



Meeting on the High-Level Panel on IDPs ICVA, 7 February 2020 (15:00 – 16:30)

The meeting aimed at having a first broad sharing of information among NGOs on the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement (HLP-IDPs), its possible objectives, ways of working and on , how to approach it. The meeting was organized under Chatham House rules. As such, the below is a quick summary, without identification of participants, rather than the usual ICVA meeting notes.

As a basis for the discussion, ICVA had prepared a short ‘primer for NGOs’ on the HLP-IDPs, which has been slightly updated and is now available to NGOs (still in draft form).

Ways of working of the HLP on IDPs

- The Panel hasn’t met yet but there are burning issues, and strong appetite to brainstorm. The HLP is in ‘listening mode’.
- First meeting of the HLP will be in Geneva, from 25-27 Feb. The Secretary-General will inaugurate the Panel on 25. There should be space to exchange with civil society.
- A website is being set-up and there should be a process allowing for written submissions.
- It seems the HLP-IDPs will convene in Geneva but not only: There might be meetings in other locations, especially NY as well as field visits with theme and country focuses. There is also the aim of holding regional consultations, possibly linked to the field visits.
- It is a one-year panel. The work will take one year, which might impact how they engage with other actors. The Secretariat will likely be set up for more than a year to ensure follow-up and completion of tasks.
- There should be field visits and regional consultations will take place, including in countries affected by a disaster.
- The Secretariat has a workstream on Research but given the time frame and resources, it might be more about desk reviews and synthesizing existing research. Doubtful there will be time and resources to commission research either. This may represent opportunities for NGOs to contribute with their own research.
- The Expert Advisory Group had a meeting with the Secretariat. NGOs may have opportunities to exchange with the Group.
- The Secretariat seems to have focal points in each of the relevant UN Agencies.

- The Panel may consider 5-6 objectives:
 1. Strengthening capacity of governments to find solutions for IDPs: capacity building, national support, etc.
 2. Improving the approach and response to the issue, in particular with through the Triple-Nexus, ways in which other actors can join.
 3. Linking the SDGs and bring again the development actors.
 4. Financing on IDPs, that have been problematic in the past. Finding new mechanisms.
 5. Data, the need for good data and good evidence. Studies on IDPs have declined in recent years. A lot of work needs to be done to reverse this trend.
 6. Climate change impacts and disaster related internal displacement, although there might be some reluctance from some States.

Discussion:

- NGOs consider that internal displacement should be presented as a global phenomenon, emphasizing multiple causes of displacement, and recognizing that the drivers are complex.
- The announcement of the panel mentioned that one objective is to help “the United Nations to improve their efforts”. Could this mean that the HLP would look into the UN architecture



and coordination mechanisms related to IDP response? There may be debates among Member States about this but also concerns about re-opening the discussion on the UN Reform.

- Member States will probably expect the HLP to look at international solidarity.
- Will the Panel aim at a depoliticized debate? The effort will probably try to avoid controversies but the aim is also to put back Member States in the driving sit, and to understand the political incentives and disincentives for that.
- What will/should be the level of ambition for the HLP? Are we aiming for practical results/recommendations and realistic or for a “game-changer”? It will depend a lot on the co-chairs’ ambition but others can influence that.
- It seems UNDP is not in the picture so far, although it seems the Secretariat works to bring it onboard.
- It is important for NGOs to meet with George Okoth-Obbo and the Secretariat, ideally before and after the first HLP meeting.
- One of the big successes of the Nansen Initiative was the consultation process, early on, with civil society. This model should be replicated with the HLP which means an early meeting with the Secretariat
- One challenge for the Panel and for NGOs to influence the process is the short time frame. Even with only one year, NGO networks and their members can mobilize on this. Our first recommendation might be that a clear work plan should be developed asap.
- The Panel/Secretariat’s resources constraints are also an issue.
- All this should push to establish synergies with existing initiatives/processes. For example, this year, the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs will be prepare reports on IDPs and Climate Change as well as IDPs and disability. The UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultation topic this year in Geneva is also supposed to focus on climate change.
- NGOs may also be proactive, e.g. organize meetings on specific themes/situations and aim at collecting NGO inputs and sharing with the HLP/Secretariat. Themes could include: data and evidence; Youth and children; AGD considerations; IDP Participation, etc.
- What will happen once the work of the HLP is done? On advocacy and the use of the HLP report, will it be used to raise awareness? How should we support on that? The HLP will produce a report for the UN Secretary-General’s consideration. We do not know yet how it will be disseminated and if it will be public or not. However, NGOs should push for concrete implications for the future, not a report sitting on a shelf.
- NGOs can help on the issue of IDP participation, e.g. collecting testimonies and providing some guidance. Entities/initiatives like JIPS and GP20 can also help.
- OHCHR does not seem to be much in the picture and not clear whether the Panel will consider human rights issues. The SRHR was invited once to attend a meeting of the States Group of Friends of the HLP in Geneva last year. Her previous and forthcoming reports are highly relevant.
- This human rights angle as well as the Protection and prevention dimensions will most certainly have to come from civil society.
- On the financing aspect, links might be made to the Grand Bargain and the report of the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing (January 2016).
- The age, gender, disability, and diversity perspectives might come under the Data side.
- Some NGOs would like to see the Panel focus on tackling xenophobia and racism and linkages might be established with planned activities/events by NGOs.
- How will the HLP work engage with host communities and the continuum of displacement/entire displacement cycle? Doubtful there will be appetite for that but this may come in certain context and from civil society.



- On climate change, we could think of linkages to COP 26 or maybe to COP 27 given that nothing will be ready for COP 26 (Nov 2020).
- The HLP should also come back to the WHS commitment to halve the number of IDPs by 2030.
- Countries the Panel may focus on include: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Colombia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Nigeria, Mexico, Somalia, South Sudan, the Philippines, the Republic Democratic of Congo; for MENA, Iraq or/and Yemen.
- Priorities for NGOs could be to bring inputs to the panel on:
 - The level of ambition for the Panel.
 - Climate change.
 - UN reform.
 - Protection and human rights issues.
 - Prevention.