



Second meeting with the Head of the Secretariat of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement Online

19 March 2020 (14:00-15:30)

Participants:

Secretariat: George Okoth-Obbo, Head of the Secretariat of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement; Caelin Briggs; Giovanni Cassani, Mark Yarnell.

NGOs: Act for Peace/Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network, ACT Alliance, CARE international, Caritas Internationalis, Concern Worldwide, Danish Refugee Council, Good Neighbors International, GP20, HIAS, International Catholic Migration Commission, Institute for Study of International Migration, Interaction, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Rescue Committee, Jesuit Refugee Service, Lutheran World Federation, Mercy Corps, Norwegian Refugee Council, Plan International, Platform on Disaster Displacement, Save the Children International, Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response, Women's Refugee Commission.

Ignacio Packer, ICVA Executive director and moderator

- Second meeting with George Okoth-Obbo, Head of Secretariat of the High-Level Panel (HLP) on Internal Displacement, accompanied by some of his Secretariat colleagues.
- Today meeting takes place after the inaugural session of the High-Level Panel in Geneva, of late February. On this occasion, ICVA members, other NGOs and UN agencies met with the Panel and shared their views. ICVA members provided 8 recommendations to the HLP (now available on [ICVA dedicated webpage](#)) and we are interested in hearing how those were received by the Panel and Secretariat.
- In agreement with the HLP Secretariat, this meeting is open beyond ICVA membership to SCHR, InterAction, Voice, Platform on Disaster Displacement, GP20 and the Red Cross movement.
- Meeting objectives:
 - know more on the HLP work plan, including the Panel priority in terms of issues/topics, work methods, focus countries (all this was discussed by the Panel/Secretariat in late Feb.)
 - how all this may now be affected/adapted given the Covid-19 outbreak.
 - better understand how NGOs and other actors can contribute (what are the entry points) and listen to suggestions that may already come from participants online.

George Okoth-Obbo

- Acknowledge the great works done by colleagues Caelin Briggs, Mark Yarnell and Giovanni Cassani who are on the call.
- Since the inaugural meeting of 25 February, the Panel proceeded with briefings to Member States, one in Geneva, one in New York as well as bilateral meetings.
- Update on the impact of COVID-19 on the Panel work:
 - Work plan was agreed assuming stable external conditions. Now that we face disruption of conditions, all events and activities involving travels have been put on hold, be it at national, regional, international level. Those will not resume until normalcy returns.
 - The Secretariat is now fully working from home, trying to maximize resources to remain efficient and dynamic.
 - No doubt this is a major disruption of the work of the Panel. Co-chair have been in touch with the UNSG to share gist of all this. Implications will have to be considered but at this point, those issues have not been broached fully. Extending the life time of the Panel to fully adjust



may be a question to address at some point but not something officially decided upon for now and would be the UNSG decision. We are not there yet.

Objectives of the inaugural meeting (Slide 5):

- Most important part of the work was to discuss and converge on key priorities and indicative plan of work (unfortunately already disrupted).
- Second part was to listen informally to stakeholders: Member States, UN agencies, NGOs, other international organizations.

Issues and priorities considered (Slide 6):

- The Panel affirmed its ToRs (see break down of priorities on slide 6).
- Some of the key touchpoints that already now influence the work of the Panel were drawn directly from the ToRs.
- Prevention-Protection-Solutions is at the core, with national responsibility and capacity. The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus is a specific focus, with reference to the SDGs and the inclusion of IDPs. Data and evidence and innovative financing are also themes to be considered.

Overarching considerations (Slides 7, 8, 9):

- Those slides cover the key themes, questions, and approaches that the Panel has considered.
- In terms of methodology, the UNSG asked the Panel to be free and bold, think outside of the box, and bring to bear a new narrative with strategic recommendations, keeping in mind the 'no one size fits all' principle. The Panel fully embraced this approach.
- In the call for submissions that we will issue, we are asking for inputs mirroring this approach and ambition. You will see that the Panel is asking for inputs from various stakeholders that should mirror the considerations listed as well as themes that may not have been considered yet.
- We are all familiar with the conflict dimension of internal displacement but we also need to consider the multi-causal dimensions horizontally, particularly with regard to climate change and disaster displacement.
- The visibility issue is also one that is often forgotten and being unaddressed but that resonated a lot with the Panel. We would be interested to hear from you about how this may translate into the work of the Panel.
- One of the strongest points made during the 25 February meeting, including from ICVA and others, was that the Panel work should be people-centered, highlighting Protection and Solutions as priorities. I confirm that the Panel took this on board completely.
- National responsibility is a constant theme, one of the streams of work the Secretariat was asked to focus on.
- On Slide 8 you can browse elements already mentioned, some coming from consultations with you.
- On solutions, the Panel wants to explore what has worked in places where solutions were tried, what helped incentivize governments, how to unlock blockages, etc. This will be highlighted in call written submissions.
- When we have tools like the Kampala Convention, the Panel is interested in understanding better the implementation record. Basically, the Panel wants a balanced approach looking at policies and the normative side. What difference policy and normative elements are making? Is implementation valuable and why?
- Inclusion and participation of IDPs is another area of focus, it was a topic of discussion in the first meetings with InterAction and ICVA. We said that we would need 1-2 if not more



consultations with IDPs and we feel that collaboration with you would be helpful in this particular field.

- Turing to Slide 9, it is important to note that one particular Panel member stressed that the HLP cannot look only at IDPS but should take a “whole-of-displacement” approach, considering refugees and returnees as well. This was stressed particularly in the context of solutions (holistic approach to Solutions), which often bring issues pertinent for other groups.
- Whole-of-Society and Whole-of-Government approaches are also well known to all of us and will be part of the Panel’s work.
- Effectiveness of coordination is also an important issue for many stakeholders, who are pushing the Panel too look at coordination for IDPs, some more broadly some more concretely. The Panel's approach at the February meeting was that strategic questions are far more important to explore. The Panel would look at the coordination/architecture question for sure but as a mainstreamed issue.
- The Panel also stress the importance of best practices and lessons learned.

Specifically reiterated (Slide 10):

- Most of the groups and topics listed here came especially from NGO stakeholders, many from your statements.
- All this will be part of the agenda of the Panel
- On Disaster Displacement: one of the strongest partnership is in particularly with Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) as we want to capitalize and maximize on existing initiatives without ambition to launch parallel processes.

Panel work plan – timeline (Slide 11):

- What you see here is the concept on which the work plan has been built, with the clear marker that by 25 February 2021, the Panel finishes it works. So by that date, its report should be submitted to the Secretary-General.
- The workplan has been developed, in theory, with mandatory milestones aligned and with an end date that cannot be shifted.
- Following the February meeting, the idea was to have a second meeting in New York, in April or May, a third one in August or September in Addis Ababa, and the fourth meeting in Geneva in November or December.
- Regional and national consultations would be aligned with these key markers.
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- However, preparations the planned meeting in New York in April/May are on hold at the moment, until we resume work in normal conditions. This part of the Panel’s work is very much in the air.

Consultations (Slides 12, 13):

- Holding consultations is an important commitment of the Panel and it will continue.
- At global level, the Panel wants to consult with all stakeholders, including NGOs. We foresee to have a workstream that is anchored with the NGO community, particularly with the networks. We have not yet developed the concept but we reaffirm here that moving forward, we anticipate that one of the workstreams will be anchored in the NGO community.
- At regional level, the same stakeholders will be consulted, but this part will be very much based on regional organizations, such as the Arab League, the African Union, etc. It is not exclusive to them. NGOs, of course will be part of that but the organizational approach will rely on regional organizations.



- At national level, the workplan foresees country visits but with the current disruption and the fact that we were not able yet to nail all this down with governments, allow me not to mention those countries for now.
- IDPs and impacted communities will be consulted and we can think of 2 iterations:
 - wherever the panel will travel, we will have consultations but we understand the limits to what can be done in 1//2 days.
 - so the idea is also to work with NGOs in particular in conducting dedicated consultations in specific countries. Giovanni responsible to work this out.
- Thematic streams include work with/on private sector; IFIs, climate change and disaster displacement, prevention, nexus, data and evidence.
- Considering ongoing initiatives at various levels.

Secretariat follow-up (Slide 14):

- Stakeholders consultations are something the Panel continues to work on. We have good contacts at global level but less at regional and national levels. This is particularly true for NGOs and we need to work more on this.
- The Panel is launching a request for submissions, the plan is for NGOs to address their submissions through NGO networks, such as ICVA, InterAction, with idea that the networks themselves will be part of the contributors but also relay the request to their members.
- The Panel's website will be launched asap. We expect the website to be an important tool for information-sharing and for communication.

Get involved (Slide 15):

- In terms of call for submission particularly, we will have a set of guiding questions that are not exclusive.

Q&A

ICVA

- Could we have a sense of the States priorities where when they met the HLP?
- Is there more concrete idea on what "follow-up" or "action plan" would follow the report at the end of the HLP mission?

International Catholic Migration Commission

- What is planned to face the time lost related to the current COVID-19 emergency?
- What does the Panel mean by a "new narrative"?
- Is there a possibility to regroup the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact on Migration and have a focus on internal migration in all its aspects?

Georges Okoth-Obbo

- Many Member States underlined themes that are already part of the Panel's ToRs, but 3 stand out:
 - Solutions, without any questions, the Panel heard a lot from Member States, including from some who would want the Panel to focus on their own situation to help move the needle, e.g. Afghanistan and Colombia).
 - The HDP Nexus and more. Which was stressed over and over. It is already in the ToRs but it came a lot from States.
 - Climate change and natural disaster displacement dimensions.
- Some States also raised the question of coordination / architecture. This is not part of the ToRs as such but true, the Panel heard a lot on this and started to consider the issue. It concluded in the direction I highlighted earlier: form will follow content. The Panel will first



conclude on strategic issues and then, when coming to coordination issue, it will be about ways in which the architecture would help achieve strategic objectives highlighted.

- A lot of reflections on various questions related to the internal displacement ecosystem; many on Protection-Solution; disability.
- The 'day after' is an important issue. According to the ToRs, the report and recommendations will be for the Secretary-General to take action on. I would be surprised if the Panel does not include a pointer to what should happen next in the report, but no decision has been taken yet. It will be natural to expect a follow-up.
- It is obvious that time has been lost due to the Covid-19, we face the question of recouping that time, but the issue has not been presented as such. We are dealing with unknown and unpredictable.
- On the new narrative, the UNSG highlighted that the response so far is fairly well developed on the humanitarian side and this needs to be recognized and reinforced. But moving from there, the UNSG is urging to not stop at humanitarian but to look at multidimensional and multi-solution perspectives, looking at touchpoints that need to be included, e.g. development and the nexus and beyond Peace, there are other topics (fragility, terrorism etc.).
- The question of bringing the two Compacts together is an issue that has not been risen as such. We have to see where this goes.

Danish Refugee Council

- Protection needs to be at the chore but we are concerned that cross-cutting approach may lead to Protection being hidden.
- Happy to see that the policies and the emphasis of the implementation record. Those are hooks for us to make sure protection is there.
- Intrigued by the whole-of-displacement approach as this is something we have been advocating for. Excellent to see this emphasis.
- Solutions focus: happy to see it at the center of attention. We would like to ensure we build on what has been done already and a lot of work has been done, also in the area of research. Multiyear research programs are there and there are Solution hubs in regions.

InterAction

- When you met with us in DC, you indicated the Panel would focus on priorities and cover everything under the sun, singling out Solutions. Now you are mentioning a lot of themes. We are concerned we are losing focus, especially given short time available. How will the Panel prioritize to move forward?

Norwegian Refugee Council

- There has been no mention of the Advisory Expert Group. Where do they fit within the process as outlined?

Georges Okoth-Obbo

- On the centrality of protection, it will be very important for stakeholders, in every way they engaged, including the written submissions, to go to a specific point, not be general (orient the discussion from the general category to specific points, looking at implementation for example). In fact, some of the themes have articulations but the centrality of protection as such is entrenched in responses to internal displacement. So it is important to be precise in pointing to questions the Panel should address on this issue.
- As for the themes, there is an extremely wide landscape but by the time it concludes, the Panel may focus on smaller set of issues and it is their prerogative. But stakeholders can



influence this process. For example, on disability, NGOs that spoke to this issue did so with a lot of strength and passion. To ensure a theme like this one stays on the map, NGOs' constant engagement and sharing information will be important, starting with the written submissions.

- The Expert Advisory Group took part in all phases of the inaugural meeting. The way in which the structure has been set up.
- The Panel has asked that the Advisory Group to be fully incorporated in all activities, including regional consultations and country visits. The Advisor Group will accompany the Panel in every phase. There are financial implications but this is the idea.

Women's Refugee Commission

- The AGD approach and the emphasis on diverse groups are most welcome since those are not easily identified.
- To echo the point on the centrality of protection, it is important to keep in mind that it comes down to States being responsible for respecting human rights. It is a big challenge when it comes to IDP protection, especially now with States using stability and security much more on the nexus. Has this issue come-up with States, and if so, how to emphasize rights upfront?

International Federation of the Red Cross

- We are all invested in supporting governments to adopt new laws and policies and we know that the challenge is often in implementation and capacities.
- How can the Panel look at a better way to bolster local capacities? Will the Panel look at that?

Georges Okoth-Obbo

- We are at the early stages of the Panel's work and one thing stands out: it is open and friendly to stakeholders contributions.
- If we look at Women's Refugee Commission's critical vision, many things have to be done to see it finally figure in the Panel's report. We turn this back to NGOs and reiterate that you have to make sure these key questions are seen by the Panel. Better if it can be brought up in a digested way. I would be surprised if human rights issues are not addressed.
- The age, gender, and diversity question figures as an area of focus.
- My own view in the balance of issues, it will be important that the big strategic items do not face the granular issues.
- Capacity is a specific element of the ToRs. Of course, it is about governments but not only. Very often it is community-based, self-help organizations, grouping and dynamics of people. The Panel will continue the work with the IIFRC and others. We welcome it.
- Let's see how these disruptions evolve. Let's keep the dynamic of the Panel in every way possible, including with online meetings.
- The Panel has already received inputs but we continue to welcome more. In addition to that, the most important is the workstreams we are looking to see with NGOs, at global level, there the role of the networks and then, at national, and local levels.

ICVA

- Thanks George Okoth-Obbo. ICVA will follow on the practical elements and continue to support NGOs.
- The momentum we keep is important even if we have disruptors.
- Coming back to the issue of State responsibility on the Human Rights of IDPs, on reflection based on comments from Federica Mogherini on 25 February is around "incentives" for States to bring protection and practical solutions for IDPs. Will this be a workstream?
- As a workstream, there would be a lot to think about, linked to rewards but also to 'enabling environments' for policies and solutions, as well as accountability.



- Noted the call for contributions, we will need to discuss the specifics with your colleagues and the NGO networks.
- You may also consider working with regional networks like APRRN, which was present during this meeting.
- Also interested in discussing further the idea of a workstream with NGOs.