

## High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

### Side event - The impact of internal displacement on cities and towns: the need for nationally owned development approaches to progress towards SDG 11 targets

#### Concept note

#### Background

The [2023 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development](#) (HLPF) convened under the auspices of Economic and Social Council theme this year is '**Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels**. It will include an in-depth review of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17. The **Goal of SDG 11** is to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. In relation to this SDG the HLPF plenary will in general focus around the experience of local governments in urban crisis response and working towards recovery and building resilience and steps being taken to promote managed density, regulate expansion and reduce rural-urban land conversion.

At the end of 2022 over **71 million people were living in internal displacement** worldwide, a 20 percent increase in a year and the highest number ever recorded ([IDMC, 2023](#)) While in the past, most of the protracted internal displacement was caused by **violence and conflict, disaster-related** internal displacement is becoming widespread, with 53 percent of all new displacements in 2022 triggered by disasters. The World Bank predicts that by 2050, **climate change** could force more than 216 million people to move within their own countries ([World Bank, 2021](#)). Some **80 percent of all IDPs live in or near cities**, often in hazard-prone informal and under-serviced settlements, disconnected from economic and social opportunities and struggling to access basic services and assistance ([World Bank, 2017](#)).

In 2021, a [High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement](#) (HLP), commissioned by the UN Secretary-General, called for a major shift from a **humanitarian-driven approach to an approach that recognizes solutions to internal displacement as a development priority in which national ownership is crucial**. To take forward the HLP recommendations, the UN Secretary-General launched in June 2022 his [Action Agenda on Internal Displacement](#) laying out a common vision for the UN system to work towards solutions, prevention and protection. The **Action Agenda recognizes the urgent need for earlier, increased and more predictable engagement of development actors to support national and local governments** in scaling up their efforts to address the challenges of internal displacement.

The **Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons** has stressed the role that development can play in reducing displacement risks, facilitating durable solutions and ensuring that IDPs are not left behind. Her recent [vision report](#) noted that more IDPs are relocating to urban areas and the need for response strategies to consider the urban eco-system and the central role of municipal and local authorities.

**Humanitarian assistance in urban displacement contexts cannot provide sustainable solutions for IDPs and wider displacement-affected communities.** Internal displacement has been a major catalyst for unplanned urbanization leading to increases in urban poverty, strain on basic services and insecurity. Short-term project-based assistance is not always aligned to system strengthening in support of municipal authorities and local systems approach that is required. Protracted humanitarian assistance to IDP camps near urban areas also risks eroding the population's faith in the capacities and relevance of their own local governments to solve these crises. ([IED, JIPS and UN-Habitat, 2020](#)).

### **Urban internal displacement in Somalia – the importance of government leadership and coordinated responses**

There are at least 3.9 million IDPs at the end of 2022 with conflict and violence having been the main triggers of internal displacement in Somalia for three decades ([IDMC, 2023](#)). However in more recent years droughts and floods have become a significant trigger of displacement with in 2022 1.4 million displacements recorded related to disaster (compared to 621,000 related to conflict and violence). Most IDPs are concentrated in urban areas such as Mogadishu and Baidoa with the scale of influxes into already overcrowded areas putting IDPs at risk of forced eviction and secondary urban displacement. Many IDPs are pastoralists, and their skills are not easily transferable to urban environments.

The **Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia** has taken several important steps to ensure that refugees, returnees, IDPs and vulnerable host communities are incorporated in National Development Plan 9 (2020 – 2024) under a broader durable solutions agenda and developed significant coordination architecture at all levels of government. Somalia has also adopted an impressive array of new policies, including a new Social Protection Policy, the National IDP and Refugee-returnee Policy, the Interim Protocol on Housing, Land and Property, and the IDPs Evictions Guidelines, to name a few. Somalia has a lot of positive practice to showcase in terms of area-based solutions to ensuring integrated and comprehensive programming for host and displaced populations and the engagement of displacement affected communities in the development of priorities. This includes in its response to COVID-19 and Socio-economic Impact Assessment which identified populated urban areas and IDP camps in peri-urban camps combined with limited access to essential services. It is also applying a whole of government approach to address the issues facing displacement-affected communities through the Durable Solutions Unit of the Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development (MoPIED) and the Durable Solutions Secretariat that brings together 16 government institutions. Local authorities in urban areas are leading and owning the development solutions approach to displacement-affected communities such as the Durable Solutions Unit at the Baidoa/Mogadishu Regional Administration, the land allocation and city planning by the Mayor's Office and the Baidoa City Strategy launched in 2023.

In its submission to the HLP, the **Government of Somalia** noted the need to find solutions for improved access to land and housing due to forced evictions in urban centres, creation of social development models to support district council formation and community action plan development and strengthened use of country systems and direct budget support. ([Federal Government of Somalia, 2020](#)).

**UNDP and UN-Habitat** have previously partnered together as part of a UN-Habitat-led consortium under the EU funded RE-INTEG project 'Innovative durable solutions for IDPs and returnees in Mogadishu through enhanced governance, employment and access to basic and protective services (2017-2020). Partners helped governance structures become more accessible to IDPs and enabled authorities to provide greater services that cement the relationship between the citizen and state. Since 2021 under the overall lead of **IOM** in *Saameynta – Scaling Up Solutions to Displacement in Somalia* funded through the Multi-Donor Trust Fund, all three organizations have been working together in three target cities of Baidoa, Bossaso and Beletweyne. The programme promotes the sustainable integration of displacement communities by empowering governments to leverage value generated by urbanization and urban infrastructure investment.

#### **HLLP side event**

Under the sponsorship of the **Federal Government of Somalia** a virtual side event co-organized by **UNDP, UN-Habitat, and IOM** will be held during the HLPF on **Wednesday 12 July 2023 from 13:15 – 14:30 EDT/20:15 – 21:30 EAT.**

The side event will make the case that addressing urban internal displacement is integral to allow progress toward SDG 11 targets in several internal displacement-impacted countries (including Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Yemen) and planning for future influx essential given the rapid increase in disaster and climate induced internal displacement in particular for many countries worldwide.

### Agenda\*:

13:15 – 13:20 **Welcome and opening remarks** (Luca Renda, Team Leader, Recovery Solutions and Human Mobility Team, Crisis Bureau, UNDP)

13:20 – 14:00 **Panel on urban internal displacement and impact on SDG 11**

- *What is the key learning from Somalia in terms of managing influxes of IDPs into urban areas and what are the main challenges for municipal and local authorities to be able to lead and coordinate the response?* Ms Zahra Abdi, Director for Durable Solutions and M&E, Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, Federal Government of Somalia
- *How can we strengthen the role of national actors (including civil society, human rights institutions and the private sector) to ensure the response is locally owned?* Ms Paula Gaviria Betancur, Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons
- *How has the UN partnered with the government to support sustainable solutions to rapidly growing urban internal displacement – lessons from the joint IOM-UN Habitat-UNDP Somalia Saameynta (impact) programme.* Mr George Conway, DSRSG, RC/HC a.i, Somalia
- *What is the role of development action and financing in responses to urban displacement?* Dr Bärbel Kofler, Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany

14:00 – 14:25 **Interactive dialogue** (Q&A and statements from the floor)

14:25 – 14:30 **Wrap up and call to action with member states and partners** (Christopher Williams, Director, New York Office, UN Habitat)

*\*(all times New York/EDT time zone)*