

90TH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE | 1 – 3 JULY 2024

Regional Activities and Global Programmes

Principal Advisor, Axel Bisschop – Presentation on UNHCR Engagement with IDPs

Madame Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to be here today, to present UNHCRs engagement with internally displaced persons.

We have seen significant advances and achievements on our IDP engagement over the past years. However, since my predecessor stood before you last year, the total number of IDPs has continued to increase.

At the end of 2023, an estimated 63 million people remained internally displaced due to conflict or violence.

With 9.1 million IDPs reported in Sudan it is the country with the largest displaced population in the world. This is followed by Syria with 7.2 million, Colombia 6.9 million and the DRC 6.7 million.

If we include disaster displaced, the total IDP figure increases to an estimated 76 million globally.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNHCR recognizes the primary responsibility of States towards protection and solutions for internally displaced.

Together with the UN and partners, we play a supporting role.

Throughout this year, we have seen increased visibility on internal displacement issues and IDPs featuring higher up on the agendas across the international community.

Several recent initiatives have highlighted that humanitarian responses to internal displacement require further improvement in our coordination and predictability.

At the heart of the recent Inter-Agency Standing Committee Review and ongoing Emergency Relief Coordinator's Flagship Initiative, is the need to systematically place IDPs at the center of the humanitarian action, in coordination with national actors and through a protection centered response.

Similarly, towards achieving long-term solutions for IDPs, efforts under the UN Secretary-General's Action Agenda seek to achieve nationally owned solutions.

To support this, UNHCR continues to work with States to develop relevant legal and public policy frameworks on internal displacement, and local approaches to solutions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNHCR has also sought to review its way of working – looking at what we can further strengthen, and how to better prioritize.

While UNHCRs IDP Policy sets the foundation for our engagement across Operations, Bureaus, and HQ. UNHCRs recent Independent Evaluation on our IDP response has steered us towards refining our positioning, with recommendations central to protection and solutions.

In addition, and guided by the High Commissioners Strategic Directions, we are finalizing our 5 Year Strategic Plan on IDP engagement which sets out UNHCR's global roadmap for predictable action.

This Plan offers guidance and clarity around UNHCR's role in different operating contexts. It also provides technical guidance on prioritization.

IDP-led action and accountability to affected populations are core aspects of this Plan.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

UNHCR also recognizes that we are not alone in our efforts towards ensuring protection and achieving solutions for IDPs.

Reaffirming our commitment under the Secretary General's Action Agenda, UNHCR commits to support Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators and strengthened partnerships.

Building on our protection expertise, we have developed a Protection Risk Assessment Tool which seeks to provide evidence-based guidance to Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators as well as partners to ensure protection informed solutions.

To strengthen our predictability, our coordination and contribution through our leadership within the three Clusters, Protection, CCCM and Shelter remains paramount.

Directly informed by the recommendations of the IASC Review, the Cluster leads are developing their multi-year strategies in consultation with cluster partners.

The Global Protection Cluster recently held discussions to strengthen the overall protection responses in operations including localization, advocacy, and transition.

In the end 2023, 40% of IDPs remain in sites. The CCCM Clusters continued to respond through a conflict sensitive approach, exploring alternatives to camps and supporting solutions from the start.

Our Shelter Cluster aims to promote integrated housing approaches to preparedness and response, while advocating for recovery and solutions.

As example, the Shelter Cluster in Ukraine, has drafted a position paper to strengthen linkages between humanitarian and durable housing solutions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To successfully implement these initiatives, the quality of data to inform decision-making is crucial.

This includes socio-economic data and understanding the intentions of displaced populations.

Capitalizing on our long-standing experience, UNHCR will continue to strengthen the evidence base through its partnership with the World Bank, Joint Data Center, the Joint IDP Profiling Service as well as other partners.

As a part of strengthening nationally owned data, the work of EGRISS and the implementation of the International Recommendations on IDP Statistics remains a priority.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Moving forward, collectively, we need to build on what we have seen works on the ground. We must amplify success and build on nationally owned actions to support the humanitarian, development, and peace nexus.

Success is not just measured in numbers – solutions should allow IDPs to participate as rights holders in all aspects of life towards building their futures.

I thank you.