

The GP20 Plan of Action: a rallying call to stakeholders

Nadine Walicki, Elizabeth Eyster and Martina Caterina

A new Plan of Action seeks to build momentum and encourage more strategic action on advancing policy and practice in the area of internal displacement.

Since the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement were presented to the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1998, there has been important progress on preventing, responding to and finding solutions to internal displacement. Internal displacement nevertheless remains a significant global issue and solutions remain elusive for the majority of internally displaced persons (IDPs). New momentum is required, as is more joined-up, strategic and multi-stakeholder action.

In 2018, the year of the 20th anniversary of the Guiding Principles and the year in which the negotiations on the Global

Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Migration have been concluded, there is an important opportunity for increased discussion and action on internal displacement. To this end, a multi-stakeholder Plan of Action for Advancing Prevention, Protection and Solutions for Internally Displaced People 2018–20 was launched in April 2018 and endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Principals the following month.¹ The Plan of Action calls on stakeholders to step up efforts on four interrelated priorities: engaging IDPs in decision-making processes; promoting,

developing and implementing national laws and policies; enhancing the quality of data and analysis; and addressing protracted displacement while seeking durable solutions.

The vision of this important initiative on internal displacement is two-fold. The first of its aims is to improve the lives of IDPs through protection, assistance and durable solutions while preventing the conditions that cause new and secondary displacement. The second aim is for action on internal displacement to be more inclusive, coherent and strategic. Implementation of the Plan of Action will be largely but not exclusively carried out at the national level through operational partners and their field offices as well as through UN Resident Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordinators. A multi-stakeholder global Steering Group will also facilitate its implementation, with the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs acting as Special Advisor.

Unique aspects

The Plan of Action is unique in several ways. It goes beyond international organisations to include IDPs, host communities, local civil society and governments of countries affected by internal displacement – because they know the context, needs and challenges best, and because primary responsibility for IDPs' protection and assistance rests with national authorities. It goes beyond humanitarian UN agencies and NGOs to include development and peacebuilding stakeholders – because supporting national authorities on internal displacement also requires development and peacebuilding expertise. And it goes beyond conflict as a cause of internal displacement to include other causes such as climate change, natural disasters and development – because bridging the discussions on and work across different causes of displacement can help refine our thinking around internal displacement and reinforce shared advocacy and operations.²

The Plan of Action offers the opportunity to strengthen work on linking countries' policies on and approaches to internal displacement to their development planning and commitments to global policy agendas

and frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the New Urban Agenda and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. It is also an opportunity to facilitate and strengthen the participation of IDPs in those policy and planning processes.

Niger: implementation in a crisis context

In April 2018 the Protection Cluster team in Niger presented the Plan of Action to the Humanitarian Country Team and also ran eight training sessions targeting a range of audiences, including government representatives, defence and security forces, cluster members and UN staff. The training workshops – in Niamey, Diffa and Tillabéri – aimed to increase the visibility of internal displacement in Niger, to disseminate the Guiding Principles to relevant stakeholders, to promote a common understanding of the Guiding Principles, and to promote the Guiding Principles' practical application for both the enhanced protection of IDPs and the prevention and resolution of displacement. To reach a larger audience, radio messages on the Guiding Principles and their importance in Niger are being disseminated through the NGO Search for Common Ground, and the messages on the Guiding Principles will be translated into local languages (in addition to Hausa, for which a translation of the Guiding Principles already exists³).

One of the recommendations arising from the training workshops was to adapt the GP20 Plan of Action to guide collective action in the varied local context of Niger – a context which includes protracted internal displacement in Diffa and emerging internal displacement in Tillabéri. This work, which started in June 2018, is being led by the Protection Cluster in collaboration with the UN Special Rapporteur and her team and the authorities. By August 2018, a local GP20 Plan of Action for Niger had been drafted based on regional workshops and was being reviewed prior to acceptance.

At the same time, the Government of Niger, through an Inter-Ministerial Committee created in December 2017, is in the process of developing a draft law on

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internal displacement as required by the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (known as the Kampala Convention), which Niger ratified in 2012. The Committee comprises relevant ministries, parliamentary representatives, UNHCR (the UN Refugee Agency) and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and is reviewing existing legislation and carrying out national consultations with IDPs, host communities and other stakeholders.

Colombia: lessons to bring to GP20

For the past 50 years, Colombia has experienced significant internal displacement caused by conflict, violence and human rights violations. In August 2018, the Colombian government reported over 7.7 million IDPs in the country,⁴ despite the peace agreement of 2016. Advancing prevention, protection and solutions for IDPs in line with the Plan of Action in this context will still require significant resources, time and commitment. Drawing on experience, Colombia has identified six important aspects in addressing internal displacement: registration of

IDPs, inter-sectoral coordination between government and NGOs at the local, state and national level, participation of IDPs in processes that affect them, ensuring that IDPs have access to the information they need, considering the needs of host communities, and cooperating with international actors and involving the private sector.⁵ All these relate to the priorities set out in the Plan of Action, and a compilation of the lessons learned and best practices that emerge in Colombia relating to each of these areas could be beneficial for implementation of the Plan of Action in other settings.

One project implemented in Colombia that brings lessons for others working on the Plan of Action's priority concerning durable solutions for IDPs is the Transitional Solutions Initiative. Implemented in 17 communities in Colombia between 2012 and 2015, this project aimed to facilitate solutions for IDPs by improving the living conditions of communities with IDPs, strengthening community organisations and local public entities, and protecting victims of the conflict and their right to truth, justice and reparation. Each of the 17 communities drafted a work



An indigenous community in Chocó, Colombia, prepares for the inauguration of their community centre. La Puria community has suffered three displacements, as well as the impact of land mines, as a consequence of the presence of different armed groups.

plan that encompassed return, relocation and urban integration. The project increased visibility and empowerment of communities, municipal authorities and public and private institutions, improved security of tenure and social infrastructure, and facilitated recovery of traditions for indigenous communities.⁶

Call to action

The Plan of Action is a much-needed call to the wider community working on internal displacement to join forces and work more closely – largely but not exclusively at the national level – and more strategically in alignment with the Plan of Action's priorities. This includes identifying, sharing and building on progress and good practice in various contexts. The Plan of Action (which is supported by a Communications Action Plan) suggests a range of actions that stakeholders can take. Suggestions include:

- convening an inter-agency discussion on the GP20 Plan of Action and agreeing on joint initiatives and activities in support of the Plan of Action
- engaging in advocacy on the importance of the Guiding Principles
- facilitating and supporting IDP and host community participation in key processes for development and peacebuilding such as the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development
- promoting through outreach, seminars and technical support the development of national laws and policies that align with the Guiding Principles
- strengthening national capacity to collect, analyse and use data on internal displacement
- engaging in dialogue with national governments to ensure that they prioritise durable solutions to internal displacement in their national and regional development planning using the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions
- signing the GP20 campaign statement⁷ to reach the goal of 2018 signatures by the end of 2018, which the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs will use in her advocacy on internal displacement.

Nadine Walicki GP20@unhcr.org
GP20 Coordinator

Elizabeth Eyster eyster@unhcr.org
Chief of IDP Section, UNHCR www.unhcr.org

Martina Caterina caterina@unhcr.org
Legal Adviser to the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons
bit.ly/OHCHR-IDPs

1. The Plan of Action, Terms of Reference for the Steering Group, Communications Action Plan and brochure are at www.globalprotectioncluster.org/news/2018/gp20-plan-of-action.
2. Cernea M M (2006) 'Development-induced and conflict-induced IDPs: bridging the research divide', *Forced Migration Review* special issue www.fmreview.org/brookings/cernea
3. The Guiding Principles are currently available in 49 languages: www.ohchr.org/en/issues/idpersons/pages/standards.aspx
4. <http://internal-displacement.org/countries/colombia/>
5. Government of Colombia, oral intervention at UN Human Rights Council, 38th Session, 26 June 2018.
6. Econometria (2016) *External Assessment of the UNHCR – UNDP Joint Program "Transitional Solutions Initiative - TSI": Final Report* bit.ly/Econometria-TSI-2016
7. <https://crowd360.org/internal-displacement-campaign-mission-statement>



Communicating your ideas and requesting support

All stakeholders are encouraged to share their planned activities with the GP20 Coordinator. You can do this at GP20@unhcr.org or at www.globalprotectioncluster.org/en/news-and-events/gp20-activities-and-initiatives. This will help with tracking GP20 activities and monitoring implementation of the Plan of Action.

Note: The GP20 Plan of Action aims also to tackle more difficult situations where government willingness to address internal displacement is

lacking, protection challenges are significant or humanitarian access is limited. As these contexts may require a different approach and support, the Coordinator also welcomes ideas from those working in such settings on how we can best assist their efforts. Initiatives requiring financial or technical support can be shared in concept note format with the Coordinator who will seek to identify avenues for support.

GP20@unhcr.org