management

28. In 2019 the World Bank and UNHCR established the Joint Data Centre on forced displacement (JDC). The JDC aims to enhance the ability of stakeholders, including governments, international organizations and NGOs, to make timely, well-informed and evidence-based decisions. With a focus on socioeconomic data, the JDC works with partners to enhance the collection, analysis and sharing of quality data on forced displacement in line with international standards. The JDC supports data collection and analysis of the socioeconomic situation of IDPs in seven countries: Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Honduras, Iraq, Somalia and Yemen. Data is made available for use with briefs and reports publicly disseminated.

29. UNHCR also contributes to IDP-related data collection and analysis efforts, through its collaboration with the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), the Joint IDP Profiling Service and IOM, as well as by co-leading the Expert Group on Refugee, IDP and Statelessness Statistics (EGRISS). EGRISS is developing IDP statistical standards and supports national statistical office capacity-building. The JDC supports the EGRISS financially and with technical expertise.

F. Workforce management

30. To further support the development of the skills of UNHCR’s workforce, efforts were undertaken to enhance their knowledge on IDP situations and operations. An online module for managing IDP operations was launched, with two additional learning modules, one on durable solutions for IDPs and another on IDP law and policy, slated for release. Programmes include inter-agency coordination in emergencies, introduction to camp-coordination and camp management, “more than a roof” [shelter programme](#) and the IDP protection learning programme. Several of these are open to partner agencies.

G. Budgetary evolution

31. Over five budgetary years, from 2017 to 2021, the pillar 4 budget increased by 24 per cent, from \$1.2 billion to more than \$1.4 billion. Expenditures also markedly increased by 42 per cent and IDP expenditure, as a percentage of overall organizational expenditure, increased for the fifth consecutive year. Not included in these calculations were major costs common to the larger UNHCR response in country, such as management, staffing and operational presence, as these captured in other pillars.