



ReDSS Agenda for Humanity and SDGs

Leaving no one behind: a commitment to address forced displacement

Displacement in Eastern Africa is predominantly of a protracted nature. At the end of February 2016, there were 11.7 million people displaced in the region, mostly in Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia (UNHCR), and at least half are children. Of the total displaced population having fled their homes mainly due to conflict, violence and human right violations, 3.2 million are refugees while 8.5 million are IDPs. Although most have been displaced for several years or even decades, few have durable solutions prospects such as returning to their home, being integrated into their host communities or settle elsewhere.

New approaches are needed for effective humanitarian-development coordination to find solutions to protracted displacement and give the millions of displaced persons a chance of a better life with dignity and self-reliance. This change requires political resolve, long-term investments and a multi-sectorial rights and needs based programming approach to work towards prevention and solutions to reduce displacement levels in the region.

'Leaving no one behind' is a core responsibility of the UNSG's Agenda for Humanity and commitments are expected to be made at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016. It recognizes the importance of reducing long-term vulnerabilities of IDPs, refugees and host communities by complementing essential humanitarian action with sustainable development approaches. The Agenda for Humanity sets an ambitious target to reduce internal displacement, in a dignified and safe manner, by 50% by 2030. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has also placed a new responsibility on us all to ensure that displacement issues are included in the development agenda and to reach those in situations of forced displacement so that, besides receiving humanitarian assistance and protection, they benefit from and contribute to sustainable long-term development.

We have a collective responsibility to challenge our structures and systems to do more and better together in the search for durable solutions for displacement affected communities¹ in the region.

In order to support that change, we ReDSS members, through consultations with key stakeholders, national actors and displacement affected communities, have developed our agenda for humanity, contextualising global commitments and principles.

We, ReDSS² members, commit to work together and to be collectively held accountable for the implementation of our joint agenda as stipulated below. Our commitments will guide our work while the actions will inform our workplan for the years to come.

Commitments

1. Support the integration of protracted displacement and durable solutions in national development plans and in peace negotiations and agreements
2. Support national and regional institutions in the implementation of legal and policy frameworks in the search of durable solutions for displacement affected communities
3. Strengthen initiatives that support the self-reliance of refugees, IDPs and returnees and empower their contribution to both host communities and countries of origin
4. Foster localized approaches and better engage local actors and communities in the search for durable solutions to ensure ownership, local relevance and social cohesion

¹ The term 'displacement affected communities' entails all displaced populations and host communities.

² Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS). For more information: www.regionaldss.org / info@regionaldss.org

Commitment 1: Support the integration of protracted displacement and durable solutions in national development plans³ and in peace negotiations and agreements

- **Adopt a holistic approach addressing physical, material and legal rights and needs** of displacement affected communities and **work on forced displacement as a development issue** to improve knowledge in this field.
- The process must be viewed as a **collective action in the search of durable solutions rather than mandate driven**- our common goal being to give the millions of displaced persons in the region a chance of a better life with dignity and self-reliance.
- **Adopt a community lens approach** so data and evidence collected should be about '*displacement affected communities*' to also include host communities.
- **Improve the generation and availability of data and relevant evidence and analysis⁴** to better understand and operationalize a complementary humanitarian and developmental approach in the search for durable solutions.
- **Develop a monitoring and evaluation system including a standard data protocol** to support disaggregation of data for better analysis, targeting, coordination and accountability, together with guidance for adaption and use in different contexts.
- **Peace negotiations and agreements need to address displacement and durable solutions⁵**: a key factor to displacement solutions has been the inclusion of displaced populations and solutions in the agreements and the key role played by community-based peace negotiations.

Commitment 2: Support national and regional capacities and the implementation of legal and policy frameworks in the search of durable solutions for displacement affected communities

- **Support the African Union and its Member States to ratify and fully implement the Kampala Convention** for the protection and assistance of internally displaced persons in Africa⁶, and to **ensure that women and girls benefit from its protections⁷**.
- **Support the full and effective implementation of the international refugee norms, laws and practices** which provide protection to refugees, and commit to actively work to uphold the institution of asylum, including the fundamental principle of non-refoulement (the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol).
- **Support the adoption of procedures that provide for full implementation of the Best Interests principle** in case management for all children affected by forced displacement as per General Comments 6 and 14 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- **Support the adoption of legislations** facilitating access to civil registration and documentation for refugees and IDPs, including birth registration, national identity cards and other personal documentation. And support the establishment of IDPs focal points as set out in article 3.2 of the Kampala convention.
- **Ensure that policies are not only 'status' based but address the rights and needs of displacement affected communities, including the right to family.**
- **Strengthen capacity to build a common understanding on** how to address durable solutions for displacement affected communities in the region.
- **Support IGAD Secretariat** in leading forced displacement and mixed migration agenda in the region.

Commitment 3: Strengthen initiatives that support the self-reliance of refugees, IDPs and returnees and empower their contribution to both host communities and countries of origin

- **Ensure that the rights of displaced persons**, their protection and empowerment, is at the heart of any programme approach.

³ Including in poverty reduction strategies and UNDAFs in line with Agenda 2030.

⁴ IDMC Briefing Paper, 8 December 2015 'Understanding the Root Causes of Displacement: towards a comprehensive approach to prevention and solutions' and refer to JIPS profiling methodology to draw from good practices.

⁵ Refer to the guide on 'Integrating Internal Displacement in Peace Processes and Agreements' <http://www.unhcr.org/50f94e689.pdf>

⁶ Refer to <http://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/2013/national-instruments-on-internal-displacement-a-guide-to-their-development/>

⁷ NRC December 2015 briefing paper: The Kampala Convention: Make it work for women <http://womenshlp.nrc.no/2015/12/the-kampala-convention-how-to-make-it-work-for-women/>

- **Support a better understanding of political context and incentive structures** within which national refugee and IDPs policies are made to have more evidence in support of local integration and the benefit of displaced people economic empowerment for host communities and countries. Focus on voluntary return and reintegration is too narrow. It buys in to the politically preferred solution but local integration options in protracted context need to be reinforced.
- **Provide adequate long-term and predictable international political and financial support to countries and communities in the region that host refugees and IDPs**, in such ways that improve services and inclusive economic opportunities, including on housing, employment, education, access to health care and other vital public services and infrastructure for all. At least half of the forcibly displaced people in the region are children so millions are out of school. Investing in youth and education is crucial. Failing the children and youth risks creating a lost generation and sets us on a path toward new conflicts and greater displacement in the future.
- **Recognise that refugees and displaced populations are not just passive victims and that they have skills, talents, and aspirations.** While many are in need of assistance, they have capacities as well as vulnerabilities. Rather than assuming a need for indefinite care and maintenance, interventions should nurture such capacities. This involves improved opportunities for education, skills development, access to microcredit and financial markets, business incubation, and improved internet access.
- **Support secure and safe space of asylum** that can act as transitional environment, preparing and empowering displaced populations to develop capacities and engage, as right-holders, once solutions become possible. The quality and sustainability of solutions often rests on the quality of asylum.
- **Ensure close coordination with resilience initiatives and support early onset solutions planning and programing for South Sudan and Burundi regional crises:** lessons can be learned from within the region, and globally, to ensure a meaningful shift from a care and maintenance approach to displacement, to one that builds resilience and improves self-reliance to pave the way for sustainable solutions.
- **Develop an ongoing and systematic research agenda** including comparative research. Very little is known for instance about the economic lives of displaced populations. In particular, comparative case studies are needed in different regulatory environments (restrictive versus open), at different phases of a displacement crisis (e.g. emergency, protracted, and return), and for different categories of displacement (e.g. refugees, IDPs, and people displaced in the context of natural disaster).
- **Improve knowledge and solutions programing in urban context:** more and more protracted displaced people live in urban areas and in the case of Somalia for instance, it has also become clear that many IDPs living in protracted displacement in urban areas will not return to their rural areas of origin. This highlights the increased need to seek solutions in urban environments and to consider all possible options to attain a durable solutions including local integration besides return.

Commitment 4: Foster localized approaches and better engage local actors and communities in the search for durable solutions to ensure ownership, local relevance and social cohesion

- **Support the direct engagement of displacement affected communities** to ensure their ownership and support in order to make solutions lasting, locally relevant and feasible.
- **Place accountability to displaced populations** at the centre of our action.
- **Support the safe and meaningful involvement of displacement affected communities in research processes**, including children and other vulnerable groups, so as to ensure their full participation in the search of durable solutions that affect their own lives.
- **Strengthen durable solutions understanding and operational capacities of local and national NGOs** at the district/county level, recognising they are instrumental in supporting local authorities and displacement affected communities in the long term.
- **Ensure that partnerships and capacity development approaches are based on transfer of skills and knowledge** through mentorship, peer to peer and long term learning.
- **Learn from countries in the region that have addressed solutions to displacement through local action plans** for refugees and IDPs at the district/ county level.
- **Invest into capacities to sustain solutions locally and nationally.** Such investments will strengthen national institutions and partnerships that can sustain locally owned solutions.