



## UNHCR's seventeenth meeting with NGOs partners on preparedness and response to Covid-19 in refugee situations

**Theme: How to address the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 by working with development partners, considering the Sustainable Development Goals.**

*15 July 2020*

*Online*

### **Participants:**

#### Moderator and Panelists:

- Stella Ogunlade, Chief, NGO and Civil Society Section, Partnership, and Coordination Service.
  
- Sajjad Malik, Director, Division of Resilience and Solutions
- Melissa Johns, Senior Operations Officer, Fragility, Conflict and Violence Group, World Bank
- Marta Valdes García, Co-chair of IASC RG4 on humanitarian development collaboration & Deputy Humanitarian Director, Global Humanitarian Team, Oxfam
- Daphne Jayasinghe, Head of Policy, International Rescue Committee Europe

#### NGOs:

- About 60+, mostly NGOs.

### **Stella Ogunlade**

- In previous weekly meeting, we touched upon how the pandemics affect PoCs' resilience, in particular the limited freedom of movement that have a negative impact on the livelihoods. Before COVID-19 we were working on the SDGs, the Nexus, particularly after the WHS, and we were working on how to implement the GCR, as several related pledges were made.
- Then COVID-19 interrupted our work and brought the questions: how can we continue, what are the challenges and the adaptations that we have to do to move forward?

### **Sajjad Malik**

- Last week I gave an update to the UNHCR Standing Committee on progress on self-reliance and solutions. It was amazing to see many good examples both at policy and operations levels. E.g. in Ethiopia the 2019 Refugee Proclamation allowed to work and open a bank account. In a number of countries good practices are emerging (driving licenses allowed to be issued, possibility to people bank accounts, etc.). Very encouraging.
- Work with the World Bank under IDA 18 and IDA 19, with the EU in a number of areas and with other bilateral donors was showing good progress. But then all of a sudden COVID-19 sharply reminded how quickly things can reverse, as we are witnessing now.
- All this has a dramatic impact on populations in almost all parts of the world, not on just in poor countries but also in middle-income countries, especially where we had self-reliant refugees who were looking after their own well-being, paying for school fees, rents. The sharp turn prompted them in a spiral where they cannot pay their rent, they are exhausted and more vulnerable, especially in Latin American countries (Venezuela situation).
- We also saw solidarity in including refugees, forcibly displaced, stateless, IDPs, other PoCs in national health responses. It was difficult but the understanding was there that they need to be included in the national systems because no one is safe until everyone is safe.
- It created some grounds for the inclusion discussion to become a little more open. It is something that we need to look into.
- National economies are affected in so many different ways. For forcibly displaced, livelihoods, access to income, food security, education is difficult.



- It is already having implications on employment. We know that urban refugees are more affected because they were employed in the private sector, 97% of them on a daily wage basis. They could earn their income in the informal sector basically or had created small opportunities for themselves. But with lockdowns, businesses started shutting down.
- This also had a spillover effect on other areas, including education. We already had very low rates of refugee education compared to nationals enrollment rates in the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels which are already very low compared to global standards.
- Most of refugee-hosting countries are in low-income countries neighboring their countries of origin. Large IDP operations are also in low-income countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, Colombia, Ecuador where there is a massive impact.
- Economic impact was different in various locations but resilience got particularly reduced in areas where there was already a gap in social protection, existing gaps in food security, high-level of poverty, in countries with low human development and high percentage of population living in densely populated areas, e.g. in Bangladesh, Eastern Africa.
- 20 large refugee-hosting countries were largely impacted. 70% of refugees in those countries had reduced access to income and we had to respond very quickly.
- In refugee camps, in comparison, it was relatively better because assistance was still reaching with food and services provided, e.g. teachers' salaries were paid 3 months in advance, WFP continued food assistance. Urban population was much more disadvantaged.
- Our call centres were normally receiving calls from refugees who had usual asylum papers issues or about other services needed but with the pandemic call centers started receiving enormous amount of calls, some calling for the first time.
- In addition, we increased WASH facilities, or distributed soap and other disinfectants as part of the whole blueprint for our COVID-19 response. We also included cash in 69 operations and expanded it or adjusted to address immediate impacts.
- We started working with the World Bank and our Joint Data Center and with other UN initiatives to gather data and have more evidence to see where this impact is.
- E.g. Data from a survey on refugee employment: 42% employed refugees in Uganda compared to 69% of their hosts. 37% of refugees employed in Kenya compared to 62% of hosts. In Ethiopia, employed refugees are 22% compared to 66% of nationals.
- Data emerging also from Lebanon which is a middle-income country again with the crisis and the financial crisis, with 69% of refugees unemployed.
- Children are also missing out on school feeding programs and the economic crisis has a spillover effect impacting education: families cannot invest in education even if the school reopens, they do not have the means to send kids back to school.
- We need to look at how to bring in education with a number of partners UNESCO, UNICEF, Education Cannot Wait, to address the issue of children who are missing out on education.
- The more difficult right now is the inclusion of forcibly displaced in national plans or UN plans, ensure that they are not left out.
- Health inclusion was relatively easy in comparison, but socio-economic inclusion is becoming a greater challenge: the will may be there but resources are lacking.
- This is the focus of a lot of work being done now, in partnership with the WB and the EU.
- We also look at stepped-up livelihoods programs (e.g. in Latin America), looking at how to bring innovative ways of engaging SMEs, how to engage in more livelihood's opportunities.
- Forcibly displaced have shown their resilience, coming forward in many countries producing masks, PPEs, soap, and distributing them to communities. They want to help communities that are hosting them. We have a database now looking at a number of refugees who have moved to other countries, but are doing odd jobs, had health qualifications, either doctors, nurses but are doing other work because their certificates are not recognized.



- We are also engaging with the UN framework for the immediate social economic response to COVID-19, the work that is being done through the RC systems, through the task team, headquarters New York, we are part of that.
- Discussions have to continue. We need to ensure PoCs are not left out of recovery programs.

#### **Stella Ogunlade**

- Could you say few words on inclusion, whether it is linked to any kind of socio-economic assistance or whether it is about engaging in recovery plans?

#### **Melissa Johns**

- We very much value our partnership with UNHCR and we welcome suggestions across organizations that can help think about how to join forces to face extraordinary challenges.
- Slide 2: How the WB sees its work on forced displacement and the echoes of this framework in our response on COVID-19.
- The WB has 2 overarching goals, one to eliminate extreme poverty: we were excited by our analysis showing that the trajectory of extreme poverty was going steadily downwards. However, it has now steeply gone back up again with COVID-19. 140 million people were predicted to come out of extreme poverty by 2021 but there is a reversal of trends.
- Our second overarching goal is to boost shared prosperity. Specifically in our work on forced displacement we look at the inclusion of vulnerable groups within what we do, including refugees, IDPs and host communities. The development lens that we apply is anchored in that poverty reduction mandate.
- We also see ourselves as part of a broader effort which includes the humanitarian components and we work hard to make sure that we are distinct from but complementary to the humanitarian agenda. We focus on where we feel we might be able to add most value on the medium-term response, in our work on the socio-economic dimension of this crisis.
- Slide 3: we have operations targeting refugees and host populations in 18 countries. We have approved more than \$2 billion of funding and 50 projects have been supported through our two main funds for supporting this work which are IDA 18 refugee sub-window and the global concessional financing facility.
- We started IDA 19 on July 1<sup>st</sup> where we have a window for host communities and refugees that is substantively similar to the IDA 18 refugee sub-window. These projects will continue and in fact we have several new ones in the pipeline.
- Slide 4: WB's COVID response: we see the threats as fourfold for forcibly displaced populations and host communities. The first two will look very familiar because it is the same challenges that we see in developed countries. Our client countries are facing these public health challenges and the economic impact.
- We are concerned about protection risks of scapegoating. This is not central to our mandate but the particular target that refugees and IDP communities are sometimes becoming, the increase in levels of violence are concerning. Obviously this seems to be a major threat to many of the points of progress that we were seeing in the years before COVID-19.
- More central to this conversation and a huge part of our day-to-day work is making sure that these populations do not fall below the radar. Ensuring that the refugee populations, the IDP populations are included in national responses, considered for the long-term implementation of support projects, etc.
- We are concerned about the subsequent increase in the numbers of forcibly displaced persons now or in the coming years, especially from countries that were previously stable and may now become unstable.



- We recognize and are concerned about the strain on governments budgets in host communities, and for our clients and other countries.
- Slide 5: Hope we can find opportunities to work together. The WB has produced a position paper on COVID-19 – not yet public, but coming out shortly.
- The WB is repositioning from regular operations to crisis response, with the goal of helping at least one billion people impacted by COVID-19 globally. We are also focused on restoring the momentum on the elimination of global extreme poverty, not only on the forcibly displaced communities, but also overall.
- For the health response, we have already approved \$6 billion for emergency health support and in the coming 15 months, we expect to approve up to 160 billion to address the social and economic impacts of COVID-19.
- Of all of the 18 countries highlighted earlier with refugee focus projects, almost all of have a WB COVID-19 response effort that specifically supports refugees, IDPs, host communities. This is done either by tweaking the RSW and GCSF projects to include COVID response or by very specifically mentioning refugees and IDPs amongst the beneficiaries of the national COVID response packages that have gone through.
- Our institution has done a very good job over the last couple of months in shifting those funds to be available for COVID response. But once the money is available, we need to ensure that it is implemented in a way that can achieve benefits in our target communities.
- Principles we are operating under: 1) Make sure that COVID responses are inclusive. The inclusive part is something that we are keeping an eye on and will be in the coming months. 2) Conceived this very much to be a complement to, rather than a substitute for, humanitarian assistance. We try to be consistent in our messaging so that there is no confusion amongst our clients or other types of diversions. We have not seen that but it is something that we keep top of mind. We want to make sure that the COVID response does not come at the detriment of other forms of support, particularly in the longer term.
- Looking 5 years out, we are looking at what funds will be needed to address the longer-term issues arising from this crisis and how to ensure that we still have funds available to support communities as they address these challenges.

#### **Stella Ogunlade**

- Could you tell us more about cash assistance in the COVID response and how cash assistance helps to support, food security, livelihood, etc.?

#### **Daphne Jayasinghe**

- IRC is a humanitarian organization that supports people to survive and recover and rebuild their lives after being affected by crisis and conflict. We operate in over 40 countries.
- Slide 2: Two new IRC research, touching on several SDGs but in particular SDG 1 & 2 on Poverty and SDG 8 on Decent work.
- The first report is [The cost of living on COVID-19 humanitarian cash transfers to prevent hunger and hardship](#) and the second is [Locked down and left behind: the impact of COVID-19 on refugees economic inclusion](#) that we co-authored with the Center for Global Development and Refugees International.
- Slide 3: On the cost of living. What we recognized early on is the grave risks of global economic downturn and recession or contraction in GDP in many countries that we work in.
- The implications of that, combined with the lockdown to control the pandemic's effects, have impacted deeply people who were already struggling to make ends meet, already depending on humanitarian assistance and those already sort of rebuilding their lives and setting up their own businesses.



- We wanted to have a sense of what those implications would look like. Work has been done before to assess the implications of economic contractions in economic shocks, on hunger in particular. That was a helpful methodology for us to use to ascertain what the likely effects would be in the future to do some projections.
- We used the methodology of the State the World Food Insecurity Report of last year, which measured the relationship between economic shocks and prevalence of undernutrition along with the World Economic Outlook IMF projections that were made in April and June to measure the relationship between the likelihood of the increase in hunger as a result of those economic shocks (see graph).
- We anticipated a slight decline in hunger in 2020 but as a result of COVID-19, based on the post-COVID World Economic outlook forecast you can see an additional 54 million likely to be hungry in developing countries as a result of economic downturn.
- We know that coming with economic shocks is negative coping, e.g. skipping meals, risky economic strategies for women and girls etc. (deeply concerned about the threat of child marriages as a response).
- We wanted to understand how support was delivered and how we needed to adapt, as IRC.
- The social safety nets have been expanded in a number of countries but we are conscious that those are very limited in fragile and conflict-affected countries and not always inclusive: refugees and displaced populations might be outside of those social safety nets.
- We are conscious that the expansion of social security that we are seeing in developing countries cannot be taken for granted in countries we work in. We recognize that there is going to be a gap and we see humanitarian cash as vital to filling that gap.
- UNHCR is expanding its humanitarian cash programming. This is also something that NGOs are keen to do. We work in collaboration with a number of NGOs to expand that reach and scale but that does rely on immediate funding to support expansion.
- Along with humanitarian cash it is important to support sustainable livelihoods and the eventual recovery effort.
- Slide 4: Impacts on livelihoods. We worked with the CGD and Refugees International to assess the implications of economic downturn in high refugee-hosting countries.
- Our analysis shows that economic growth has slowed in refugee-hosting countries because of the combined impact of COVID and locked measures. Refugees are particularly at risk from the impact of economic contraction.
- The ILO has done an assessment of those sectors that are most likely to be impacted by the downturn (e.g. accommodation manufacturing). We did some analysis on the proportion of refugees working in those sectors: 60% of refugees are more likely to be working in highly impacted sectors.
- Refugees are predominantly also found in the informal sector. In a number of high refugee-hosting countries, we find that refugees are more likely to work in the informal sector than host populations (see graph).
- Slide 5: Important to think about the disproportionate impact on women. The gender impact of COVID-19 will translate in many ways. We are deeply concerned by the shadow pandemic of GBV. In terms of economic opportunities, women are already shouldering the burden of additional unpaid care, being marginalized in sexist economy, etc.
- Women are disproportionately involved in the highly impacted sectors in the informal economy (more likely to be in highly impacted sectors than men).
- Slide 6: Recommendations, capturing both reports and summarizing needs as we see them.
- We estimated – based on minimum expenditure basket in other countries affected by fragility, displacement and conflict – that delivering 6 months of humanitarian cash to the



additional numbers affected would lead to a grand total of 1.7 billion just to mitigate that additional risk of hunger.

- The scale of the response is reflected in the huge needs that we have identified.
- Social safety nets are being expanded and health care is made accessible and inclusive and capture the most marginalized displaced populations.
- What we are relying on, as a humanitarian organization, is multiyear flexible financing and support for livelihoods and economic inclusion programs. We continue to adapt our programming to meet social distancing requirements. We continue to adapt with our partners and with the people we work with to consider the new requirements of the market, to rebuild a more resilient and sustainable and inclusive economy and think more about independent food systems given that food insecurity.
- The barriers to formal labor market existed for refugees before COVID-19. These will just be amplified by the economic downturn and some of the pressures on host populations. We have to ensure those already discriminatory laws and practical and regulatory barriers to decent work are addressed and revised, particularly those faced by refugee women.

#### **Marta Valdes Garcia**

- Slide 1: Representing the IASC RG 4 to share one of its products: [The light guidance on collective outcomes](#) and make some of the linkages with nexus and COVID-19 response because we see clearly how important and relevant it is.
- Slide 2: On 29 June we launched the light guidance as a joint product of the IASC RG4 and the joint Steering Committee of the UN. It has been led by UNHCR and WHO.
- It comes from requests from field and HQ level on how we can work on collective outcomes, how we can operationalize the Nexus from a theoretical perspective and a practical and pragmatic approach. The document is for leaders and practitioners at the field level. Giving practical clues on how to pragmatically operationalize collective outcomes.
- The RG focuses on developing normative products to support the practice around the nexus and getting clarity and knowledge around it. It is composed of a diverse membership with UN agencies, some of them humanitarian, some of them going into the development side. We also have a number of international and local NGOs and different platforms.
- We link with development actors and with donors. OECD is part of it, as well as the WB.
- The document started to be developed before COVID-19, resulting in a broad consultation with more than 40 agencies, NGOs and different actors.
- Aim of the document is to respond to five key questions: why? What? When? Who? How? in a very short manner because it is dedicated to practitioners and leaders.
- It highlights the main steps with key questions that will guide leaders and practitioners in analyzing the situation in the country-level context and defining what the entry point for collective outcomes is.
- The second step is about convening stakeholders. Third step is about analysis. Fourth, designing the collective outcomes. Fifth is financing collective outcomes. Sixth is about implementation. Seventh is about evaluation. Eight is about mainstreaming.
- The main idea is to ensure that we identify the key questions that need to be raised at every stage in order to facilitate the process.
- We did not want to provide a recipe because the nexus is an important change in our ways of working and there are a number of questions around its implementation. We needed to make it adaptable to different context and realities, so we decided to provide flexible guidance that will help, adapt, and ensure it is customized to the reality at country level.



- Aim to provide support for multi-mandate organizations but as well for organizations and agencies with a unique mandate realizing and recognizing the importance of getting the right stakeholders and actors around the table.
- The collective outcomes are not only a humanitarian priority it must be a priority shared among development, peace, and humanitarian actors.
- We are not suggesting that all the programs and all the outcomes need to be implemented by all different factors but we are suggesting that we need to identify a common ground, common objectives and to build on each other's trends and to ensure that we have a common objective to work.
- The Nexus and the collective outcomes imply a change in culture and changing ways of working: full flexibility is going to be key. Different contexts calls for different solutions. We cannot compare the situation for example in Mali with the situation in Afghanistan.
- When we speak about Nexus, often the discussion focuses on funding. The RG4 has been working as well with the RG5 (focused on finances and funding). It is clear that for collective outcomes, there is a need to have quality funding. Quality funding in this frame means multiyear, flexible funding. There is a need to ensure that we can adapt. To be able to work with different actors, with multiple mandates, we need funding that can accommodate different realities.
- The document is a live document due to the fact that changing culture requires learning. We want to ensure that we can incorporate feedback and learn from field practice. With different organizations, we are setting up a system to collect feedback and learning.
- Slide 3: COVID-19 is a global crisis, and a moment calling for a Nexus approach.
- The pandemic is going to stay with us for one or two more years but the impact of the COVID-19 will be longer. We know already that one of the pandemic's results is the restrictions of movements and the measures to control the spread. This leads to some increase in terms of humanitarian needs and there is a socio-economic impact.
- Oxfam issued [a report last week about hunger and the implications in some fragile contexts](#).
- E.g. we have seen in the Central African Republic how the restrictions of movement and the partial closure of borders have an effect on food prices increase (raised to 80% in some cases; even national produces, which prices have increased by 50%). For the displaced and affected populations in the existing protracted crisis, this is coming at a moment when needs were already extremely high.
- In very fragile countries, where humanitarian needs were extremely high before COVID-19, we now see those being exacerbated because of the socio-economic impact of the crisis.
- There is also an important risk in terms of political stability, social unrest. 80% of protection clusters at field level are reporting increasing violence since the outbreak of the pandemic. We can already see some of the risks realizing.
- Achieving the SDGs, e.g. the one related to poverty, was already very challenging. The impact of the COVID-19 could challenge that further.
- All this highlights the implications and connections of development, humanitarian, and peace work. With COVID-19, we see challenges and potential opportunities (e.g. the UN SG global ceasefire call could be a contribution to deliver lasting peace options and solutions).
- We have called for a global economic stimulus package. It has not been agreed and acted upon yet but that is an opportunity.
- Slide 4: The collective outcomes can bring opportunities and options for us to strengthen the work around the Nexus, because we believe that in these global crises, all the different actors need to play their role. We have seen development actors already making plans, humanitarians responding, and peace actors having analyzed different plans.



- There is no space to have sequential actions (not any more humanitarian response followed by a development action). All the actors must be working in a connected way and ensure that objectives are connected and implementation is coordinated with complementary, flexible funding, especially for fragile countries to ensure that we prevent potential risks of further deterioration and escalation. Ensuring that we seize this opportunity of changing ways of working and culture is a difficult aspect.
- COVID-19 is now our new normal. When we started back in December, we did not foresee the dimension that it was going to take. We know now that this is going to be the new reality and we believe that this light guidance can contribute to the design and implementation of collaborative strategies around collective outcomes.

## Q&A

### Islamic Relief Worldwide

- The WB talks about how it focuses on inclusion and making sure a displaced population is included in national plans. Could you be more specific and indicate how this is done?
- Can the World Bank provide its thinking around microfinance?
- On exclusion and other issues, how is the WB going to address the issue of shrinking space of civil societies in many countries? Normally, civil societies are those who facilitate in addressing the issue of exclusion.

### ICVA

- To UNHCR, you talked about a database where you have information about the skills of refugees and particularly those that are under-employed compared to their level of education, could you say a bit more about this?
- The WB talked about how it is active now in a crisis mode. How does that work? The WB's DNA is not necessarily about emergency action. What kind of adaptations were put in place?
- Has the the current crisis has led to some rethinking or progress in thinking about the WB's interaction and cooperation with NGOs? E.g. in the form of direct contributions to NGOs or cooperation agreements, exchange of data and information. How does the crisis influence the WB's approach to civil society?
- To UNHCR, there is a [2019 Updated Guidance Note on UNHCR Engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals](#). Can you tell us a bit more about this work and the strategic UNHCR engagement with the SDGs? How does this drive more precise UNHCR workstreams?

### Act Alliance

- Does IRC have any projections for how long special measures would need to be in place, or to what extent you advocate for longer-term systemic changes? Many of us have been working on cash transfers for example. Are there other elements that you see having longer-term value for change?

### Melissa Johns

- How we are doing the inclusion? The first word that came to mind was "harassment", meaning we are staying on top of the progress of these major packages that have been approved and are going into implementation. We are in conversations with governments to ensure that all vulnerable groups are considered, including refugees and IDPs.
- "Harassing" is not a nice word to use when talking about our clients, but it just highlights a general focus of my team to watch these packages' progress and make sure refugees and IDPs are included from the outset. If they are not, then through the implementation we





capture these populations and we stay on top of things. There is no magic answer except focus and ensuring these populations receive benefits from the approved packages.

- Microfinance is supported by the WB and the IFC. Broadly, the IFC has pushed out a similar level of funding (billions of USD) to support private sector firms through this economic crisis. A flood of liquidity to our clients and private sector firms in our client countries, to ensure they are able to stay afloat and maintain employment. That has been a significant focus and an immediate response in the first few months of the crisis.
- On how does the crisis mode work. 'Crisis' for the World Bank is different than for your organizations. 'Crisis' mode is really about freeing up all of the approved funding immediately. In February, March we freed up the funding that we had just received through the capital increase and the IDA round we finished in December. The crisis started after a major round of fundraising on behalf of the WB, so we had the funds available to be able to front-load them for immediate response.
- Re-thinking about working with NGOs as we really move into implementation which is again rapid for us but quite slow for you and the timelines that you all work with. We are recognizing that we are limited in our current structures on how to implement these projects because we are not able to travel, we do not have the presence on the ground that we normally have, and in general we have a lighter presence in country offices than other organizations. There is a lot of discussions about the need to think about the entire development and humanitarian community that might be able to help implement these programmes but I have not seen any policy changes yet. The need to respond, the recognition that we are not able to respond in our normal ways or at the volume that we need to respond but we still have rules in place that require extensive reviews and some consultation for certain partners.

### **Sajjad Malik**

- To IRW, on the inclusion side, we are learning. For some countries, it was not so easy as more resources and support were needed (PPEs, ventilators, support to national systems, regional hospitals, etc.) In the true spirit of the GCR (supporting refugee-hosting countries, burden-sharing, making sure that they are not left alone) the support was enormous. We received some really good support.
- On the socio-economic side, the support that comes from the WB and bilateral donors is absolutely essential. I call it "aggressive diplomacy": informing governments with data and evidence, not just the human stories, which we are beginning to do more with the JDC, with the World Bank and with other partners.
- IDA 18 and IDA 19 are there. Half of it, up to a billion dollars for the next fiscal year will go in the form of grants. We can create a lot of opportunities for working towards inclusion.
- On microfinance, there is close to 8 billion fast track financing facility, which aims to keep companies, businesses, and preserve jobs. It is part of a much larger portfolio for the next 12 to 15 months. We are working with the Africa team and hopefully, we will have more collaboration, e.g. projects in Kakuma, Kenya and we are also looking at staff secondment to bring forced displacement aspects to IFC as well.
- On our own work on microfinance, we have 45 contracts with financial service providers in 13 countries that is expanding. We are looking at microfinance to go further, especially where the concerns are on food security and related issues.
- To ICVA, on the database: it is rather a lot about community-based approach work because many qualified refugees reach out to our colleagues in community centers or through our teams. They are coming forward with qualifications and we also have our own RSD database, with health workers on that.



- We still have infections that are not as massive as in some of other areas, but we are in this preparedness mode looking at all those who had qualifications in health or health-related work, including our DAFI graduates (20% of our DAFI scholarships were health-related).
- On the SDGs' document: the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response is also something we are working on. The UN workstream is also expanding rapidly on the COVID response. There are five work streams under the framework: protecting people through social protection and basic services; protecting jobs; the macroeconomic side effect, which we are not too much involved in; promoting social cohesion peace – xenophobia is a major risk, an area we need to keep an eye on because if forced displaced are seen as infected, it can signal a different direction.
- The work of the UN and the SDGs is very much a work in which we are all going in the same direction, reinforcing each other rather than working in parallel.
- From the forcibly displaced point of view it is encouraging to see the environment that we are in. Even though it is a global pandemic and unprecedented crisis, we see more collaboration taking place, more than before, between NGOs, UN, host governments, WB, development actors. There is also more coordination because there are so many work streams running parallel.
- The GCR, the GRF and the pledges that were made by States, the private sector, all stakeholders have shown to be timely. We are now following-up and trying to engage in the implementation and where we stand on some of those pledges.
- Solidarity and burden-sharing are absolutely essential for rapid response, we call it “crisis management” but it something that brings benefits to the people as quickly as possible.
- E.g. in Latin American countries where people cannot even have a proper shower, wash hands, and have personal hygiene. We need to keep it in mind.
- On self-reliance and inclusion, first, we made some significant but we also now see the risks of reversing some of those gains. We need to work on moving with solid approaches.

#### **Daphne Jayasinghe**

- To Act Alliance, the projections that we made were based on World Economic Outlook forecasts that were made in April and June. We already saw a change in those forecasts: a downgrade in GDP growth between April and June. Our estimates are already out of date.
- What we know is that the anticipated recovery is likely to be unpredictable and unsteady, bringing to the point about the importance of long-term but also flexible measures.
- Given the unpredictability of the context, given the anticipated economic shocks, it is vital to have a combination of both short-term humanitarian cash transfers and longer-term resilience and building livelihoods to cope with unanticipated shocks.
- The systemic change is something we are also advocating for. A lot of people are talking about the opportunities that we can seize as a result of the kind of global reset that were undergoing the moment. Those systemic changes could be for examples working diversifying away from export crops, increased food independence, more resilient systems, addressing climate challenges that communities are already facing. Those long-term systemic changes are vital and need to be coupled with the short-term humanitarian emergency response that we are talking about in terms of humanitarian cash transfers.

#### **Stella Ogunlade**

- UNHCR has issued documents on its COVID-19 preparedness and response, including [UNHCR's COVID-19: Emerging practices on livelihoods and economic inclusion](#), May 2020.
- Next meeting will focus on crisis communication in the context of COVID-19 with speakers from NRC and UNHCR.