



# TURNING THE TIDE ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT:

A development  
approach to solutions



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# FOREWORD

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Our world is facing a global crisis of internal displacement. Over 59 million people remained forcibly displaced within their own countries at the end of 2021 due to conflict, violence, disasters, and climate change – an all-time high. That was before the war in Ukraine, where 6.5 million people are now estimated to be internally displaced.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) can live for years without adequate access to basic services, social protection, and decent work, unable to exercise their full rights as citizens and be agents of progress for their communities. The marginalization of IDPs hinders long-term peace, stability, and recovery, and constitutes a major obstacle to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This new report, produced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with the collaboration of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), argues that in tandem with critical humanitarian assistance, there is a need to place a renewed emphasis on development as the only way to provide sustainable solutions to internal displacement and build pathways towards peace and stability. This is in line with the recommendations issued by the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel Report on Internal Displacement and a key tenet of the UN Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement.

The report calls for countries to take political, social, and economic measures to ensure that IDPs can exercise their full rights as citizens, including in political processes. This renewed social contract should ensure the safety of IDPs as well as their access to healthcare, education, decent jobs, and social protection. Restoring the rule of law, improving security and justice, and guaranteeing the housing, land, and property rights of IDPs are also critical. It highlights how socio-economic integration and recovery measures should be tailored to vulnerable groups, including women and girls, ethnic or religious minorities, and persons with disabilities. Finally, the report provides recommendations for better data and analytics to inform decision-making and measure progress made towards solutions.

We call for countries to champion the cause of IDPs and for international partners to support such efforts. That solidarity involves co-investing in the tried-and-trusted international architecture that countries depend on to emerge from conflict and crisis. Just as no one is immune to forced displacement, no one can solve it alone.

**Achim Steiner, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Internal displacement is a major challenge to sustainable development. By the end of the 2021, more than 59 million people remained displaced in their own countries – the highest ever global figure and more than double the number recorded 10 years ago.<sup>1</sup>

Internal displacement, conflict, violence, disasters, climate change and economic crises are resulting in historical reversals in human development, with the poorest and most vulnerable hit the hardest. The impacts go beyond IDPs and the communities that host them. Internal displacement can affect states, resulting in immediate global costs and losses estimated to be over US\$21 billion per year.<sup>2</sup>

For years, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and parts of the Americas have been the regions most affected by internal displacement linked with conflicts and violence.<sup>3</sup> With the ongoing war in Ukraine and the unfolding large-scale internal displacement, now Europe is also heavily affected. Disaster-related internal displacement is even more widespread, with new displacements recorded in over 130 countries and territories in 2021.<sup>4</sup> Countries in Asia and the Pacific region show the highest numbers, but every country is at risk. According to the World Bank, without concrete action, by 2050, climate change could force more than 216 million people to move within their own countries.<sup>5</sup>

While new internal displacements are recorded every year around the globe, some of the people uprooted years or even decades ago still suffer the consequences of their displacement, with second and even third generations of children having been born into displacement. Internal displacement also has fundamental consequences for areas where IDPs have been displaced from or seek refuge in, and for the state as whole.<sup>6</sup> Without adequate support and integration, social fabrics can be disrupted, instability increased and inequalities widened. Many affected countries will not be able to reach their SDGs – including the critical goals on poverty, education, peaceful societies and gender equality – without fully addressing internal displacement.

The 2021 UN Secretary-General's HLP Report on Internal Displacement called for a global imperative to work towards solutions for all IDPs as a fundamental development issue with a

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1 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2022*, May 2022.

2 Ibid.

3 IDMC, "Global Internal Displacement Database". Available at <https://www.internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data> (accessed 25 October 2022).

4 Ibid.

5 World Bank, *Groundswell Report Part 2: Acting on Internal Climate Migration*, September 2021.

6 "Displacement-affected communities" include anyone living in an area where internal displacement has taken place, and may include IDPs, host community members, refugees, returnees, ex-combatants or others whose living conditions are affected by the presence of IDPs. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and School of Oriental Studies (SOAS), University of London, *Towards Development Solutions to Internal Displacement: A Political Economy Approach*, June 2021.

stronger emphasis on nationally owned action.<sup>7</sup> This recognizes that contrary to those forcibly displaced people who cross international borders (refugees and asylum seekers), IDPs are citizens and/or residents in their own countries and are entitled to the same rights as their fellow citizens. The follow-up 2022 UN Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement called for stepped up, earlier and more predictable engagement of development actors to support national and local governments in scaling up their work to bring about solutions.<sup>8</sup>

The call for development approaches to prevent, address and enable solutions to protracted internal displacement is not a new one. By 2016, the UN had recognized the need to address growing internal displacement as a fundamental development challenge.<sup>9</sup> There have been some shifts in the pendulum in working towards solutions to internal displacement as a development challenge among governments and international humanitarian, development and peace organizations, but not at the scale and predictability required.<sup>10</sup>

This report considers the interdependence between solutions to internal displacement and sustainable development progress. It conceptualizes what the end of displacement looks like in human development terms by focusing on people, their opportunities and choices. It proposes new ways to address the consequences of internal displacement through a development approach. Based on lessons learned and in line with wider human development frameworks, the report suggests five key pathways to development solutions, including strengthening governance institutions, boosting socio-economic integration through access to jobs and services, restoring security, enhancing participation and building social cohesion. By investing in development solutions, governments with support of national stakeholders and development partners will help IDPs overcome the consequences of their displacement and foster their contribution to economies and societies, while delivering progress on key SDGs.

This report is UNDP's contribution on how to bring about a more development approach to solutions. We hope it creates the space for a broader coalition of partners to engage with governments and national actors to better address the consequences of internal displacement. However, to do this, we need much more and better data and analysis on the impacts of internal displacement on development and to work together to better understand how we can support governments and national stakeholders to monitor progress towards development solutions.

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7 United Nations (UN), *Shining a Light on Internal Displacement: A Vision for the Future*, Report of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, September 2021.

8 UN, *The United Nations Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement: Follow-Up to the Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement*, June 2022.

9 UN General Assembly, *One humanity: shared responsibility*, Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit, February 2016. See also UN Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Breaking the Impasse: Reducing Protracted Internal Displacement as a Collective Outcome*, OCHA Policy and Studies Series, June 2017.

10 See Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "Social protection for the forcibly displaced in low- and middle-income countries: A pathway for inclusion", *OECD Policy Papers*, No. 43, OECD Publishing Papers. Paris, July 2022.

Despite the scale of protracted internal displacement, national actors still do not have enough timely data on the overall numbers and evidence of its development impact on individuals, communities and states. In collaboration with IDMC, the report makes the case for a concerted research and evidence agenda in support of the fundamental shift in approach, working methods and institutional arrangements across national and international actors.

### Key recommendations

Development partners should promote nationally owned and locally led solutions to internal displacement and prioritize investments in development solutions. The report recommendations are thus based on five key pathways involving national and local governments in displacement-affected countries and communities:

1. Guaranteeing IDPs' access to full rights as citizens and residents of their own countries and incorporating internal displacement into national and local development plans.
2. Increasing gender-responsive measures to foster socio-economic integration and provide IDPs and wider displacement-affected communities' access to health, education, livelihoods, decent jobs, and social protection among others.
3. Ensuring the safety of IDPs and communities by guaranteeing the rule of law, improving security and access to justice, and ensuring peace processes are inclusive.
4. Enhancing the civil and political participation of IDPs through access to legal and civil documentation, greater representation in local governance structures, and increased participation in electoral processes.
5. Reinforcing social cohesion by ensuring non-discriminatory access to services, restoring housing, land and property, and promoting dialogue and peaceful coexistence between IDPs and host communities.

# 1

# THE INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT CHALLENGE

The link with sustainable  
development, peace and security



Addressing internal displacement requires understanding its linkages with sustainable development, peace and security. Many IDPs remain trapped for years – even decades – in protracted displacement. Leaving IDPs marginalized is not only an economic and humanitarian challenge, but it can also become an obstacle to long-term peace, stability, recovery and reconstruction in post-crisis countries, and constitutes a major obstacle to meeting the SDGs.

## Internal displacement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development and its 17 universal and interrelated SDGs, the international community set an ambitious framework for human development. Fundamental for effective and inclusive SDG implementation is the overarching commitment to “leave no one behind” and significantly improve the well-being and living conditions of the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalized groups in societies, including those at risk of violence and discrimination. Figure 1 provides an overview of the SDGs and common dynamics and consequences of internal displacement on individuals, communities and states.

**FIGURE 1**  
The SDGs and internal displacement



Source: UN Sustainable Development Goals

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) noted in September 2022 that the scale and severity of today's multiple crises are putting the achievement of the 2030 Agenda at risk at its halfway point.<sup>11</sup> Fragility, defined as the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks, increased worldwide in 2021 and reached a 10-year high in extreme fragile contexts.

Major trends in fragile contexts are violence, conflict, disaster events, inequality, food insecurity and forced displacement. Fragile contexts generate the vast majority of the world's refugees and IDPs. OECD data found that in 2022 fragile contexts also host 80 percent of all IDPs.<sup>12</sup> This compares to global data of 24 percent of the world's population living in fragile contexts in 2022. Displacement is both a cause and outcome of fragility.

No fragile context is on track to achieve SDGs related to hunger, health and gender equality, for example. This is contrasted with the rest of the world where progress is accelerating or on track to achieve 13 of the 17 SDGs by 2030, according to the OCED.<sup>13</sup>

### **What happens when development is missing? A deeper dive into Sudan's protracted internally displacement**

In Sudan, 3.2 million people remained internally displaced at the end of 2021, often several times over, due to multiple reasons including conflict and disasters.<sup>14</sup> It is estimated that 56 percent of Sudan's IDPs have been displaced for over 10 years.<sup>15</sup> Many continue to live in overcrowded shelters with no access to water, sanitation or other essential services. The displacement process itself has created massive societal changes with children born or growing up in displacement. They tend to be disconnected from the lives of their families and communities, which often are linked to rural production such as agriculture, trade and livestock. Limited investment, lack of development and decades of conflict have resulted in weak education, health and other essential services and infrastructure across the country, with huge disparities between rural and urban areas. Security remains a critical concern, preventing actors from scaling up responses and making the country too unstable for IDPs to return safely to their homes.

11 OECD, *States of Fragility 2022*, (Paris; OECD Publishing, Paris 2022).

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2022*, May 2022.

15 OCHA, "Sudan Humanitarian Update", May 2022.

## What does internal displacement cost?

Internal displacement can have a significant impact on social, urban and environmental services, and the arrival of IDPs in host areas can pose an institutional capacity constraint at both national and local levels. The cost of responding to internal displacement can place a significant burden on overstretched humanitarian resources and fragile national economies, threatening to slow down or even reverse progress on sustainable development.

The direct impact of internal displacement globally was estimated at over \$21.5 billion in 2021.<sup>16</sup> The figure represents the financial cost of providing every IDP with housing, education, health and security, and accounts for their loss of income for one year of displacement.

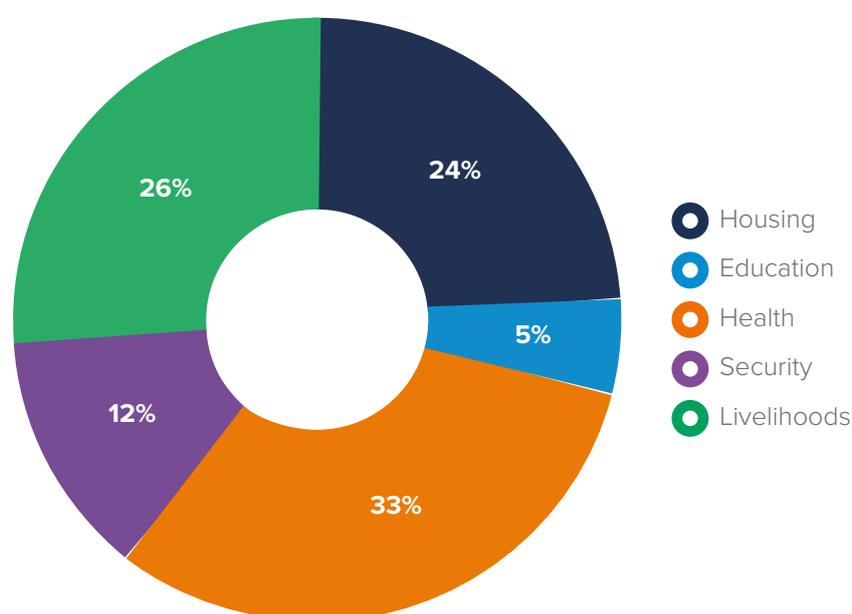
It is based on information from the World Bank and humanitarian needs overviews and humanitarian response plans published by the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The figure only considers the cost of covering IDPs' basic needs and immediate losses. It does not account for investments made by governments or development actors to address the longer-term consequences of internal displacement.

It does not include either the economic impacts of displacement on communities of origin or destination. The communities often incur additional expenses when hosting IDPs in their homes, or face rises in prices or rents, as well as increased competition for services, resources and earning opportunities. The figure does not include the cost of helping IDPs who have returned, many of whom still require support. Globally, the average cost per IDP for one year of displacement was about \$360 in 2021 but ranged from \$90 in Colombia to about \$710 in Libya.

The highest costs were linked to providing IDPs with health care, food and nutrition (see Figure 2). The COVID-19 pandemic placed an additional burden on already stretched resources.

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<sup>16</sup> IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2022*, May 2022.

**FIGURE 2****The financial burden of internal displacement in 2021 by dimension for 18 countries analysed<sup>17</sup>**

**Source:** IDMC, Global Report on Internal Displacement 2022

Variations in the cost of displacement depend on countries and levels of need. In Ethiopia, ongoing instability, below-average crop production, a rise in food prices and disruptions to essential supply chains fuelled food insecurity and malnutrition amongst IDPs.<sup>18</sup> In Libya, ongoing loss of income represents over a quarter of the overall financial impact of internal displacement.<sup>19</sup> The economic slowdown of the past couple of years has affected everyone, but IDPs tend to be worse off as displacement often prevents them from maintaining economic self-reliance.

Securing a new home is another priority for most displaced people. The cost of providing shelter, non-food items and water, sanitation and hygiene represents a quarter of the total financial impact of internal displacement. Despite the need for permanent housing, IDPs often remain in transitional shelters for extended periods of time. In Somalia, for example, humanitarian partners did not provide durable shelter support to both new and protracted IDPs in 2021 due to the initial cost of such interventions and the potential tensions that could arise due to people in the host communities living in comparatively sub-standard shelters.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Countries analysed were Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Ukraine.

<sup>18</sup> OCHA, "Ethiopia Humanitarian Response Plan 2021 Mid-Year Review", October 2021; OCHA, "Revision of the Northern Ethiopia Response Plan – May to December 2021", October 2021.

<sup>19</sup> OCHA, "Libya: Humanitarian Needs Overview 2021", December 2020; OCHA, "Libya: Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020", January 2020.

<sup>20</sup> OCHA, "Somalia: Humanitarian Response Plan 2021", February 2021.

In large-scale, protracted displacement crises, the financial impacts can amount to a sizeable proportion of GDP. More than a decade of conflict in Syria left 6.6 million people internally displaced at the end of 2021. The cost of displacement in Syria was estimated over \$3 billion for 2021 alone, equivalent to about 15 percent of the country's GDP. The cost was also high in Afghanistan, where conflict and natural disasters left about 5.7 million people displaced at the end of 2021, at a cost of about \$1.7 billion, or nearly 9 percent of the country's GDP. Trends in cost of displacement over time and impact on GDP depend on the individual displacement context – there can be higher costs at the beginning of a displacement crisis as infrastructure and services need to be set up from scratch. At the same time, when displacement endures, some impacts become more severe and require more investment. Such figures highlight the enormous implications displacement can have on the economic development and financial stability of affected countries.

Impacts do not stop at the individual level. In the case of large-scale displacement, the development and sustainability of host areas' environment, resources and infrastructure can be jeopardized (SDG 9, 11, 13, 14, 15). Displacement to cities is a widespread phenomenon that requires the active intervention of municipal authorities to avoid future crises.<sup>21</sup> By 2017, more than half of all IDPs lived in or near cities, often settling in peripheral, unhealthy and hazard-prone informal settlements where they may also be subject to violence and crime.<sup>22</sup>

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21 IDMC, *Research agenda and call for partners*, Thematic Series – Unsettled: Urban displacement in the 21st century, February 2018.

22 World Bank, *Forcibly Displaced: Towards a Development Approach Supporting Refugees, the Internally Displaced, and Their Hosts* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2017).

## Positive development outcomes for IDPs: What does progress look like?

With adequate planning and support to IDPs and hosts, not only can the negative consequences of internal displacement be mitigated and eventually resolved, but internal displacement can be a window of opportunity to advance socio-economic development and address broader development themes, including urbanization and climate change.

The sons of pastoralists displaced by drought in rural Somalia, for instance, had better access to school in Mogadishu where they found refuge. 29 percent of them used to go to school before displacement, compared to 41 percent after displacement.<sup>23</sup>

Host communities can also benefit from the arrival of new neighbours, consumers and workers. In Gode, Ethiopia, the arrival of people displaced by drought led to an expansion of the city and an increase in local business activity.<sup>24</sup>

In Pakistan, displacement was followed by improved gender relations, reduced domestic violence and positive change as more girls went to school and more women were able to work.<sup>25</sup> Displacement disrupts gender roles and can provide a window of opportunity for improving gender equality, although it can also reinforce more unequal or traditional gender norms. In Pakistan, the former was the case as a follow-up study by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) found that these changes persisted once the IDPs were able to return to their area of origin.<sup>26</sup>

When response to a displacement crisis brings sufficient funding, the opportunity can be seized on to strengthen social protection systems. The Kenya Hunger Safety Net programme, set up to respond to the impacts of drought and reduce the risk of displacement, led to the creation of a registry of vulnerable households that can now be used by government, humanitarian and development partners for targeting and delivering cash-based programmes.<sup>27</sup>

Including other affected populations beyond IDPs in responses and solutions to internal displacement is a valuable approach. In Somalia, the Danwadaag consortium project sought to relocate IDPs to a new settlement in Baidoa where community infrastructure was built, jobs were created, and the local economy was supported for the benefit of all.<sup>28</sup>

23 IDMC, *Measuring the Costs of Internal Displacement on IDPs and Hosts: Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia*, Thematic Series – The ripple effects: economic impacts of internal displacement, January 2020.

24 IDMC, *Impacts of displacement: Drought displacement in Gode Woreda*, Ethiopia, October 2021.

25 Overseas Development Institute (ODI), *The impact of displacement on gender roles and relations: the case of IDPs from FATA, Pakistan*, March 2019.

26 ODI, *Changing gender relations on return from displacement to the newly merged districts of Pakistan*, October 2022.

27 Oxford Policy Management, *Evaluation of the Kenya Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSPN)*, March 2018; Alice Obrecht, *Adapting According to Plan: Early action and adaptive drought response in Kenya*, ALNAP County Study, 2019.

28 Danwadagg Durable Solutions Consortium, *Danwadaag Durable Solutions Consortium Local (Re)integration Assessment – LORA 3 Endline Report Somalia*, 2022. Available at <https://regionaldss.org/danwadaag/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Danwadaag-Consortium-LORA-Endline-Report.pdf>.

In the north-east of Nigeria, communities that hosted large numbers of IDPs benefited from improved health care through the expansion of hospital facilities and personnel thanks to the intervention of the Government and its international partners.<sup>29</sup>

## Backsliding on progress: Negative development outcomes for IDPs

When it comes to understanding the developmental impact of internal displacement, we are just beginning to scratch the surface. We need much better data and analytics on the development impact of internal displacement on individuals, wider displacement-affected communities, region and on the state as whole

An analysis by UNDP of IDMC data from a survey across eight internal displacement contexts can provide some insights into the development outcomes for IDPs in terms of decent work, education and health. Between January 2021 and January 2022, IDMC used a household survey tool to collect quantitative information on a sample of 2,653 internally displaced and host community women and men in eight countries: Colombia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Nepal, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Somalia and Vanuatu.<sup>30</sup> While that data is not nationally representative, it can provide insights and indications to take the place of often unavailable national or global estimates of the socio-economic consequences of internal displacement.

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29 Federal Republic of Nigeria, National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons.

30 In each case study location, IDMC identified people who had been displaced from the same area (city, region or province) for the same reason (conflict, floods, drought...) and within a pre-determined timeframe. This was to ensure that the sample included people who had been displaced by the same event (specific monsoon floods or a particular earthquake, for instance) and had been living in displacement for approximately the same amount of time. For hosts, the sample was selected to ensure that all respondents were living in the area before IDPs arrived and were aware of the arrival of IDPs, so that they could compare the situation before and after. IDMC's daily monitoring of internal displacement stock and flows helped to identify locations where displaced people had found refuge. In each of these locations, the survey team then selected random sampling points using cartographic mapping. From each sampling point, interviewers approached different houses asking filtering questions to ensure the inhabitants matched the sample's criteria. If they did, they then asked to speak to the person most knowledgeable about household expenditure to interview them. Sample size was generally 150 IDPs and 150 hosts in each location, with a 50/50 split (+10%) between men and women.

## Analysing socio-economic impact of internal displacement through microeconomic lenses

UNDP conducted a micro-econometric analysis of data collected by IDMC from 2,653 people from different areas (city, region or province), with different reasons for displacement (such as conflict, floods and drought) and different lengths of time since their displacement in a pre-determined timeframe.<sup>31</sup>

### Scenario one: Probability of employment

In terms of the probability of being employed, a micro-econometric analysis was conducted for a 40-year-old internally displaced woman, with secondary education or above, who has two children and lives in a household where no one is disabled and does not receive assistance.

The result shows that this representative internally displaced woman has only a 58 percent chance of being employed in comparison to the 77 percent probability a host woman with the same characteristics has of being employed. A 19-percentage point difference for women in the same country with the only difference being displacement experience is a significant gap.

### Scenario two: Gendered impacts

To look at the gender impact differences, the probability was estimated changing only the gender and keeping everything else the same as in scenario one.

The results show that even within IDPs, there is a 14 percent difference in the probability of being employed between men and women (an internally displaced man has a 72 percent chance of being employed relative to 58 percent for an internally displaced woman).

Between IDP and host community males, there is a 15 percent difference, with a host man having an 87 percent probability of being employed.

### Scenario three: The role of education

Investigating the role of education, if the internally displaced woman of scenario one has a primary education or below, the likelihood of being employed drops to 48 percent. This is compared to 58 percent with secondary education or above. This result highlights the even greater difficulty for IDPs with lower levels of education to join the labour market. For a host woman, the probability of being employed decreases also, from 77 to 68 percent when she has primary education or below.

<sup>31</sup> The goal was to ensure that the sample included people who had been displaced by the same event (specific monsoon floods or a particular earthquake, for instance) and had been living in displacement for approximately the same amount of time. For hosts, the sample was selected to ensure that all respondents were living in the area before IDPs arrived and were aware of the arrival of IDPs, so that they could compare the situation before and after.

**Scenario Four: Breaks in education**

An analysis of a 12-years-old internally displaced girl with one sibling whose parent has secondary education or above and receives no assistance show that she has a 55 percent chance of experiencing breaks in education following displacement compared to a 26 percent chance for a host girl with similar characteristics. This is a 29-percentage point gap between the internally displaced and host girl that can translate to persistent disparities in education, future employment and well-being.

However, it must be noted that the likelihood of school attendance of the internally displaced girl mentioned above is predicted to be 88 percent and 91 percent for the host girl with the same characteristics. Although internally displaced girls are more likely to experience breaks in education, when it comes to school attendance the difference between the internally displaced girl and the host girl is small.

**Scenario Five: Impact on health**

Internal displacement can have adverse effects on health. A 40-year-old internally displaced woman with secondary education or above, two children, no disabled household member, who receives no financial assistance and who experienced no decrease in health care access following displacement still has a 21 percent likelihood of experiencing a decline in health. A host woman with the same characteristics has a 10 percent chance of experiencing a health decline.

Instead, if the internally displaced woman reports having worse access to health care now than before displacement, she has a 52 percent chance of experiencing a decline in health outcome compared to before.

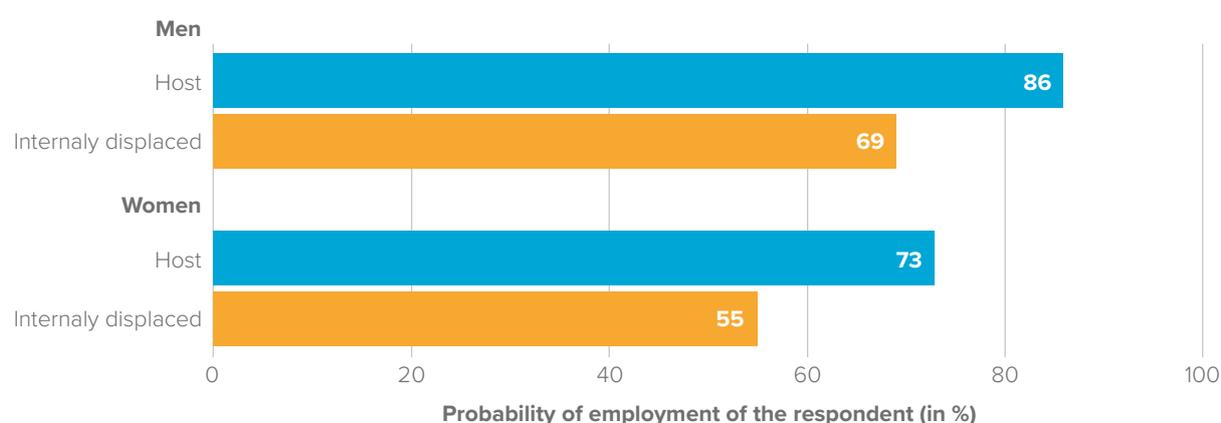
**Decent work**

IDPs' financial resources are almost systematically reduced as a result of displacement, through the loss of assets and capital, and difficulties securing a new income-generating activity in host areas (SDGs 1 and 8). Across the eight countries surveyed, displacement disrupted the professional lives of IDPs. 30 percent of them became unemployed and 24 percent were not able to earn money the same way as before. As a result, 48 percent of internally displaced households in the sample earned less money than before displacement. Female and youth-headed households were more impacted.

Significantly, being displaced for several years did not improve the likelihood of being able to find a job and earn an income, with similar levels of unemployment found amongst newly displaced people and people who had been displaced for two or more years.

The surveys allowed comparison with the surrounding host community. IDPs were 14 percent less likely to have at least one household member employed than host households.

**FIGURE 3**  
**Income evolution for IDPs and hosts**



## Health and education

Education often deteriorates as a result of internal displacement, as children see their access to school interrupted and their ability to learn affected (SDG 4).<sup>32</sup> IDMC survey data found that children of IDPs were on average 28 percent more likely than their host counterparts to have experienced breaks in schooling. This is especially critical for girls who are less likely to go back to school after displacement than boys if they experienced breaks.

The health of displaced people is also often affected (SDG 3, 2 and 6). IDMC survey data across eight forced displacement contexts found that 31 percent of IDPs felt that their health worsened following displacement. Decreased access to the health care system was a major factor in the physical health decline for both hosts and IDPs indicating the importance of sustaining and improving access to health facilities and care in communities affected by displacement. Another IDMC study in Ethiopia found that 44 percent of people displaced by drought felt that their physical

<sup>32</sup> IDMC and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), *Equitable access to quality internal displacement for internally displaced children*, July 2019.

health had worsened since they left their homes.<sup>33</sup> They mentioned poorer access to food and clean water in the under-serviced settlement where they found refuge.

## Pledges to action: Monitoring progress towards the SDGs

The interactions between internal displacement and sustainable development make it an essential issue to prioritize in nationally owned development plans and 2030 Agenda initiatives, including as part of monitoring progress towards the broader SDGs.<sup>34</sup> During the 2020 review of the SDG Indicator Framework, a specific indicator on refugees, but not for other forcibly displaced populations such as IDPs, was included in the framework.<sup>35</sup> The Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (EGRISS), established by the UN Statistical Commission, has suggested 12 priority SDG indicators that should be disaggregated by displacement status broadly linked to basic needs and living conditions, livelihoods and economic self-reliance and civil, political and legal rights.<sup>36</sup> Including internal displacement in the broader 2030 Agenda must go beyond measures of the number of IDPs to also include indicators on the characteristics of those displaced, especially age, sex and diversity, as well as measures of progress towards solutions to internal displacement.

UNDP and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have also recently finalized a joint Appraisal Tool on the Inclusion of Forcibly Displaced and Stateless Persons in National Frameworks for the Achievement of the SDGs.<sup>37</sup> Key decision makers, including government officials and local authorities, can use the integrated framework to identify systematic barriers, prioritize action, enable inclusion, mobilize resources and promote partnerships. Before finalizing The Appraisal Tool it was piloted in various countries, including in IDP contexts.

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33 IDMC, *Impacts of displacement: Drought displacement in Gode Woreda*, Ethiopia, October 2021.

34 Christelle Cazabat, "The importance of monitoring internal displacement", *Forced Migration Review*, Issue 59 (October 2018).

35 Expert Group on Refugee and Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (EGRISS), *International Recommendations on Internally Displaced Persons Statistics*, March 2020.

36 This proposal was included in a background document on data disaggregation which was prepared by UNSD for the 50<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Statistical Commission. *Data Disaggregation and SDG Indicators: Policy Priorities and Current and Future Disaggregation Plans*, 5-8 March 2019. Prepared by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. Available at: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/50th-session/documents/BG-Item3a-Data-Disaggregation-E.pdf>

37 UNDP and UN Office of the High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR), *Appraisal Tool on the Inclusion of Forcibly Displaced and Stateless Persons in National Frameworks for the Achievement of the SDGs*, October 2022. Available at <https://www.undp.org/publications/appraisal-tool-inclusion-forcibly-displaced-and-stateless-persons-national-frameworks-achievement-sdgs>

# 2

# THE EVOLVING POLICY AGENDA

In search of solutions to  
internal displacement



Internal displacement is too often seen as a temporary state during which affected people are forced out of their homes until it is safe for them to return. As a result, the solutions sought remain short-term by nature. However, evidence from many contexts shows that displacement can last for many years, as is the case for millions of people in Afghanistan, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Somalia, Syria and Yemen.

The rights of IDPs are guaranteed under international humanitarian and human rights law on an equal and non-discriminatory basis with other citizens and residents. There is no global international legal instrument dedicated to IDPs. However, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement restate the rights and guarantees under international law that are most relevant to the protection and assistance of IDPs, as well as the primary responsibility of States regarding ensuring protection for these rights. Important advances have since been made to implement the Guiding Principles at national levels, including through the development of legislation and policy on addressing internal displacement. Significantly, Members of the African Union and the International Conference of the Great Lakes prioritized the development of instruments on the protection and assistance of IDPs.

## Defining solutions that end displacement

The 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement stipulate that IDPs have the right to choose freely between three solutions to end their displacement:

- return to their former homes or habitual places of residence
- local integration in areas where they take refuge
- settlement and integration elsewhere in the country<sup>38</sup>

The three solutions put forward largely mirror those conceived for refugees in terms of voluntary repatriation/return, local integration in country of first asylum and third country resettlement. Such solutions for IDPs were also defined in terms of the location – return, local integration or (re) settlement. Achieving them is often measured by monitoring where IDPs are located. If they find their way back to their areas of origin, for instance, the conclusion is that they have “accessed solutions” and may no longer be considered displaced.

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38 OCHA, *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, June 2001.

Yet, in many cases, even when a displacement may appear to have physically ended, IDPs can continue to be affected by displacement-related consequences. A mere physical return to the place of habitual residence, long-term presence in a place of refuge, or relocation within the country does not always indicate that displacement-related concerns have been resolved.

The 2010 Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions provides further guidance following a long process on how to determine the end of internal displacement. It stresses that IDPs must be free to make a voluntary and informed choice on which settlement option they prefer, and this choice must be pursued with safety and dignity.<sup>39</sup> The Framework also unpacks what it means to achieve a durable solution and importantly states that a durable solution is achieved only when "IDPs no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement."<sup>40</sup>

This definition means that the end of displacement is determined not by the location of the displaced person in their area of origin, but rather by the disappearance of negative consequence that may have come about as a result of their displacement. The IASC Framework noted, "The specific needs and human rights concerns of IDPs do not automatically disappear when a conflict or natural disaster ends. Nor do they fade away when people initially find safety from ongoing conflict or disaster. Rather, the displaced – whether they return to their homes, settle elsewhere in the country, or try to integrate locally – usually face continuing problems, requiring support until they achieve a durable solution to their displacement."<sup>41</sup>

## Taking stock: Progress and gaps

Defining when displacement ends has concrete repercussions on the framework applied and resources allocated by governments and their partners in supporting affected people. Measuring the achievement of durable solutions as put forward in the 2010 IASC Framework requires comprehensive data on the impacts of displacement on IDPs and on their ability to secure and access their rights. This is a more complex and resource-intensive endeavour than assessing their location alone. Yet, only when IDPs can get on with their lives and overcome the challenges displacement placed on them can this really be called "the end."

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39 The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement were developed by Francis M. Deng, then Representative of the Secretary-General on internal displaced persons and presented to the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1998. E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2. See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-internally-displaced-persons/international-standards> for further information on their development and status.

40 Ibid at A-1.

41 Ibid.

The IASC Framework proposes eight criteria to help determine if durable solutions have been achieved: (i) safety and security; (ii) adequate standard of living; (iii) access to livelihoods; (iv) restoration of housing, land and property; (v) access to documentation; (vi) family reunification; (vii) participation in public affairs; (viii) access to effective remedies and justice.

In 2015, an inter-agency process was established to operationalize the IASC Framework. The work under the leadership of the Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons and coordinated by the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) resulted in a library of standardized indicators.<sup>42</sup> Additional work in the field has been supported through two durable solutions platforms – the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) covering the East and Horn of Africa and the Durable Solutions Platform (DSP) covering the Middle East.<sup>43</sup> The IDMC's severity assessments also build on the IASC Framework as well as specific support at country level in assessing socio-economic vulnerabilities in IDP data sets such as Colombia.<sup>44</sup> The International Organization on Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) has also contributed to better understanding movements and evolving needs of displaced populations in some countries through inclusion of cross-sectoral needs assessments and specific surveys.<sup>45</sup>

In 2020, the UN Statistical Commission endorsed the International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS) developed by the EGRISS, and an online Compilers' Manual that provides guidance for practitioners. It proposed the following measures of progress towards durable solutions:

1. A durable solutions progress measure designed to show the change in the share of IDPs who have overcome vulnerabilities over time, linked to the criteria of the IASC Framework.
2. A composite measure through household-level assessments designed to specify if all key displacement-related vulnerabilities have been overcome and therefore whether persons with displacement-related protection needs and vulnerabilities can be taken out of the total IDP stocks.

The IRIS recommendations are a relatively new instrument so we are yet to see how these can be operationalized by national governments. The challenge remains how to carry this out at scale and in a standardized way to allow for comparative analysis on tracking progress towards durable solutions.

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42 Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS), "Interagency Indicator Library" and "Analysis Guide", available at <https://www.jips.org/tools-and-guidance/durable-solutions-indicators-guide/>.

43 See Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS), "ReDSS Solutions Framework", available at <https://regionaldss.org/index.php/research-and-knowledge-management/solutions-framework/>; Durable Solutions Platform (DSP), "Syria Analytical Framework", available at <https://www.dsp-syria.org/syria-analytical-framework>.

44 IDMC, *Severity of Internal Displacement: 2021 Report*, November 2021.

45 International Organization on Migration (IOM), "Displacement Tracking Matrix", InfoSheet. Available at <https://dtm.iom.int>.

There is a need to generate consensus around the data concerning displacement. A shift away from internationally owned and often humanitarian-driven datasets and analysis on displacement towards development-oriented analysis (social, political and economic, etc.), together with reinforced national capacities, is central to contributing to national dialogue and shaping remedial developmental action.

## What works: Nationally owned, locally led solutions

Responses to internal displacement have often consisted of affected states relying on mostly external humanitarian actors to address the needs of IDPs and broader displacement-affected communities. Yet these needs are often linked with a lack of access to basic rights and social services that only public authorities can address in a more sustainable manner. Relying on short-term assistance without investing in longer-term solutions to internal displacement is unsustainable. This is particularly acute in situations of protracted displacement, where conditions of humanitarian crisis may have improved, but the challenge of building resilience, addressing root causes and finding longer-term solutions receives less attention.<sup>46</sup>

Investing in measures to prevent and end displacement is not only best for the people, but also economically sound and in the interest of affected countries. Out of the 46 countries analysed in IDMC Internal Displacement Index in 2021, only 13 had comprehensive national policies addressing internal displacement.<sup>47</sup> The same number did not even mention durable solutions in their national frameworks on internal displacement, focusing only on emergency assistance to IDPs. This shows that more investment is needed to support governments to comprehensively include internal displacement as part of their national development plans to prevent, address and respond to the development impacts of internal displacement on sustainable development.

## Key solution: Prevention

Projections estimate that disasters including floods, earthquakes, cyclonic winds, storm surges and tsunamis could globally displace an average of 14 million people in any given year in the future.<sup>48</sup> These developments are concerning not least because of the complex correlation between displacements related to climate change and disasters, and those prompted by conflict and

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46 UNDP and SOAS, University of London, *Towards Development Solutions to Internal Displacement: A Political Economy Approach*, June 2021. See also Gagnon, J and M Rodrigues, "Towards more sustainable solutions to forced displacement: What measures are donor countries applying to forced displacement in developing countries?", *OECD Development Policy Papers*, No. 34, OECD Publishing, Paris, December 2020

47 IDMC, *Internal Displacement Index Report*, December 2021.

48 IDMC, *Global Disaster Displacement Risk: A baseline for future work*, Thematic Report, October 2017.

violence where displacement is both a cause and an outcome. Disaster-induced displacements can increase tensions over scarce natural resources on which many local communities depend. Reducing fragility and building resilience is therefore a critical component of a preventive approach to forced displacement. Although most displacements linked with disasters take the form of pre-emptive evacuations, with displaced people able to return home after a few days, millions remain displaced for longer periods of time.

The most effective and efficient way to address internal displacement is to prevent it or limit its scale and duration. Focusing only on durable solutions and emergency response *a posteriori* is admitting failure to address the root causes of the displacement problem, whether climate- and disaster-related or induced by violence and conflict. And much can be done to try and avoid large-scale, protracted displacement. Out of 46 countries analysed in 2021, 29 had policies or strategies on internal displacement mentioning preventive measures.<sup>49</sup> Further research is required to understand the impact of such policies on addressing the root causes and drivers of displacement.

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49 IDMC, *Internal Displacement Index Report*, December 2021.

# 3

# PATHWAYS TO DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS

Building a better future for displaced people and affected communities



“National ownership, responsibility and accountability must be brought to the forefront and States must recognize IDPs and host communities as rights-holding citizens and residents of their country. There is a need to go beyond internal displacement as only a humanitarian crisis and understand that it is directly linked to broader challenges of governance, development, human rights and peace. It is also closely tied to the interconnected realities of climate change, urbanization and fragility.”<sup>50</sup>

HLP Report, September 2021.

Fundamental changes are required to the current approach in supporting solutions to end internal displacement. The solutions agenda must be nationally owned and locally led to sustainably improve the lives of displaced citizens and affected communities, help address the root causes and reduce risks in a way that contributes to sustainable human development. Internal displacement also needs to be understood within broader long-term societal processes such as urbanization, economic, social and political transformation and, increasingly, climate adaptation.

Treating internal displacement and solutions as ultimately government-owned development priorities provides an opportunity to pivot to view IDPs as citizens rather than just beneficiaries, emphasizing their ability to contribute to their economies and societies if provided the opportunity.

This report proposes a wider approach to solutions applying a human development lens that builds upon and enriches the current durable solutions principles. National and local authorities are responsible for establishing the conditions as well as providing the means for IDPs to achieve such development solutions and end their displacement. Other partners, including civil society, the private sector, and donors can further support development solutions for IDPs and wider displacement-affected communities.

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<sup>50</sup> UN, *Shining a Light on Internal Displacement: A Vision for the Future*, Report of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, September 2021, at p. ii.

### People first: Focusing on a human-centred approach

Based on consultations with over 50,000 displaced people, the HLP in 2021 identified action typically needed across five core areas to enable solutions to internal displacement: (i) safety and security risks, (ii) jobs, livelihoods and access to income and social protection systems, (iii) housing, land and property, (iv) education, and (v) basic infrastructure and services.<sup>51</sup>

This goes to the very heart of the human development approach that focuses on people, and their opportunities and choices. It is about expanding the richness of human life, rather than simply the richness of the economy in which human beings live. Income growth is seen from a development dimension, rather than as an end in itself.

“The right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair. All individuals, in particular vulnerable people, are entitled to Freedom from Fear and Freedom from Want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential.”<sup>52</sup>

UN General Assembly, 2012

The process of development – human development – should create opportunities for IDPs and the communities that host them to develop to their full potential and to have a reasonable chance of leading productive and creative lives. IDPs are not only recipients of assistance and protection (beneficiaries): they are also people with rights and agency. They are contributing members of the community who should be entitled to civic and political participation, and access to a safe and secure environment (citizens).

## A development solutions framework

In a development solutions framework, key conditions must be in place for IDPs to truly achieve an end to their displacement and become equal citizens benefiting from and contributing to national and community life. Broadly, these are: (1) renewing the social contract between displaced citizens and the state; (2) restoring human security and dignity; and (3) (re)building equity and prosperity.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> UN General Assembly A/RES/766/290, 10 September 2012.

## 1. Renewing the social contract between displaced citizens and the state

A sovereign nation is responsible for and accountable to its own population, including those who have been forced to leave their homes. A robust social contract between the state and society is built on the trust that people have in their government's ability and willingness to treat them equally and provide them with protection, services and opportunities. When a person is forced to leave their home, the social contract between the state and its citizens may be affected in different ways, usually depending on the cause(s) of displacement and the political willingness to invest in solutions as a national priority. In some situations, IDPs may no longer enjoy their full rights as citizens. They may in some cases suffer from marginalization or discrimination.

The strength or weakness of the social contract depends on political, economic, cultural and social ties, which may need to be restored or renewed in cases where IDPs no longer enjoy rights equal to those of their fellow citizens.

Renewing the social contract requires considering the political, social and economic measures needed to create an enabling legal and policy environment rooted in the longer-term integration of IDPs. It begins with states acting to resolve internal displacement as a development challenge as key to national priorities and plans. It is premised on the view that IDPs must be included in all aspects of development planning and programming to ensure that their rights as citizens are restored and respected.

## 2. Restoring human security and dignity

Affected states take varying approaches to recognizing situations of displacement within their territories, offering greater or lesser protection depending on the causes of displacement, who is displaced, where they come from and where they are settled, what competing political and economic interests and priorities exist, and whether international or local assistance is available.

States are sometimes not able to exercise effective control over an area and protect civilians from threats to their physical safety and integrity or provide them with much need support.

Human security puts the emphasis on security and stability of the people, and their social and economic environment, rather than focusing on security of the state. Framed by every person's right to live in dignity, human security is concerned with safety and security from chronic threats, such as hunger, disease, repression, or environmental risks. It also encompasses protection from sudden and destructive disruptions to the patterns of daily life, including to homes, jobs and communities.

Restoring human security and dignity is about IDPs and affected communities being free from fear. It emphasizes the protection of IDPs as citizens from chronic and sudden threats, and the safeguarding of their survival, livelihood and dignity when faced with these threats. The seven dimensions of human security include economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security.<sup>53</sup> Measuring these dimensions are centred on the IDP's and affected communities' own perceptions of fear, vulnerability and dignity.

### 3. (Re)building equity and prosperity

People from lower income groups or with lower educational levels, children, older people, women, people with disabilities and people who belong to minority groups are often at higher risk of being displaced, and then at higher risk of remaining so in the most severe conditions. This is often because of a lack of resilience to deal with shocks and overcome them.

In many cases, responses to internal displacement are designed as an exit strategy with return to locations of origin as the “preferred” durable solution by national governments and the international community alike. An overfocus on return can inhibit other potential solutions being found in inclusive community-centred approaches and comprehensive national and local socio-economic development policies aimed at building equity, poverty reduction, inclusive green growth, climate change mitigation and adaptation, among others.

Building equity and prosperity for IDPs and affected communities is about freedom from want. Targeted investments in policies and programmes aimed at increasing socio-economic equity, reducing inequalities that negatively affect IDPs and creating common prosperity for internally displaced and wider displacement-affected communities go a long way towards creating conditions required to truly end displacement. It requires a sustained, longer-term engagement strategy by national governments with affected communities, tailored according to their socio-economic profiles and capabilities. Inclusiveness should not end with IDPs. Truly sustainable and inclusive policies on internal displacement must encompass other affected communities, including host communities and people left behind in IDPs' areas of origin. The latter can be in even more dire circumstances if they were unable to flee conflict or disaster. The former can also bear the cost of internal displacement, as host communities often share their resources and homes with IDPs, as well as their facilities and labour markets.

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53 UNDP, *New threats to human security in the Anthropocene- Demanding greater solidarity*, Special Report, February 2022.

## Investing in solutions that work

Each internal displacement situation is specific and localized. Policy and operational responses should be based on the identified protection and assistance needs of IDPs, an understanding of the typologies and nature of displacement, and the wider development context.

It is therefore essential to understand the political economy of displacement, which has a strong impact on the solutions to be adopted and implemented. This is about better analysing the causes of displacement, the impacts on those who are affected, as well as the dynamics of the potential solutions. Such an approach considers how vested interests, profits and agendas are served by arrangements of power, and can also help identify entry points to galvanize political will with national and local authorities.<sup>54</sup>

This report identifies a series of key pathways to development solutions based on the tenets of a human development approach and the lessons learned from current internal displacement responses. By investing in new approaches and scaling up complementary action in an integrated manner and making internal displacement a development priority, governments can contribute to unblocking barriers, creating a booster effect, and accelerating progress towards solutions to end internal displacement.

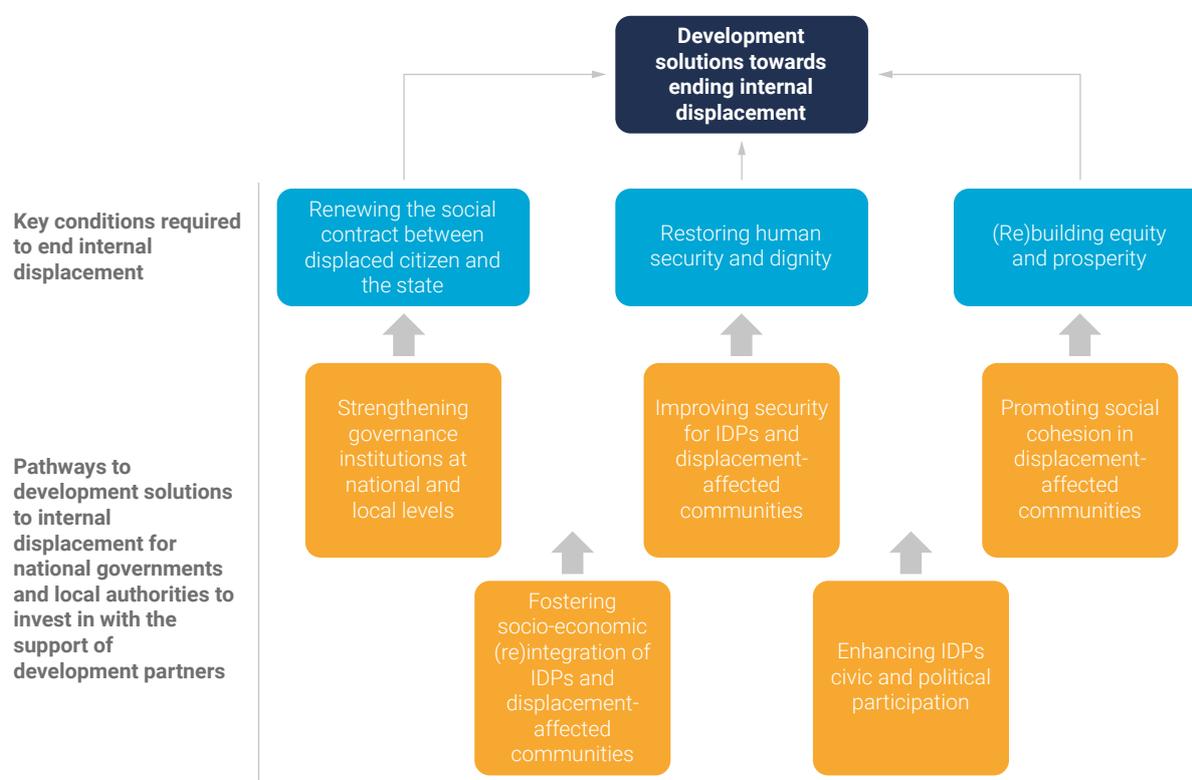
This section outlines five interlinked development solutions pathways and key areas of strategic investment and intervention for national and local authorities, with the support of development partners.

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<sup>54</sup> UNDP and SOAS, University of London, *Towards Development Solutions to Internal Displacement: A Political Economy Approach*, June 2021.

FIGURE 4

## Development solutions towards ending internal displacement



## 1. Strengthening governance institutions at national and local levels

To be sustainable, development solutions to internal displacement should be nationally owned and locally led, recognized officially in the nation's legal and policy frameworks, and grounded in national and local plans and priorities. A key development pathway begins with governments agreeing on national solutions strategies tailored to address the specific internal displacement situations and strengthening the requisite solutions governance infrastructure at national and local levels. By capacitating, reinforcing and building resilient institutions at national and local levels, this indication of political will contributes significantly to rebuilding the social contract between government and IDPs. Relevant governance investments and interventions prioritized by public authorities and other national stakeholders, with support of development partners, can include:

- Develop an official national government solutions strategy for internal displacement. A collective whole-of-government process can help foster (further) national ownership on solutions to internal displacement through outlining a national vision that can be translated into specific and relevant line ministries plans, strategies and national budgets, linking solutions to internal displacement to broader national and local development plans, including the SDG agenda.

- Use nationally owned development statistics to help national and local governments design, measure and invest in an evidence-based manner in solutions. One key to building political will is to generate consensus around the data concerning displacement and recognizing the types of solutions interventions that work to meaningfully end displacement. This represents a shift away from internationally owned and often humanitarian-driven datasets and analysis on internal displacement towards a more development-oriented analysis (social, political and economic). Reinforced national capacities are also central to contributing to national dialogue and shaping remedial developmental action towards solutions.
- Invest in and support for the reinforcement of transparent and accountable sub-national solutions governance structures, including local and urban governance institutions and solutions structures. Resilient local institutions are essential to find solutions that can enhance trust between IDPs, broader displacement-affected communities and local authorities, while creating an enabling environment that ensures that IDPs can equitably access services and solutions are sustainable.
- Build and reinforce national capacities and nationally owned approaches to conflict prevention, disaster risk reduction and climate-change resilience to mitigate internal displacement. Applying a preventive approach, the role of national and local institutions is key in identifying, owning, and remedying risk factors that can cause displacement in the first place and/or build preparedness capacity to mitigate the impact of (inevitable) displacement in the short-, medium- and long-term.
- Strengthen the solutions knowledge and expertise that national and local governments require to tap into existing development funding and financing mechanisms needed for the implementation of their plans and strategies. The 2021 HLP report on internal displacement and subsequent 2022 Secretary-General's Action Agenda both recognize that development financing is a key factor in the fundamental change needed towards more development-oriented and nationally owned solutions to internal displacement. This recognizes the ongoing reality of humanitarian funding being one of the main resources for solutions.

## **2. Fostering socio-economic (re)integration of IDPs and displacement-affected communities**

Integration is an important feature of solutions to internal displacement, both in terms of local integration in places where IDPs seek refuge or other areas of the country where they finally settle, and reintegration of returnees to their areas of origin. Socio-economic (re)integration of IDPs and wider displacement-affected communities can help restore a nation's development trajectory

towards equity, growth and prosperity. This begins with understanding the socio-economic impact of internal displacement on communities hosting IDPs and in their areas of origins. Making integration work requires identifying the local socio-economic needs of displaced communities, particularly on micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, value chains and on households, as well as structural economic issues such as inadequate social protection systems and weak fiscal policy that can exacerbate their situation further.

Fostering the socio-economic integration of IDPs in host communities or their reintegration in areas of origin includes a broad focus on poverty reduction and reducing inequalities through local economic development. It also requires measures to provide access to livelihoods, decent jobs, health and education, among others. It is about integrating IDPs into economies, generating jobs, supporting businesses, engaging with the private sector and ensuring that IDPs, including those returning home, can exercise their social and cultural rights. This entails a process of adaptation and acceptance that enables IDPs to contribute to the economic and social life of their host or return communities without fear of discrimination:

- Prioritize socio-economic investments and interventions that support extending appropriate social protection mechanisms to IDPs and displacement-affected communities. This includes social assistance schemes such as safety net programmes and social insurance, with a view towards graduation from assistance, but also non-contributory schemes such as pensions, social insurance schemes and unemployment funds.
- Integrate the needs and interests of IDPs and displacement-affected communities into overall plans for local and/or urban planning and development. More than half of all IDPs have already settled in urban centres.<sup>55</sup> With more widespread climate-induced displacement this trend may further increase. While IDPs do settle in capital cities, many also live in ‘secondary cities’ – regional or provincial capitals, or other urban centres. Because secondary cities are usually not the focus of attention and investment in urban development, large numbers of IDPs can strain already weak public services. Working with municipal authorities and garnering the support of the private sector through an urban development lens can stimulate political will, and support social and economic inclusion, by investing in urban infrastructure and services that meet the needs of all residents, whether displaced or hosts.
- Acknowledge and respond to the specific needs of different groups of IDPs. For example, more than half of internally displaced people are women and girls.<sup>56</sup> They experience displacement

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<sup>55</sup> World Bank, *Forcibly Displaced: Towards a Development Approach Supporting Refugees, the Internally Displaced, and Their Hosts* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2017).

<sup>56</sup> IDMC, Impact Initiatives & Plan International, *Women and Girls in internal displacement*, Thematic Series – Hidden in Plain Sight, March 2022.

differently from men and boys, and face specific challenges that must be well understood, including their vulnerability to physical and sexual violence, abuse and exploitation, kidnappings, and early and forced marriages. Special attention is also needed to ensure their economic, social and political inclusion, especially through access to civil documentation and services, training and education, livelihoods, decent jobs and social protection, care facilities, land and property rights, etc.

### 3. Improving security of IDPs and displacement-affected communities

Development solutions to internal displacement require that IDPs are and feel safe both in their displacement and wherever they finally find to rebuild a home and life. All too often, insecurity can breed continued protracted and secondary displacement, and be one of the main barriers to fully ending displacement. As a development solutions pathway, improving security of both IDPs and broader displacement-affected communities requires restoring the rule of law, improving security and access to justice, and fostering return to peace:

- Identify, support and implement rule-of-law systems, while strengthening efforts at the decentralized level to address access to justice, remedy and dispute resolution. Effective solutions to internal displacement can only occur if IDPs have full access to their rights and restitution. This includes building capacity with the ministries of justice, police forces and lawyers to understand and respond to the presence and specific needs of IDPs, as well as restoring essential infrastructure to help these institutions function.
- Ensure that any wider peace processes address internal displacement and IDPs' voices and promote participation. This can include foreseeing and supporting tailored transitional justice invitations to promote recovery of widespread rights violations.

## Role of stabilization in Iraq for sustainable return

National policies on internal displacement or other related frameworks on conflict resolution or disaster management often set the stage for the type of longer-term support IDPs can hope to receive. Some good practice exists in this regard. For example, stabilization interventions are timebound, localized, integrated, civilian programmes of activities with the primary purpose of extending state presence by establishing minimum security conditions, essential infrastructure and services, and livelihood opportunities.

In 2015, the Government of Iraq, the Global Coalition Against Daesh, and the UN established the Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS) to carry out activities in areas affected by the conflict with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The primary objective has been to create conditions allowing for the safe and dignified return of approximately 6 million IDPs to their places of origin in territories formerly occupied by ISIS.

The FFS is active in 31 locations and has a portfolio of more than 4,800 projects. The stabilization programme has helped support the return of 4.9 million Iraqis displaced by the ISIS conflict, while helping more than 13.2 million Iraqis with better access to basic infrastructure and services like health, education, water and electricity, and millions in accessing livelihoods opportunities as a result of \$1.48 billion in investments from 30 international partners. Challenges remain, however, for 1.2 million IDPs with perceived affiliations to ISIS as well as in terms of ensuring a standard of living and social cohesion in the areas of return.

The FFS operates under the leadership of the Prime Minister's office, and in close partnership with the Global Coalition Against Daesh, which identifies key areas for activity in the country. Local initiatives are then identified in conjunction with local authorities. Following this prioritization process, rehabilitation work has begun with more than 95 percent of this work contracted through the local private sector. This process reduces costs and ensures that local companies rebuild their own cities with local labour.

Managed well, stabilization can be seen as a foundational/transitional prerequisite to re-establish the social contract, sustain peace, recovery and allow longer-term social cohesion and development solutions processes to achieve impact.

## 4. Enhancing IDPs' civic and political participation

Another impact of internal displacement can be IDPs exclusion from full participation in society, even though they are citizens. It is therefore important as a pathway to development solutions to focus on the inclusive civic and political participation of IDPs as a way to remedy and reduce inequalities:

- Develop or update the national legal framework that recognizes the full rights of IDPs as citizens of their countries, including by safeguarding their civil and political rights. Ensure that laws and regulations enable civil society from displaced communities to engage effectively with the state.
- Secure IDPs' access to legal and civil documentation, including national ID cards, birth, death and marriage certificates, which are required to claim their legal rights and access services. Include IDPs in any planned census processes to support their basic recognition before the state, but also to inform national and local planning processes.
- In the event of elections in situations of continued internal displacement, support election officials in planning and including IDPs at national and local levels. Consider any specific barriers to their participation caused by their displacement status. Incorporate measures to address or provide alternative methods to ensure that IDPs, along with other citizens, can participate, for instance by voting in an alternative location or easing documentation requirements.
- Support an inclusive and bottom-up approach to local governance that involves the participation of internally displaced and wider displacement-affected communities in local governance. Ensure a range of tailored social accountability mechanisms to increase IDP voices, and greater representation of IDPs in national and local governance. This includes fostering civil society institutions' vital role in providing information and applying pressure to governmental actors to recognize and take responsibility for supporting solutions to internal displacement.

## Nigeria and the need for broader social inclusion

In Nigeria, IDMC estimates that more than 3.3 million people were internally displaced at the end of 2021, the majority due to conflict and violence.<sup>57</sup> In north-east Nigeria, even prior to the violence and insecurity in areas affected by Boko Haram insurgents, over 70 percent of the population lived in extreme poverty with 50 percent malnutrition, 85 percent illiteracy and 60 percent unemployment. A study on human security levels between 2009 and 2016 found that internal displacement directly affected personal and community security due to increased crime rates, human trafficking, child soldier recruitments, as well as social tensions between IDPs and host communities. Higher levels of food insecurity were evident with 1 million people facing food insecurity in 2016 due to restricted movements on farmers and greater health insecurity from poor sanitation and waste management. Access to education, however, was considered as less affected with perceived greater access to schools and learning centres for children in the IDP camps.

In terms of solutions to internal displacement, IDPs perceived that the national and international responses had helped mitigate the crisis with the provision of shelter and humanitarian assistance. However, IDPs highlighted the need for a legal framework to enable solutions and provide more reliable data to reflect the scale of internal displacement, including recognition of IDP camps. The study recommends greater government investments in key sectors, such as health, education, agriculture, infrastructure and housing, to increase human security and for greater representation of the IDP community, especially in local government.

## 5. Promoting social cohesion in displacement-affected communities

Crises can undermine social cohesion and a *status quo* can build up in which inequalities that accrue to different groups of displaced populations are maintained. This can be because many IDPs lack access to documentation, services, secure housing, land and property and are excluded from some of civic and political life. Women and girls are often affected disproportionately and differently to men and boys. Minority groups may be further marginalized.<sup>58</sup> It is therefore essential to address the inequalities that feed tensions. Linked to governance, local authorities and rule-of-law institutions play a key role through supporting equitable delivery of services to

57 IDMC, "Figures Analysis 2021 – Nigeria. Displacement associated with Conflict and Violence". Available at <https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/figures-analysis-2021-nga.pdf>.

58 UNDP and SOAS, University of London, *Towards Development Solutions to Internal Displacement: A Political Economy Approach*, June 2021.

IDPs and displacement-affected communities, thus contributing to social cohesion and peaceful co-existence:

- Build and develop nationally owned data management, digital technologies and analysis capacities to ensure a better understanding of systematic inequalities and exclusion in society. This will help direct development investments and financing towards redressing these imbalances, and promote affirmative action policies, including targeted safety nets and equal opportunities for employment and livelihoods.
- Use of integrated area-based approaches as a planning and coordination tool to promote social cohesion and (re)integration of displaced populations. Area-based planning is critical to realizing more sustainable local solutions. It is characterized by a focus on needs, capacities and vulnerabilities within a geographic area rather than among a specific target group, in this case IDPs. Area-based planning should also aim to build and strengthen the local authorities' capacity to lead and coordinate the response.
- Recognize that all IDPs will not seek the same (single) solution in an area, and plan for adequate spaces for community dialogue and IDPs' voices to be heard. The active participation of IDPs and displacement-affected communities in development planning and policies is needed to encompass the concerns and challenges of all affected populations.
- Promote and invest at national and local levels in the development of inclusive and equitable land-management legal frameworks, together with policies and governance capacities. Conflicts over land and destruction of housing and property are often hallmarks of internal displacement in both conflict and climate-induced situations. Restoration of housing, land and property rights, and sustainable and equitable land-management policies are also central to development solutions.

### What does success look like? Locally focused solutions

Policies and programmes aimed at increasing socio-economic equity and reducing inequalities are important foundation to solutions to internal displacement. But they must be seen as long-term processes and tailored to specific contexts.

For example, a 2019 World Bank Group study analysed a varied set of interventions aimed at supporting IDPs across four countries.<sup>59</sup> In north-east Nigeria, to support solutions to internal displacement the study found there was a need to further prioritize security and better living conditions in host areas. In Somalia, solutions policies were suggested to focus more on human capital to prevent lifelong gaps in social and economic development. In South Sudan, solutions to displacement needed to work more on preserving human capital by strengthening food security and improving living conditions and access to education and employment opportunities for young adult IDPs. Finally, in Sudan there was a need to prioritize security in return areas, reduce gender-based vulnerabilities, and improve living conditions in host and return areas.

## Measuring progress towards development solutions

In 2010, the IASC proposed a framework to help determine when durable solutions are achieved, looking at eight criteria that can be broadly captured across measurements to do with IDPs' physical, material and legal safety. This paper proposes to build on these criteria by measuring progress towards the end of displacement through wider human development frameworks.

The UN's Human Development Index (HDI), introduced in 1990, is based on key dimensions of human development, namely life expectancy, education and income.<sup>60</sup> Household-level survey data on related topics disaggregated by displacement status could provide a broad overview of health, education and standards of living and potential outcomes for IDPs in comparison to host communities and national averages. In internal displacement-affected states, such data would support a broader impetus since 2010 on measuring actual human development based on the Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI) to account for disparities in human development across populations within the same country.<sup>61</sup>

59 World Bank Group, *Informing Durable Solutions for Internal Displacement in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan*, November 2019.

60 UNDP, *Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World*, Human Development Report 2021/2022, September 2022.

61 See UNDP, "Inequality-Adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI)", available at <https://hdr.undp.org/inequality-adjusted-human-development-index#/indicies/IHDI>.

Since 1994, there have been discussions on how to measure the concept of human security and its broad components of freedom from fear, freedom from want and freedom from indignity.<sup>62</sup> A Human Security Index (HSI) originally proposed in 2008 is based on three components and various data sets measuring economic, environmental and social fabrics.<sup>63</sup> While needing to be further developed, the use of a simplified HSI (including work in relation to a Perceived HSI) could capture broader dimensions of security from chronic threats and disruptions in daily life for IDPs.

Measuring the strength of the social contract between the state and internally displaced citizens is more challenging in purely quantitative terms. However, proxy standard indicators could be used to review the overall legal and regulatory environment for IDPs and their inclusion in national development plans and relevant sector strategies. Regular perception surveys measuring IDPs' feelings on (re)integration and trust in authorities could be another useful measure.<sup>64</sup>

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62 UNDP, *New threats to human security in the Anthropocene: Demanding greater solidarity*, Special Report, February 2022.

63 David E. Hastings, 'From Human Development to Human Security: A Prototype Human Security Index', *UNESCAP Working Paper*, WP/09/03, October 2009.

64 See the Local (Re)Integration Index (LORI) piloted in Somalia in the Danwadaag Durable Solutions Consortium. ReDSS, *Lessons Learned from the EU RE-INTEG Durable Solutions Consortia (2017 – 2020)*, October 2019.

# 4

# TOWARDS AN ACTIONABLE RESEARCH AGENDA

How better data can shape better responses



**We need a radical shift in the way internal displacement is understood and addressed. This will help achieve true development solutions that not only overcome the negative consequences of internal displacement but make way for a better future for all affected communities and ensure they are no longer left behind.**

**This report highlights gaps in current knowledge and approaches that must – and can – be bridged as a matter of urgency. This section proposes steps forward to act to build a better data and evidence base to build on and measure progress towards solutions through development approaches.**

## **Bridging knowledge gaps**

The most urgent gaps in our knowledge of internal displacement are around the scale and types of internal displacement (typologies). It is also important to better understand the main drivers of internal displacement, especially how different political, economic and social contexts might prevent (or encourage) people exposed to conflicts, violence or disasters from being forced to flee their homes. Likewise, this report demonstrates the need for more quantitative research on the impact of internal displacement on the individual, household and the displaced communities of origin and host communities' lives and futures. Many IDPs are still unrecorded and left behind by response plans and assistance mechanisms, including those who are in insecure and remote areas or in context of slow onset disasters.

Other knowledge gaps prevent authorities from assessing needs accurately and responding to them adequately. These include lack of information on IDPs' and members of affected communities' age, sex and diversity, on the challenges they face accessing basic services, security, decent housing, and livelihoods, on the number of times they have been displaced, and how long they have been displaced for. All these factors influence their need for support and must be included in governments' plans.

We have tools to assess these different pieces of information, and they can be adapted to each country's context and resources. Governments, through their national statistical offices or other entities, can generate the knowledge they need to support their population and mitigate the scale and impacts of internal displacement.

## Building on existing data with focus on gender, age and diversity

Data on internal displacement and related issues exist at the global, national and local levels. They are collected in different formats and following different methodologies depending on where, why, when and by whom they are collected. Data can feed into initial assessments of internal displacement situations that can guide preliminary action, decisions on priority investments needed, and longer-term plans for data collection, support and solutions.

Ensuring the publication of safe, anonymized, disaggregated quality data on internal displacement and its accessibility to policymakers and operational actors is a much-needed step to accelerate progress on internal displacement.

Beyond publication of statistics, efforts must be made to standardize indicators and disaggregated data collection and analysis methodologies across displacement situations and move towards more interoperable data at the global level.

An evaluation of comparable socio-economic needs of internally displaced and host communities focusing on living standards, security, and access to key services for health and education is only possible through access to microdata. Stand-alone household surveys or expansion of existing national surveys over time could be adapted to include displacement-specific questionnaire modules and explicitly stratified to identify displaced populations, host communities as well as communities of origin. This approach would be especially useful in countries experiencing long-term displacement. In this way, analysis of employment and livelihood patterns could provide a crucial developmental perspective on sustainable income generation and socio-economic integration. It is particularly important to improve data collection and analysis that differentiate the experiences and situations faced by gender, age and diversity.

## Measuring the development impact of displacement

Little information currently exists on the longer-term impacts of internal displacement on sustainable development at the economic and societal level. Data collection, analysis and research have mostly focused on getting a sense of scale and severity of the most immediate effects on IDPs, and the economic cost of protracted internal displacement.

What is presented in this report to illustrate the consequences that internal displacement can have on economic growth and on virtually all the SDGs relies heavily on proxy indicators, models and

rough estimates: enough to show that the link between the two is undeniable, but not enough to design and implement development solutions to displacement.

Far more resources must be allocated to generating knowledge on these impacts and unveiling the true effect displacement can have on entire societies' path to inclusive and sustainable development. Only then can governments and their partners address more than the tip of the iceberg. Therefore, we urgently need data related to policy and programmes around sustainable (re)integration, socio-economic opportunities and parity in living conditions between host communities, communities of origin and IDPs, to address the displacement-induced vulnerabilities and assess their effectiveness toward developmental outcomes.

## Monitoring progress towards development solutions

While criteria for measuring durable solutions have been developed, there has not been enough attention on how to measure progress or pathways to solutions, and the complex social, economic and political shifts required. While tools and data sources to some extent exist to get a sense of the number of people affected by internal displacement, of their needs and of the impacts of displacement on sustainable development, there is no mechanism in place to monitor countries' progress towards development solutions to internal displacement.

As outlined in this report, truly solving internal displacement requires more than *ad hoc* responses and temporary support, or even durable solutions for IDPs. A human development approach, in which IDPs are considered citizens-rightsholders and potential contributors to collective development rather than people in need or beneficiaries, is necessary. Such a major shift requires new monitoring frameworks to guide governments' decisions and actions, and follow-up on results.

While some tools already exist to assess these different pieces of information, and can be adapted to each country's context and resources, it is also important to develop specific indicators and analytical frameworks to ensure that governments, through their national statistical offices or other entities, can generate the knowledge they need to support their population to work towards solutions to end displacement.

UNDP is proposing to work with wider stakeholders on a new solutions composite index made up of multi-dimensional human development indicators sets relating to political, social and economic parameters including measuring IDPs level of (re)integration and participation. Building on the IASC Durable Solutions Framework and existing human development indexes including the HDI, UNDP will work with partners over the next year to develop, model and test the Solutions Index that can

monitor progress towards development solutions to internal displacement, and also evaluate the impact of such solutions on the well-being of IDPs and other displacement-affected populations.

UNDP with IDMC are committed to supporting governments in developing and implementing development solutions to internal displacement, including supporting nationally owned data systems. With their respective expertise on governance and internal displacement, data collection, analysis, research, and in-country support to governments, they will provide tailored guidance and recommendations to affected countries.



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