

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROGRAMMES AND FINANCE**

**Twenty-eighth Session**

**ADOPTING A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT:**

**OPERATIONALIZING THE TRIPLE NEXUS**



## ADOPTING A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT: OPERATIONALIZING THE TRIPLE NEXUS

### Introduction

1. IOM is one of the largest agencies responding to internal displacement and one of the few United Nations bodies whose operations on internal displacement span the crisis continuum – from preparedness and risk reduction, to humanitarian protection and assistance, as well as transition to longer-term solutions and recovery. Most of its crisis-related programming relates to internal displacement, implemented at the individual, community and structural level. The Organization's mandate and experience mean that it is present on the ground with the capacity and expertise to directly implement and support the work of its partners across the humanitarian, peacebuilding and development spheres. IOM adheres to the recommendations of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC) on the humanitarian, development and peace nexus (triple nexus).

2. As the international community continues its work to support the High-level Panel on Internal Displacement, IOM aims to review its institutional approach to internal displacement so as to effectively and holistically meet the needs of affected populations and to further contribute to operationalizing the nexus.

3. This paper contains a brief overview of the Organization's comprehensive approach to internal displacement, with a particular focus on the policies and frameworks that advance its efforts to operationalize the humanitarian, development and peace nexus. In addition to a broad overview of the main functional areas that lend value to IOM's unique contributions to the nexus, the paper will showcase two examples of its concerted efforts to operationalize the triple nexus through targeted programming and partner support. This will demonstrate how mobility and migration perspectives, principles and programming help to strengthen resilience, address the needs and impacts of sudden movements on populations and host communities, and help to mitigate protracted displacement, including by empowering and enabling populations to progressively resolve their displacement situations.

### Background

4. An estimated 50.8 million people are currently internally displaced.<sup>1</sup> The volume of new displacements continues to outpace available solutions, with a majority living in protracted displacement situations. Global estimates of the average duration of displacement range from 10 to 26 years,<sup>2</sup> with people in some 50 countries experiencing internal displacement for 10 years or more.<sup>3</sup>

5. Individuals and families in camps or camp-like settings, host communities or urban dwellings are in acutely vulnerable situations for years and are often dependent on humanitarian aid. Put simply, responses to internal displacement aim to protect their rights, meet their needs, reduce their risks and vulnerabilities, and pursue solutions. Typically, most of this has been done by the humanitarian community. However, over time, the pressures on these systems, services and resources weigh heavily on local societies, sometimes at the expense of social cohesion and stability, and to the detriment of progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

---

<sup>1</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2020* (Geneva, April 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Ferris, *When refugee displacement drags on, is self-reliance the answer?* [blog post], Brookings Institution (Washington, D.C., June 2018).

<sup>3</sup> World Bank, *Forcibly Displaced: Toward a Development Approach Supporting Refugees, the Internally Displaced, and Their Hosts* (Washington, D.C., 2017).

6. Internal displacement limits the ability of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to contribute to the economy and incurs a wide range of socioeconomic costs that are borne by the IDPs, their hosts, their governments or other aid providers.<sup>4</sup> In 2020, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) conservatively estimated that the average direct immediate economic impact of internal displacement, including response costs and lost productivity, exceeds USD 20 billion per year,<sup>5</sup> not accounting for indirect and longer-term human development impacts. For the eight countries included in the study, this translates to up to 11 per cent of the affected State's GDP each year.<sup>6</sup> Sustainable development helps reduce the vulnerabilities that lead to displacement and minimize its impact, while effective and timely resolution of displacement situations is key to longer-term socioeconomic well-being and human development.

7. As well as putting people's lives at risk, crisis situations can weaken or eradicate the social, physical, political, cultural, economic, judicial and security structures and systems required for societies and communities to function. Transitioning out of the immediate, emergency phase of a crisis can also reveal deeper, more complex and longer-lasting impacts on the stability of the affected areas. This can aggravate displacement situations and undermine efforts towards sustainable recovery and solutions. This recognition led to peace becoming increasingly understood as an integral component of the nexus.

8. In recent years there has been a greater call for multi-year, whole-of-society and multidisciplinary approaches largely expressed in the form of collective outcomes, part of a comprehensive humanitarian, development and peace nexus approach to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

### **International approach to the nexus**

9. In addition to the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and regional and international instruments relevant to internal displacement, several key initiatives have emerged in recent years to help strengthen responses through the nexus. Internationally, the outcomes of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and the associated Agenda for Humanity initiatives have sought to improve collaboration across the humanitarian-development nexus within a "new way of working", while the twin resolutions on sustaining peace adopted by the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly in 2016<sup>7</sup> broadened the effort to include peace in the triple nexus. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015) and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2015), among others, are increasingly understood to have an intrinsic role in addressing internal displacement.

10. At the inaugural meeting of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement in February 2020, the United Nations Secretary-General called on the panellists to help draw global attention to internal displacement and catalyse a new and stepped-up effort to find solutions. He urged the Panel to think outside the box with a view to producing bold and practical recommendations. The Panel was established at the request of fifty-seven United Nations Member States, each with diverse and varying stakes in an enhanced response to internal displacement. This further highlights a recognition that current efforts are insufficient and that both individual States and the international community as a whole need to pursue a new approach to internal displacement. Going forward, the Panel will cover a number of topics related to operationalizing the nexus, with a particular emphasis on facilitating solutions.

---

<sup>4</sup> IDMC, *Unveiling the Cost of Internal Displacement* (Geneva, February 2019).

<sup>5</sup> IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID) 2020* (Geneva, April 2020).

<sup>6</sup> IDMC, *Unveiling the Cost of Internal Displacement*.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) and United Nations General Assembly resolution 262 (2016).

## **IOM policies and frameworks for operationalizing the nexus**

11. The Organization's foundation for operationalizing the nexus in internal displacement contexts is firmly established in its Constitution, as well as in various resolutions adopted by its governing bodies and other strategic documents, such as the IOM Migration Governance Framework. IOM is also part of the United Nations reform efforts in this regard. As part of the review of its institutional approach to internal displacement in order to more effectively operationalize the nexus, IOM will take as a starting point a number of its existing policies, frameworks and strategies, most notably the Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF), which Member States welcomed in Council Resolution No. 1243 of 27 November 2012. This Framework outlines how the Organization's activities complement existing international systems, including OECD/DAC, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee cluster system, and those relevant to peace and security. In addition, the scope of the Framework's 15 sectors of assistance draws on the humanitarian, peacebuilding, migration and development fields. Although it predates discourse around the triple nexus, the MCOF anticipated the need for coordinated and integrated programming to meet immediate, medium- and longer-term needs before, during and after a crisis.

12. Other key policies, frameworks and strategies that will underpin further review of IOM's approach to the nexus include: the IOM Principles for Humanitarian Action (2015); the IOM Framework for Addressing Internal Displacement (2017); the Progressive Resolution of Displacement Situations Framework (2016); the Taking Sendai Forward: IOM Strategic Work Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience 2017-2020 (2017); the Accountability to Affected Populations Framework (revised 2020); the Institutional Framework for Addressing Gender-based Violence in Crises (2018); and the IOM Institutional Strategy on Migration and Sustainable Development (2020).

## **The Organization's approach to the triple nexus in internal displacement contexts**

13. IOM is reviewing the internal measures necessary to bring its work into line with its internal and external commitments to operationalizing the nexus, including the Grand Bargain and the current United Nations reform process. At the inter-agency level, IOM actively participates in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Results Group 4 on Humanitarian-Development Collaboration, including playing a key role in finding consensus on the peace elements that the nexus entails.<sup>8</sup>

14. Operationally, IOM is investing in building greater coherence across its own preparedness, humanitarian, peacebuilding and development programming through MCOF-based strategic planning. With an in-country presence long before and after a crisis, and its surged humanitarian capacity from the onset of a crisis, IOM also leverages its capacities in these different fields and across sectors to build partnerships and promote operational predictability and continuity through multi-year and multisectoral programmes.

15. IOM programming over the years has demonstrated that early investment in IDPs as agents of their own solutions is intrinsic to progress. In addition, a range of supportive measures can help to build or reinforce self-reliance; while well-designed community-based approaches can minimize negative impacts, maximize the contributions of IDPs to a community's well-being, and facilitate incremental steps towards solutions that have a broader transformative effect on recovery and development. The Organization's entry points for these investments take place before a crisis occurs, during humanitarian responses and throughout recovery and sustainable development interventions.

16. Prior to a crisis, early warning and preparedness activities result in more effective responses and recovery. IOM works alongside government partners on humanitarian preparedness,

---

<sup>8</sup> A concrete example of the work of Results Group 4 is the October 2020 paper: [Exploring peace within the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus \(HDPN\)](#)

development and peace-related activities, providing support for the necessary frameworks and capacity, including by working with communities and local authorities to build resilience, reduce risk, and prepare effective responses.

17. During a humanitarian crisis, IOM begins planning early for longer-term resilience, transition and recovery, with such responses often overlapping. Moreover, to the extent possible, its humanitarian protection and assistance activities aim to further support longer-term benefits and positively influence the capacity of IDPs to build self-reliance and recover from the crisis. The Organization's camp management responsibilities help ensure that internal governance structures are in place to facilitate informed decision-making processes and the participation of IDPs in the identification of solutions. These activities help to build dialogue, engage communities, promote social cohesion and prepare populations for life after displacement. Similarly, shelter activities build on local construction practices and material, which communities can own and lead throughout the recovery process. IOM also applies cash-based assistance throughout various sectors, a modality that helps populations meet their needs and priorities as appropriate, regardless of the originating sector.

18. In line with the IOM Progressive Resolution of Displacement Situations Framework, the Organization's efforts towards durable solutions involve a series of steps taken – sequentially or simultaneously – at individual, community and structural levels. With IOM humanitarian assistance assuring that the immediate needs of displaced persons are met, its transition, peacebuilding and development-oriented programming aims to build resilience and self-reliance, restore peace and security, and meet other infrastructural and socioeconomic needs to enhance the well-being of the IDPs and host communities. This also includes strengthening local governance mechanisms, empowering local government actors and promoting coherence with broader planning for sustainable development. IOM also carries out a wide range of programmes and activities that specifically target the humanitarian, development and peace nexus.

#### **Example of a targeted nexus activity**

19. As an example, IOM's community stabilization activities approach specifically contributes to operationalizing the nexus. Neither specifically humanitarian nor developmental, the approach has strong connections with both fields, as well as close links to resilience-building and peacebuilding. It can be implemented concurrently with programmes focused on humanitarian response and development assistance, and/or be incorporated into humanitarian or development interventions. It combines the adaptive, flexible and rapid interventions of humanitarian assistance with development-oriented programming aimed at elevating a community to a point where it can eventually transition to and benefit from development programmes or be self-reliant.

20. This approach requires a broad range of interventions from diverse actors, including communities, civil society and governments, and can directly or indirectly benefit both displaced populations and community members. It helps to restore or augment the systems and services necessary for societies and communities to function, including the responsibility and accountability of local institutions as a precursor to building trust between communities and their leadership. It also aims to meet infrastructure, economic, service-related or legal objectives, but in a way that catalyses additional gains for peaceful and inclusive societies. For instance, if a local health clinic requires reconstruction, in addition to ensuring its repair, the community stabilization activities approach would also identify and promote additional benefits, for example: community consultations; social cohesion; opting for local labour across different community groups through cash-for-work; public works; and assigning a central, visible role to local authorities. In the words of a relocated IDP woman in Zimbabwe: "I'm not happy because I now have a school to send my children, I'm happy because I sat

with my brothers and sisters under that tree, decided we needed a school, then we organized ourselves and built the school with our own hands. I melded the bricks.”<sup>9</sup>

21. While the community stabilization activities approach can be beneficial in a number of different contexts – including as a preventative measure to reduce fragility risks – it is particularly suited to environments where circumstances are not yet conducive to durable solutions as a way to build on positive changes that can lead on to solutions and broader recovery. However, given that the emphasis of the approach is on the proximate, immediate threats to stability, often in a rapidly evolving environment, it is essential to have contextual analysis, conflict sensitivity and a high degree of flexibility and risk tolerance from donors and implementers.

22. As the co-lead of the Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster – and in line with the inter-agency [Camp Management Toolkit](#), which provides practical support for national authorities, national and international humanitarian actors, as well as IDPs and refugees involved in camp management – IOM includes advocacy for the nexus and durable solutions as part of its life-saving activities.

### **Example showing the role of data in supporting the nexus**

23. The IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is an information system and set of tools developed to gather and analyse data in order to disseminate critical multilayered information on the mobility, vulnerabilities and needs of displaced populations and enable decision makers and responders to provide these populations with better context-specific assistance. In 2019, 81 per cent of Humanitarian Needs Overviews and Humanitarian Response Plans used the DTM as a source of data on internal displacement situations.

24. The Organization’s data collection efforts in recent years have highlighted the importance of understanding and analysing the complex relationship between key displacement-related vulnerabilities, community stability and durable solutions. The DTM draws on existing humanitarian data and adds new and more targeted metrics in order to explore and develop transition- and recovery-oriented analysis. This helps to develop a foundational understanding of a community’s preconditions, such as stability or service conditions, which is useful in predicting the sustainable resolution of an individual’s displacement. This approach has been applied in transitional and early recovery settings in, for instance, Ethiopia, Iraq, Mozambique, South Sudan and the Lake Chad basin.

25. In addition to the results produced by the data collection and analysis, the process of collaboration, partnership and dissemination can also further support the nexus. During the protracted crisis in Afghanistan, the country has witnessed periods of simultaneous violence and transition as well as periods of conflict and stabilization in which humanitarian assistance, developmental programming and peace processes have run concurrently. IOM works in close coordination with national and provincial authorities, and supports a wide range of humanitarian partners and clusters by providing emergency tracking updates on large-scale or sudden onset movements, such as during the 2018 drought. Furthermore, stabilization and development actors, including within the Government and the World Bank, use information from the DTM to prioritize communities and districts with higher concentrations of IDPs and returnees to receive reintegration and livelihood assistance and improvements to core infrastructure and essential services. Health partners – including the Humanitarian Health Cluster – use DTM data to inform their selection of priority, at-risk districts and communities, and the health facilities in need of strengthened capacity, response, surveillance, as well as risk education for polio, tuberculosis, and other infectious diseases.

---

<sup>9</sup> Head of programme interview with key informant, IOM field monitoring report, Zimbabwe, 2014.

## **Conclusion**

26. It is the primary responsibility of States to address internal displacement, including by providing the necessary political solutions to the conditions impeding its resolution. Efforts to operationalize the nexus are a positive step in this direction.

27. IOM is investing in building greater coherence across its own preparedness, humanitarian, development programming and peacebuilding through its draft strategic results framework and with the MCOF-based strategic tool to enhance the operationalization of the nexus across the Organization.

28. As the nexus requires a context-based approach, the Organization's decentralized structure ensures in-country presence long before and after a crisis, together with surged humanitarian capacity from the onset of a crisis. IOM also leverages its operations across sectors, to build partnerships and promote predictability and continuity through multi-year and multisectoral programmes.

29. In order to define a coherent and inclusive triple nexus approach to internal displacement, the Organization will draw on its unique added-value to the nexus, both as a significant actor in the areas of humanitarian action, sustainable development, and peace and security, and as a flexible, dynamic mostly field-based organization, able to fill gaps and reinforce the work of governments and other partners across all sectors, including by supporting data collection and analysis in order to respond to the needs and vulnerabilities of internally displaced persons.