

Foreword: Prevent, protect, resolve – reflecting on the GP20 Plan of Action

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At the end of the three-year GP20 Plan of Action, I applaud the significant achievements made by States and other actors, and look forward to our continued, shared engagement on enhancing protection for IDP rights.

Launched in 1998, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement represent a major landmark in international standards for the protection of the human rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs). To mark the 20th anniversary of the Guiding Principles, in 2018 I launched the GP20 Plan of Action for Advancing Prevention, Protection and Solutions for IDPs (to run for three years) with other major stakeholders and with the invaluable support of the governments of Austria, Honduras and Uganda.

This year, 2020, the GP20 Plan of Action draws to a close, with the past three years providing a treasure trove of experience, lessons learned, and new and strengthened relationships. I thank Forced Migration Review for this opportunity to showcase the results. The articles included here analyse some of the initiatives undertaken during this period and offer recommendations on ways forward – essential both for underpinning successes and for confronting current and future challenges. We are grateful to the authors for highlighting their work and knowledge in this manner.

The GP20 initiative aims to raise awareness of the Guiding Principles and enhance the work being undertaken in the field. It also aims to spotlight those IDP protection issues that require enhanced engagement from the international community, namely to:

- strengthen the participation of IDPs in decisions that affect them
- provide impetus to strengthening IDP law and policy worldwide, including through domestication of the Guiding Principles
- enhance the capacity of States and other actors to gather, analyse and utilise data for IDP protection

- focus more closely on finding solutions, especially for protracted internal displacement situations.

The GP20 Plan of Action emphasises multi-stakeholder collaboration at international, regional and national levels with a focus on the national and local implementation that is necessary to support States in their responsibilities to protect IDPs. UN Member States, UN agencies and civil society have participated in the Plan of Action, which was endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

The GP20 Plan of Action was launched with the slogan ‘prevent, protect, resolve’. Those words encapsulate the spirit of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement – Principles that continue to resonate and be relevant in the day-to-day lives of IDPs and affected communities. ‘Prevent, protect, resolve’ likewise emphasises the responsibility of States to protect the human rights of IDPs, in peace, in violence and in war, as part of the international obligations they are required to meet in exercising their sovereignty.

Indeed, with the continuing increase in numbers of IDPs and internal displacement situations in many different countries and contexts around the world, ‘prevent, protect, resolve’ will continue to be relevant in our shared work to uphold the human rights of IDPs. The GP20 Plan of Action has demonstrated that, with political will, we can achieve more. Let us continue to do so, wiser and with heightened commitment.

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