



## UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement - Online Briefing for NGOs

25 March 2021

Notes

### Participants:

- HLP Secretariat
- About 45 NGOs and other actors such as PDD and JIPS

### Agenda:

- Remarks by the ASG George Okoth-Obbo,
- Presentation from the Secretariat
- Open discussion.

### **George Okoth-Obbo**

- We are always delighted to work with NGOs, civil society, other networks.
- This meeting is critical because the Panel is now at the point where:
  - 1) we consolidate the analysis of the problem described earlier.
  - 2) we also formulate the conclusions and recommendations for the report to the Secretary General (SG).
- Reiterate on behalf of the Panel thanks for the collaboration with civil society, in particular the consultations with IDPs and host communities, which started in June 2020, in 22 countries. The Panel got inputs from nearly 13,000 IDPs.
- We also received rich inputs from NGOs and civil society, close to 100 written submissions from various actors, the wide range of issues featured in the submissions strongly influenced the work of the Panel.
- Few elements from the submissions to highlight:
  - the causes and the necessity to draw attention to the effects of natural disasters and climate change in the context of internal displacement.
  - the issue of political will and national ownership.
  - the drive for solutions.
  - the very important area of humanitarian response, interlinked with age, gender and diversity (AGD) question. We already received specific submissions. AGD stands now with this area of accountability and coordination, including the IASC system.
- The Panel will submit its report at the end of September, in about five months from now.
- Interactions between stakeholders will continue from now.
- The current information including the PowerPoint cannot be shared publicly because the work is still in progress.

### **Greta Zeender**

- Slide 2: 14 months after starting its work, the Panel is looking at its breadth of information, conclusions, recommendations. This meeting is very important to us because some of the recommendations need tuning, sharpening.
- There are outstanding issues, which the Panel is looking at and is moving forward with the drafting of its report.
- Slide 3: The Panel timeline was extended until September 2021. We have received several written submissions including from NGOs. Many organizations have contributed to the Refugee Quarterly Survey.

- Some of the information we looked at had not been very developed e.g., the political will issue, the obstacles for people to find durable solutions, better understanding the context.
- We have had a range of consultations, whether bilateral conversations with the private sector, NGOs, financial institutions, think tanks. We have had a series of thematic events and will continue to do so.
- The consultation of IDPs has been extremely precious to build on recommendations.
- In addition to receiving submissions, we had many discussions with States including half of them affected by internal displacement, whether by disasters or by conflicts.
- Slide 4: the analysis of the problems is massive although there have been positive developments since the early 1990s' at the institutional, legal, and policy levels.
- There were also interesting initiatives being developed to foster solutions. Overall, a picture of crisis with 45 million IDPs due to conflicts, disasters as at the end of 2019.
- The Panel looked at where there are multiple causalities of displacement related to fragility, climate change, poverty and analyzed the complexity of root causes of displacement.
- The Panel also looked at a series of issues:
  - reducing the risk of internal displacement.
  - despite humanitarian assistance and protection provided, we see a picture of dire suffering in many IDP contexts.
  - protracted displacement and the inability in many contexts to achieve durable solutions.
  - the costs to society in particular for host communities, local communities, and authorities overwhelmed with several people trying to find refuge in their localities and respond to them. E.g., a good example of a recent conversation we had with several mayors in Northern Burkina Faso who are trying to do their best to accommodate people.
  - the issue of invisibility because internal displacement gets less visibility compared to other issues.
  - the issue of entities in urban settings as well as the impacts of COVID-19.
- Slide 5: to address these very complex issues, the Panel has decided to look at key shifts needed to make a difference on internal displacement.
  - 1) We need stronger prevention, investments, leveraging financing, e.g. climate change financing such as the green funds. Overall, how can internal displacement be better integrated into prevention efforts whether it is disaster risk reduction, better respect of IHL, etc.?
  - 2) Have a key shift on humanitarian response and strengthen leadership, accountability within the humanitarian system. Many written submissions highlighted the difficulties on the ground with unclear leadership, with mandates which sometimes compete with each other and the need for clear guidance. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement date back to 1998 and some actors have pointed to the need to have a revision especially in relation to the clusters and transformative agenda.
  - 3) Urge to make effective progress on solutions. The SG pointed it as a major point for the Panel. Solutions must be a core priority for countries, so IDPs are included in national development agendas. The aspect of treating IDPs as a humanitarian issue into a development issue has to do with a new narrative. Looking at government leadership and national ownership is also key.
  - 4) The issue of disability remains orphan whether it is at the international and national systems level and does not have the resources and the focus it should have.
  - 5) The issue of new narrative (although we have heard it already at the World Humanitarian Summit), the importance of not handling internal displacement solely as a humanitarian issue but thinking it as the development agenda item, having it as the primary responsibility of governments but also training IDPs as citizens, not just as beneficiaries.

- Slide 6: The Panel is now looking at a range of measures by action areas. The first action is enabling government ownership, political will and accountability. It has to be done in line with the rights of IDPs recognizing them as citizens, having the legal and policy frameworks in place, from prevention to protection, to durable solutions including national development plans, in protection of civilian policies, in disaster risk reduction frameworks, etc.
- Also enabling a whole-of-government approach with not just one ministry which deals with the issue, e.g. Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs or Refugees, but considered in different government plans (e.g. education, health plans), how IDPs are integrated in National Safety Nets, etc.
- It also means having the right data and evidence. The Panel has been interested to follow the work of EGRIS and has done specific work on data.
- The issue of transitional justice and also accountability for IDPs.
- The issue of internal displacement is taken up by the ICC but also in the Kampala Convention with a specific article on arbitrary displacement. How do we make this a reality?
- Finally, the Panel has been looking at building on what already exists at the regional level to have dedicated forums to discuss internal displacement, e.g. peer to peer, a global forum, where there could be an exchange of good practices but also showing what works and encourage governments. The Panel has heard from different organizations that the best way to engage governments is space to learn and try to take out what works.
- Slide 7: The Panel wants to ensure it is not just at the national government or the international community we should do something about internal displacement, but we look at through the whole-of-society approach, meaning what can we do to support stronger participation but also consultation and decision-making by IDPs, across all AGD. It is critical for IDPs and host communities because the majority of IDPs are not in camps but with host communities who need also strong support.
- The Panel is also looking at supporting civil society. In the Refugee Survey Quarterly, there are good examples such as civil society networks from Latin America which has enabled stronger action on the part of governments for better response to internal displacement.
- The Panel is also aware of the issue of visibility, the media has a strong role to play, and the Panel is also looking at what type of IDPs representation bodies could be supported. There have been several examples like in peacebuilding processes in Colombia or South Sudan. The Panel has been looking at good initiatives to enhance community-based planning.
- Another area that the Panel is having a lot of attention on is how to leverage the private sector because we think about durable solutions to internal displacement, one of the major issues is the lack of sustainable livelihoods, e.g. the lack of access to credit, of digitalization. A good example the Panel has been looking at is where the private sector collaborates with NGOs, e.g., the International Rescue Committee collaborating with the private sector is a very good example.
- Slide 8: The Panel is looking at financing aspects. With COVID-19 effects, it is hard to get additional financing for prevention, humanitarian assistance, durable solutions. The Panel is keen to look into the issue and make concrete proposals. The current situation is not acceptable, e.g. the latest appeal in Yemen received so little. The Panel is keen to build on what exists and to propose additional avenues for funding. One avenue is to scale up the forecast-based financing, e.g. see IFRC and GP20 submissions. A second avenue is catalytic funding, e.g. the Panel discussed with the peacebuilding fund, OCHA, CERF. There are different avenues or multi-partner trust funds at country level, like what was developed in Ethiopia, which is promising.
- The Panel discussed with the World Bank which is developing a new approach to internal displacement to make sure to address internal displacement through existing channels. The Panel is also looking possibly at a new global fund, inspired with the experience of the

Global Fund to Fight Aids which incentivizes work between governments and different partners to address specific issues.

- Slide 9: How to make sure the international system works for IDPs? There is a need to better understand the context and talk about the political economy analysis which the Panel sees as a key issue of forecast-based financing.
- When it comes to the humanitarian response, the possibility to have a review of what IASC has been doing, maybe updating the policy guidance on internal displacement. Welcome suggestions to optimizing or improving the humanitarian response keeping in mind that the Panel cannot touch on everything and have complex issues such as access, counterterrorism policies and their impacts.
- Slide 10: The Panel is looking at the issue of accountability and of different responsibilities within the system when it comes to solutions. The Panel also looks at the issue of coordination for solutions, the role of the Resident Coordinators. See the great work for example of networks such as ReDSS.
- How to promote durable solutions and appeals? How could the UN Sustainable Development Corporation Framework better address this issue of IDPs durable solutions?
- The issue of performance may not be based just on getting the most money for your organization and doing your own programs but about incentivizing collective actions.
- Bring more visibility but also coherence across the Nexus and the possibility to have a high-level UN official in the system who could bring this together.
- Slide 11: it is not the work of the Panel to implement its recommendations. The Panel has to make sure that recommendations can be implemented. The SG will decide on the follow-up. There have different options which could be proposed and taken or not by the SG such as:
  - a global dialogue,
  - a global leaders' summit,
  - we could have actions at the regional/national or international level.
- Again, the role of civil society and NGOs will be key to making sure recommendations are taken into action.
- Slide 12: The Panel is still having several meetings to articulate its findings. We are receiving research projects; we will have several roundtables. This represents another opportunity for NGOs to be consulted and provide feedback.
- Slides 13 & 14: Welcome NGOs reactions/comments on the key shifts, the five action areas, e.g. whether the focus should be on solutions or how much we go into prevention and humanitarian response? What do you think of the issue of multi-causality when it comes to prevention? On humanitarian response, how far the Panel can go to its recommendations? On the issue of political will, how to foster action on the part of governments but also of the whole society? How we can make sure to feature AGD correctly?

## Open discussion

### InterAction

- We are glad to see clear prioritization with the five plans of action. We concur with the emphasis on the remaining time and pre-advocacy before recommendations are delivered. We think – it coincides with InterAction submission paper – solutions and prevention are transformative areas. Obviously, the private sector has also a role to play, and a whole-of-society approach is important for more meaningful change.
- We encourage a deepening and significant focus and prioritization particularly on prevention and solutions.
- Multiple factors lead to forced displacement particularly as it emerges from conflict but in terms of taking these recommendations forward, the recommendations can focus on

practical steps, e.g. establishing a community of practice among States and how to minimize harm to civilians in their own military operations.

- On humanitarian response, there is room for improvement in the system and some Member States are interested to see recommendations on this front. There are no humanitarian solutions to humanitarian problems according to the SG, and we can make improvements.
- The role of the Resident Coordinator, given the UN reform, could be a primary champion on delivering on the SDGs. There is a huge opportunity to put solutions responsibilities on the RC and have recommendations. They are technically there to deliver outcomes for all people in those countries towards poverty reduction and inclusion also for IDPs.
- Financing has been a long-standing problem because there is humanitarian funding, there is development funding and the two never meet. Financing has to be matched with specific solutions-oriented plans for a given internal displacement context. It is at the heart of the InterAction submission on developing road maps that are context specific.
- Recommendations can sometimes be broad or very specific, we strongly encourage a menu of very specific recommendations on a key set of those priorities. We could have an eminent person of a more political nature taking this process forward, it could be States that encouraged the development of the High-Level Panel, who come together as a group of friends going forward to develop the Road Maps mentioned. There are Member States closely watching the Panel's process. Ultimately it is the States responsibility to resolve this problem on a variety of different levels.

#### **Plan International**

- To strengthen a point on the role of civil society: The whole-of-society approach can bring solutions and help in terms of response. It can also enhance accountability and support to bring it to the global space or global fora.
- AGD must be mainstreamed. It could benefit from a specific and separate recommendation, particularly setting out some of the approaches and underlying actions that could be taken forward by governments and other actors, to ensure the participation but also the sensitivity to staff and resources.

#### **Christian Aid**

- There have been 22 countries with IDP consultations. Have we gathered enough collective inputs from other contexts?
- Whilst we have seen a growing number States moving together on internal displacement, for example through GP20 initiatives and steering group, reports note that this is often an issue. Wondering whether it is worth including this in a problem statement?
- We can see recommendations from previous UN Special Rapporteur mission reports for example around the government approaches. It is great to see how findings have been weaved into practical recommendations related to funding mechanisms, UN roles, SDGs follow-up.
- The issue of political will is still a top priority.
- After the report is transmitted to the SG, we all need to be propositional with practical ideas. Publishing the report will be a first basic step, we all need to be very supportive of the idea, especially as it will further galvanize States to amplify and share their good practices.
- The SG's role, his leadership, is critical and we also welcome the fact that we are looking out a Special Representative rather than a Special Rapporteur, upgrading the position.
- Holding a peer-to-peer global forum to maintain momentum and promote practical ways forward will be important and I am wondering how this can happen at national level?
- How do we move from those standards and soft law into the further promotion of hard law?



- The work happening around this High-Level Panel is encouraging States to feel confident about talking on the issues.
- A peer-to-peer global forum will be an opportunity for States to flag good practices.
- How could the report and its recommendations be discussed at the UN General Assembly? Could this also be discussed in fora like the UN Security Council's working group on children in armed conflicts?

#### **George Okoth Obbo**

- On the follow-up, some of the issues which have come in the discussion are also discussed at Secretariat level, on subsequent processes, consultations, issues that are still being explored.
- Hearing NGOs' inputs, it is clear that time is our enemy. Beyond this meeting let's maintain communication. We welcome contacts to elaborate further, e.g. on the multi-causalities issue, on the role of civil society space, on the place, value of further consultations.
- We had consultations in 22 countries and if there is a need, space for more, we would welcome consultations not only from IDPs and impacted communities but with local authorities on the ground. Now we are trying to do what we can with mayors for example, so that is the first part that we would welcome. The Panel is meeting tomorrow so maybe this is one of the issues that we will roll up to them and then let's come back and have a further conversation to see what may be possible.
- On the issue of follow-up, on peer-to-peer, the questions around the Guiding principles, we are glad to hear from NGOs that the Panel seems to go in the right direction.

#### **Greta Zeender**

- InterAction written submission and the road maps are very concrete recommendations when it comes to prevention in conflict contexts, and we recognize the importance of practical recommendations.
- We are in contact with NGOs on a range of issues in relation to accountability and look forward to continuing being in touch.
- We understand from the office of the SG that there is the intention to publish the report, not a guarantee but this has been the practice with every other panel reports.

#### **Danish Refugee Council**

- What is most inspiring, the most revolutionary from your analysis point of view?
- From DRC side, the five suggested shifts correspond very well to the challenges we experience on the ground and there are commonly recognized challenges.
- We do think it would be important to flesh out the analysis and detailed the action plans. It would be useful to understand the interlinkages between the shifts and the action plans, how they relate to each other. The links between the shifts and the action points do not in all instances fully align and it would be important to have clear connections between the identified problems, the key shifts and the action plans, particularly we felt that prevention stream is not coming out very strong and we do think that it deserves a more central place with more specific recommendations as to how the humanitarian system needs to change to ensure that it lives up to the SDGs goals.
- We would recommend an explicit commitment to the triple Nexus and clear points around its operationalization.

#### **ICVA**

- When visualizing the PowerPoint Presentation, indeed highlighting the dialectics between the key shifts and the action areas could be useful at least in terms of grasping connections.





## ReDSS

- It is great that your first action area is connected to political will. We see a lot of challenges in the East and Horn of Africa, where internal displacement is politicized and it would be good to understand the recommendations you have within the political will section.
- It was not so clear where accountability stands or the monitoring stands, e.g. the recommendation on the RCO. What happens in locations where the shift is not there, for various reasons? In some locations we see a shift in terms of coordination with the One UN Agency, so where do you see some of the accountability or monitoring for that? It would then help understand NGOs' role. Would you have more details on the idea of a global fund for internal displacement. Is it a new mechanism? We have lot of learning in the region.

## Norwegian Refugee Council

- We need a big shift at least within the humanitarian community on prevention. Does the Panel see a common understanding of what prevention is and what work needs to be done in the next steps? What prevention means in practice and how the different roles of NGOs, UN agencies and different actors on prevention work could be?

## Georges Okoth-Obbo

- We have a list of key issues that are still in progress, prevention in humanitarian response is definitely one of them.
- One of those issues relates to where the Panel may wish to strike a balance between issues that are more political and perhaps sensitive and those which lead to greater convergence.
- On how the different parts link together, when we drafted the PPT, we initially put a slide on ongoing work on a theory of change. There is so much grounded work taking place around it, showing all those threads are together.
- Recommendations are usually structurally put by "actor area", this formula will refer to specific actors, it is strong. But some important thematic areas, as opposed to actor area, lost a bit of visibility. It is an outstanding issue. This is why this aspect of the work was not shared yet.
- On politization, it links to the accountability issue, its implications and dealing with IDPs as citizens. It is a controversial issue, within the Panel itself it is in discussions.
- The integrity of humanitarian principles relates to how strongly the Nexus will be framed.
- On the global fund, we can share more after the Panel meeting tomorrow.

## Greta Zeender

- On what is new, the encouraging news is that some States dealing with internal displacement are now sharing good practices and we are asking for support. They can build on other practices at local, national and regional levels, e.g. Sudan, which was against the Guiding principles, now engaging with the Panel. This is encouraging.
- On prevention, it will be great to hear how NRC for example is dealing with prevention. In terms of common understanding, we had a discussion on the topic with ICRC/IFRC and partners both on disasters and on conflicts. We saw a different understanding of prevention when it comes to disasters, conflicts.

## Giovanni Cassani

- On the broader picture of engagement, a lot of the work of the Panel is to focus on the five action plans and recommendations. We get a lot of engagement with different actors. We are now in the process of developing a concept note for the recommendations to make sure there is rationale. We will continue to test those ideas with bilateral meetings and roundtable discussions, in small groups ideally, and as representative as possible with States,



NGOs, think thanks. It will happen in the next weeks and can lead for example on what happens when coordination is failing or actions when solutions are not active.

#### **IFRC**

- Does the Panel have an updated timeline for the completion of its report and the submission of its recommendations to the SG?

#### **Christian Aid**

- Completely support the idea that the Panel includes issues around justice, including the use of international mechanisms implementing international criminal law. This supports a more comprehensive access to justice.

#### **Act Alliance**

- Is there a need to fill gaps somewhere? Do you think you have sufficient inputs from the consultations?
- On the follow-up, we heard from our members an interest for concrete national follow-up.

#### **Women's Refugee Commission**

- The biggest part of the problem is the lack of human rights for IDPs. Hope it will be clearly stated and emphasized.
- Government ownership is key to highlight and peer to peer learning government is probably the most useful way where we will have more traction, e.g., the Global Refugee Forum was an opportunity to bring together several stakeholders, but we do not know if States would attend the same level of discussions on internal displacement. Like the idea to have a Special Rapporteur. How could we have different staffing working in the regions, globally is important but at regional level will be key.
- When looking at issues of citizens, it is important to not forget statelessness.
- How will the Panel make recommendations on financing and making links?
- Recommendations on mainstreaming AGD and how civil society can be included, would be excellent.
- On making sure the international system is fit for purpose, we have not had a proper evaluation of how the humanitarian system responds to internal displacement since 2010.
- On the role of the Resident Coordinators, it is clearly stated that they have the responsibility to develop durable solutions frameworks for displaced populations. Would be useful to know where the challenges are?

#### **ICVA**

- Where do we go from here and in our relationship? What can NGOs do to help and influence the process? Bilateral meetings can continue with a number of NGOs and happy to see how ICVA can plug into the roundtable discussions and other processes.
- On consultations with IDPs and then maybe local actors as well, happy to see how ICVA could help. We have been engaged initially in launching the process. Maybe we can build on that and we would be happy to convene a meeting if helpful.
- Wonder if there could be interest in having NGOs making the case for some of the proposals highlighted; would need to understand from your perspective whether, how, and when that could be useful. For example, about bringing some further reflections and details from an NGO perspective around for the new global fund, the SRSF, the global forum idea, etc. NGOs could help in campaigning, convincing some actors.





- Probably that will be something that will be also useful when the report is finalized, if it is public or maybe there will be need for NGOs to say that it should be public. Then put some ideas behind implementation of the following process and where emphasis should be put.

#### **Save the Children**

- It will be very important to have the report being public, otherwise any advocacy on the implementation will be very difficult.

#### **Giovanni Cassani**

- We are in the phase of refining recommendations until May. June will be a phase of testing the recommendations on States at regional level with consultations at regional level.
- A plan of work of the Panel engagement is [available on the website](#).

#### **Greta Zeender**

- To WRC and the lack of evaluation since 2010 on the response, on clusters and IDPs, the point is very well taken. If NGOs have specific recommendations, we welcome suggestions. It links to the issue of visibility and IDPs in different processes and the UN Development Reform. Durable solutions to internal displacement were not in the radar at that time.

#### **Mark Yarnell**

- We are working on shaping the report, e.g. if you look at solutions and the five action areas, there is a need for government leadership and ownership as well as at national level across societies. There is a need for an international system suited to supporting governments, beyond the humanitarian response. Looking at a development approach and making the shift a reality. The private sector can also have a significant impact.

#### **George Okoth-Obbo**

- On the issue of representativity of inputs from all regions, we welcome to stay in touch through the networks and bilaterally.
- The report will highlight concrete developments and strategies, especially around solutions.
- On human rights, there are some themes in the report, posted as background.
- The Panel is also working on financing issues, asking what the evidence is. There are opportunities around efficiency and existing mechanisms, pool funding.