



**General Assembly**

Distr.  
GENERAL

A/HRC/13/21/Add.4

29 December 2009

Original: ENGLISH

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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL  
Thirteenth session  
Agenda item 3

**PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS, CIVIL,  
POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING  
THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT**

**Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of  
internally displaced persons, Walter Kälin**

**Addendum**

**Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons**

**Summary**

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, annex) stipulate in principle 6 that “displacement shall last no longer than required by the circumstances”. Drawing on existing international law, the right of internally displaced persons to a durable solution is articulated in principles 28-30.

The Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons set out in this report is organized around four questions.

Question 1. What is a durable solution for internally displaced persons?

The specific needs and human rights concerns of internally displaced persons (IDPs) do not automatically disappear when a conflict or natural disaster ends. Nor do they fade away when people initially find safety from ongoing conflict or disaster. Rather, the displaced – whether they return to their homes, settle elsewhere in the country or try to integrate locally – usually face continuing problems, requiring support until they achieve a durable solution to their displacement.

A durable solution is achieved when internally displaced persons no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement. It can be achieved through:

- Sustainable reintegration at the place of origin (hereinafter referred to as “return”);
- Sustainable local integration in areas where internally displaced persons take refuge (local integration);
- Sustainable integration in another part of the country (settlement elsewhere in the country).

The search for any of these durable solutions for IDPs should be understood as:

- A gradual, often long-term process of reducing displacement-specific needs and ensuring the enjoyment of human rights without discrimination;
- A complex process that address human rights, humanitarian, development, reconstruction and peace-building challenges;
- A process requiring the coordinated and timely engagement of different actors.

Question 2. . What key principles should guide the search for durable solutions?

- The primary responsibility to provide durable solutions for IDPs needs to be assumed by the national authorities. International humanitarian and development actors have complementary roles.
- The authorities concerned should grant and facilitate rapid and unimpeded access to humanitarian and development actors that assist internally displaced persons in achieving a durable solution.
- The needs, rights and legitimate interests of internally displaced persons should be the primary considerations guiding all policies and decisions on durable solutions.
- All relevant actors need to respect the right of internally displaced persons to make an informed and voluntary choice on what durable solution to pursue and to participate in the planning and management of durable solutions.
- An internally displaced person's choice of local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country, in the absence of the option to return, must not be regarded as a renunciation of his/her right to return should that choice later become feasible.
- Under no circumstances should internally displaced persons be encouraged or compelled to return or relocate to areas where their life, safety, liberty or health would be at risk.
- Internally displaced persons seeking a durable solution must not be subject to discrimination for reasons related to their displacement.
- Likewise, populations and communities that (re-)integrate internally displaced persons and whose needs may be comparable, must not be neglected in comparison to the displaced.
- Internally displaced persons who have achieved a durable solution continue to be protected by international human rights and, where applicable, humanitarian law.

Question 3. How should a rights-based process to support a durable solution be organized?

National and local authorities, humanitarian and development actors need to work together to effectively support internally displaced persons and set up a rights-based process so that:

- (a) Internally displaced persons are in a position to make an informed and voluntary decision on the durable solution they would like to pursue;
  - (b) They participate in the planning and management of the durable solution so that their needs and rights are considered in recovery and development strategies;
  - (c) They have safe, unimpeded and timely access to all actors supporting the achievement of durable solutions including non-governmental and international humanitarian or development actors;
  - (d) They have access to effective mechanisms that monitor the process and the conditions on the ground;
- and,
- (e) In situations of displacement resulting from conflict or violence, they are at least indirectly involved in peace processes and peacebuilding efforts and such efforts reinforce durable solutions;

Processes to support a durable solution should be inclusive and involve, on the basis of full equality, all parts of the displaced population, including women, children (in accordance with their age and level of maturity), persons with special needs and persons who are potentially marginalized.

Question 4. What criteria determine to what extent a durable solution has been achieved?

A number of criteria determine to what extent a durable solution has been achieved. Internally displaced persons who have achieved a durable solution will enjoy without discrimination:

- (a) Long-term safety, security and freedom of movement;
- (b) An adequate standard of living, including at a minimum access to adequate food, water, housing, health care and basic education;
- (c) Access to employment and livelihoods;
- (d) Access to effective mechanisms that restore their housing, land and property or provide them with compensation.

In a number of contexts, it will also be necessary for internally displaced persons to benefit, without discrimination, from the following to achieve a durable solution:

- (a) Access to and replacement of personal and other documentation;
- (b) Voluntary reunification with family members separated during displacement;
- (c) Participation in public affairs at all levels on an equal basis with the resident population;
- (d) Effective remedies for displacement-related violations, including access to justice, reparations and information about the causes of violations.

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## I. Introduction

1. Displacement is a life-changing event. While the often traumatic experience of displacement cannot be undone, internally displaced persons (IDPs) need to be able to resume a normal life by achieving a durable solution. As articulated in principle 28 of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement,<sup>1</sup> IDPs have a right to a durable solution and often need assistance in their efforts. Guiding Principles 28-30 set out the rights of IDPs to durable solutions, the responsibilities of national authorities, and the role of humanitarian and development actors to assist durable solutions.

2. Principle 28 recognizes that the competent authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to establish conditions, as well as provide the means, which allow IDPs to return voluntarily, in safety and with dignity, to their homes or places of habitual residence, or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country. Securing durable solutions for the internally displaced is also in the State's best interests. Leaving IDPs in continued marginalization without the prospect of a durable solution may become an obstacle to long-term peace stability, recovery and reconstruction in post-crisis countries. Facilitating durable solutions requires that all stakeholders, including national and local authorities, humanitarian and development actors, work together, identify the right strategies and activities to assist IDPs in this process, and set criteria that will help to determine to what extent a durable solution has been achieved.

3. The present Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons aims to provide clarity on the concept of a durable solution and provides general guidance on how to achieve it. This version of the Framework builds on a pilot version released in 2007, which the Inter-Agency Standing Committee welcomed and suggested

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<sup>1</sup> The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, annex) are based upon, reflect and are consistent with international human rights and humanitarian law. They have been recognized by the 2005 World Summit, the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly as “an important framework for the protection of internally displaced persons” (Assembly resolution 60/1, para.132; resolution 62/153 para.10; resolution 64/162, para. 11; Council resolution 6/32, para. 5).

be field-tested. The Framework was revised and finalized in 2009, taking into account valuable feedback from the field on the pilot version and subsequent drafts.

4. The revision process was led by the Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights of internally displaced persons working in close cooperation with the Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery and the Protection Cluster Working Group, in particular the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Environment Programme and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. Support was also provided by the Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Purpose and scope of this Framework**

5. The purpose of this Framework is: (a) to foster a better understanding of the concept of durable solutions for the internally displaced; (b) provide general guidance on the process and conditions necessary for achieving a durable solution; and (c) assist in determining to what extent a durable solution has been achieved.

6. The Framework aims to provide guidance for achieving durable solutions following internal displacement in the context of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights and natural or human-made disasters.<sup>3</sup> Being of a generic character, the Framework needs to be applied in light of the specific situation and context. It is complementary to more detailed operational guidelines adopted by humanitarian and development actors or national and local authorities.

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<sup>2</sup> The pilot version of this Framework was also based on input from the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University.

<sup>3</sup> Situations may of course overlap, in particular where disaster-induced displacement occurs in the context of complex emergencies. It is also increasingly evident that climate change exacerbates natural disasters and related displacement, even if not all disaster-induced displacement is related to climate change. While this framework may provide some general guidance with regard to development-induced displacement, existing special guidelines on resettlement should be consulted. See, in particular, World Bank, Operational Policy on Involuntary Resettlement (OP 4.12, December 2001); Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-based Evictions and Displacement, (A/HRC/4/18, 2007); Asian Development Bank, Policy on Involuntary Resettlement, 1996.

7. The Framework primarily aims to help international and non-governmental actors to better assist Governments dealing with humanitarian and development challenges resulting from internal displacement. The Framework may also be useful for Governments of countries affected by internal displacement, who have the primary duty and responsibility to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to IDPs, as well as for other stakeholders namely donors and IDPs themselves.<sup>4</sup>

## **II. WHAT IS A DURABLE SOLUTION FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS?**

8. A durable solution is achieved when former IDPs no longer have specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and such persons can enjoy their human rights without discrimination resulting from their displacement.

9. A durable solution can be achieved through:

- Sustainable reintegration at the place of origin (hereinafter referred to as “return”);
- Sustainable local integration in areas where internally displaced persons take refuge (local integration);
- Sustainable integration in another part of the country (settlement elsewhere in the country).

10. The resolution of the immediate cause of displacement, e.g. because a peace agreement has been concluded or because floodwaters have receded, may create

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<sup>4</sup> In some situations, the Framework may also be relevant for de facto authorities controlling territory, whose acts are classified under international law as acts of the State to the extent that such authorities are in fact exercising elements of governmental authority in the absence or default of the official authorities, and in circumstances which call for the exercise of such authority. See article 9, Draft Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, adopted by the International Law Commission at its fifty-third session and commended to the attention of Governments by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/83.

opportunities for finding durable solutions. However, it is usually not sufficient in and by itself to create a durable solution. Mere physical movement, namely returning to one's home or place of habitual residence, moving to another part of the country or choosing to integrate locally often does not amount to a durable solution either (in particular after conflict).<sup>5</sup>

11. Whatever the cause of internal displacement, or the option chosen by IDPs for their durable solution, IDPs will commonly continue to have residual needs and human rights concerns linked to their displacement. For example, IDPs who have physically returned to their place of origin may find that they are unable to rebuild destroyed houses or reclaim their land, because the disaster that displaced them has made the land unsafe for habitation or the land is now occupied by others. Persons opting for local integration may not find a job or a dwelling to rent because of discrimination against IDPs by the resident population or authorities. Those who settle elsewhere in the country may require humanitarian, developmental and financial assistance until they are able to access livelihoods, education and health services in their new location.

12. Also, durable solutions must not be exclusively understood as a return to one's former home and a re-establishment of the status quo before displacement. An IDP can find a durable solution away from his or her former home if that the person's displacement-specific needs are met and the person can enjoy his or her rights without displacement-specific discrimination.

13. IDPs who have achieved a durable solution may still face needs or human rights concerns that are not displacement-specific, e.g. when IDPs return or relocate to an area that was neglected and impoverished even before their displacement or where the wider

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<sup>5</sup> In some places IDPs are registered for the purpose of providing them with assistance (e.g. food aid). The fact that they no longer require such assistance and can be de-registered for that purpose does not necessarily mean they have found a durable solution. From the perspective of international law, internal displacement is a factual state and, unlike in refugee law, there is nothing like a legal "IDP Status." IDP registration can be useful if registration is tied to specific and concrete goals, namely the provision of specific assistance. IDP registration or de-registration does not add to or take away from the persons rights under international law, including the right to a durable solution.

population faces the same challenges as IDPs participate in elections or other public affairs.

14. It is therefore important to determine whether the remaining needs or human rights concerns are related to the fact of having been displaced. The following criteria can help determine whether an IDP need or human rights concern is displacement-specific:

- The need or human rights concern is the consequence of events causing displacement or resulting from displacement. Examples: An IDP lost her birth certificate during flight or evacuation and needs a replacement document. A returning IDP cannot make a living because those who violently displaced him still occupy his agricultural land. An adolescent IDP girl placed with a host family is at risk of sexual violence.

- The need or human rights concern results from the displaced person's absence from his or her home. For example, a returning IDP needs food aid until the next harvest season because she could not cultivate her land because of displacement. Or, an IDP who resettled to another area is not on the voter registry because he was not present when the census took place.

- The need or human rights concern is related to conditions in areas of return, local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country that pose an obstacle to the IDPs' being able to choose a durable solution. For example, IDPs who fled natural disaster cannot safely return to a flood-prone area until the authorities put in place dams or other appropriate disaster-risk reduction measures. Or, there is a need to demobilize and disarm combatants, punish perpetrators and promote community reconciliation to allow a displaced minority to safely return. Or IDPs are offered to relocate to a remote area, where no public services or adequate livelihood opportunities exist.

- The need or human rights concern is a consequence of a problem disproportionately affecting IDPs, in particular if the problem results from discrimination. For example, IDPs trying to integrate locally cannot find jobs despite a high level of employment among the resident population. Other IDPs become targets of hate crimes when trying to settle in certain areas.

### **A gradual and complex process**

15. Securing a truly durable solution is often a long-term process of gradually diminishing displacement-specific needs, while ensuring that IDPs enjoy their rights without discrimination related to their displacement. A solution may become durable only years, or even decades, after the physical movement to the place of origin or place of settlement has taken place, or the decision to locally integrate has been made.

16. It is a complex process that involves multiple challenges:

- **A human rights challenge:** Finding durable solutions is about restoring the human rights of IDPs who have been affected by their being displaced, including their rights to security, property, housing, education, health and livelihoods. This may entail the right to reparation, justice, truth and closure for past injustices through transitional justice or other appropriate measures.
- **A humanitarian challenge:** In the course of achieving durable solutions, IDPs often have continuing humanitarian needs. They may need temporary shelter until destroyed houses are rebuilt, food rations until the first crops are available, or emergency health services until the health system has been re-established.
- **A development challenge:** Achieving durable solutions entails addressing key development challenges that are also identified by the Millennium Development Goals. These include providing access to livelihoods, education and health care in areas of return, local integration or other settlement areas; helping to establish or re-establish local governance structures and the rule of law, and rebuilding houses and infrastructure.
- **A peace-building or reconstruction challenge:** Achieving durable solutions after conflict, generalized violence and, in some cases, large-scale natural or human-made

disasters may not be possible without local or even national political, economic and social stabilization.

**A process requiring the coordinated and timely engagement of different actors**

17. The range of actors that can support durable solutions including national and local authorities as well as humanitarian, development, human rights and international political actors,<sup>6</sup> need to work together from the beginning of the process.

18. Humanitarian and development actors both have a role to play in supporting durable solutions. Effective coordination between humanitarian and development actors and the authorities is essential. National coordination structures such as a commission that convenes relevant authorities and their international and non-governmental humanitarian and development partners can ensure the effective distribution of responsibilities, ensuring a coherent and comprehensive strategy.

19. In this context, it is important to stress that development actors should assume their responsibility for and engage in early recovery<sup>7</sup> and recovery strategies and activities that assist the authorities in addressing the needs and concerns of IDPs and can be carried over into longer-term development programming. Experience shows that early recovery is crucial. Investment in early-recovery expedites the achievement of durable solutions, avoids protracted displacement, stimulates spontaneous recovery activities within the affected population, including host and receiving communities, and helps prevent renewed displacement. Among early recovery priorities relevant for durable solutions are the re-establishment of local governance structures, State protection institutions (police, local courts etc.) and the most basic services (schools, basic

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<sup>6</sup> International bodies such as regional organizations, the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission or peacekeeping and political missions, may have an important role to play in some contexts. To date, the Peacebuilding Commission has developed, in close cooperation with the Governments concerned, peacebuilding strategies on several countries emerging from conflict, and some of them address durable solutions for IDPs.

<sup>7</sup> The concept of early recovery has been defined as the application of development principles to humanitarian situations in order to stabilize local and national capacities from further deterioration so that they can provide the foundation for full recovery and stimulate spontaneous recovery activities within the affected population. Stabilizing and using these capacities in turn reduces the amount of humanitarian support required. See UNDP, Policy on Early Recovery (22 August 2008), at 1.1.

healthcare, water and sanitation) – or where these already exist, their adaption to the specific needs of IDPs. It is also important that early recovery efforts provide individual IDPs with immediate and tangible assistance to reestablish their livelihoods and such programmes should be initiated already as part of the humanitarian response.

20. Donors supporting durable solutions should be prepared to provide funds for early recovery programmes, which often receive insufficient attention even though they fulfill a life-sustaining and peace building function.

### **III. WHAT KEY PRINCIPLES SHOULD GUIDE THE SEARCH FOR DURABLE SOLUTIONS?**

21. The Guiding Principles, and the international legal framework (international human rights law and, where applicable, international humanitarian law) from which they are drawn, set out the rights and responsibilities that must be respected in the search for durable solutions. All strategies and activities aimed at supporting the search for durable solutions have to be based upon these rights and responsibilities:

(a) The primary responsibility to provide durable solutions for IDPs and ensure their protection and assistance needs to be assumed by the national authorities.<sup>8</sup> Whilst the operationalization of this responsibility may vary depending on the context, in practical terms, the national authorities need to ensure at a minimum that the necessary legal and/or policy frameworks are in place to secure the rights of IDPs, to establish effective government structures to coordinate the national and local response, to facilitate provision of humanitarian and development assistance, and to ensure that adequate funding, through national budgets as well as international aid, is allocated to support the process.

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<sup>8</sup> See Guiding Principle 28(1). De facto authorities that established effective control over territory have similar responsibilities without this implying legal recognition.

(b) National and local authorities should grant international humanitarian and development actors, in the exercise of their respective mandates, rapid and unimpeded access to assist IDPs in finding a durable solution.<sup>9</sup> Although the primary responsibility to protect and assist IDPs rests with the authorities, international humanitarian and development actors have a complementary role.

(c) The rights, needs and legitimate interests of IDPs should be the primary considerations guiding all policies and decisions relating to internal displacement and durable solutions. Durable solutions are often linked to important issues of territorial integrity, sovereignty and security. Nevertheless, considerations based on the needs and vulnerabilities of IDPs and informed by international human rights standards should guide laws and policies on internal displacement at all times.

(d) All relevant actors need to respect IDPs have a right to make an informed and voluntary decision on what durable solution to pursue.<sup>10</sup> They also have the right to participate in the planning and management of durable solutions strategies and programmes.<sup>11</sup> IDPs determine, in light of the specific circumstances of their situation, whether to pursue return, local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country. There is no hierarchy among different types of durable solutions. A peace agreement may contain a policy of preference for one durable solution, but even in these cases the principle of freedom of movement remains valid and individual choices must be respected and supported. National and local authorities and humanitarian and development actors should base their durable solution programming on the actual preferences of IDPs and work towards providing them with a meaningful and realistic choice of durable solutions.

(e) A person opting for local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country in the absence of a prospect of return does not lose the right to return once return becomes

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<sup>9</sup> See Guiding Principle 30.

<sup>10</sup> This right emanates from the right to freedom of movement and residence guaranteed by article 13 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is also implicit in Guiding Principle 28. See below, paras. 24-34.

<sup>11</sup> See Guiding Principle 28 and below paras. 35-42.

feasible. Exercising the right to choose a durable solution requires that different options (return, local integration, settlement elsewhere) are available. IDPs, who have no prospect of return in the foreseeable future (e.g. due to unresolved territorial disputes or because a disaster has rendered land uninhabitable) will often choose to integrate locally for the time being while retaining the prospect of an eventual return. Supporting IDPs in normalizing their living situation at the site of displacement (helping them to find employment, their own home etc.) does not exclude the right to return. Rather, such support contributes to avoiding protracted displacement, enhances self-sufficiency and places IDPs in a stronger position to voluntarily return to their former homes at a later point. The decision to integrate locally or settle elsewhere in the country on a more permanent basis, even though return is feasible, does not preclude the person's freedom to later choose to move elsewhere, including to his/her original home.

(f) Under no circumstances should IDPs be encouraged or compelled to return or relocate to areas where their life, safety, liberty or health would be at risk.<sup>12</sup> Policymakers often grapple with the question as to when conditions are conducive to begin assisting returns, local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country. This issue must not be confused with the question when a durable solution has been achieved. Practically speaking, not all conditions for durable solutions need to be in place for humanitarian or development actors or national and local authorities to begin assisting IDP return or settlement. However, even when return, local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country are entirely voluntary, they should not be promoted if they endanger the life, safety, liberty or health of IDPs or if a minimum standard of agreeable living conditions bearing in mind local conditions cannot be ensured.<sup>13</sup> It is crucial to have constant monitoring, including independent monitoring, of conditions in return/relocation areas.

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<sup>12</sup> According to Guiding Principle 15 (d), IDPs have “The right to be protected against forcible return to or resettlement in any place where their life, safety, liberty and/or health would be at risk.”

<sup>13</sup> Usually returns should only be encouraged if there is a prospect of a durable solution. Temporary returns without the prospect of a durable solution can be used as a protection strategy in exceptional circumstances, namely where return would pose a lesser risk than continued presence at the site of displacement. Humanitarian actors also grapple with the dilemma of whether to assist IDPs who spontaneously return or relocate even though they have been informed that conditions are not safe. In some scenarios, it might be appropriate to assist IDPs if this decreases the risks they face, while strictly abstaining from promoting such unsafe return or relocation.

Conditions at the site of displacement that may push IDPs to accept unsafe return or relocation also need to be monitored.

(g) IDPs, who return, integrate locally or settle elsewhere in the country must not be subject to discrimination, in particular for reasons related to their displacement.<sup>14</sup> Non-discrimination is a cross-cutting principle that should guide the process of supporting a durable solution and the assessment to what extent a durable solution has been achieved. IDPs should neither be discriminated against on the basis of their displacement nor on grounds of their race, religion, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, disability, age, marital and family status, nationality, or other status.

(h) Similarly, populations and communities that (re-)integrate IDPs and whose needs may be comparable, should not be neglected. The arrival and integration of IDPs will likely place a considerable burden on existing community services and resources. Ensuring a community-based approach that addresses the needs of IDPs and those receiving them may mitigate risks of tensions between the two populations, and support a more effective integration or re-integration of IDPs.

(i) IDPs continue to be protected by national and international human rights, and, where applicable, international humanitarian law, even after they have achieved a durable solution.

#### **IV. HOW SHOULD A RIGHTS-BASED PROCESS TO SUPPORT DURABLE SOLUTIONS BE ORGANIZED?**

22. Humanitarian and development actors, working closely with national and local authorities, should adopt a rights-based approach to supporting durable solutions that

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<sup>14</sup> Guiding Principle 29(1) states that “Internally displaced persons who have returned to their homes or places of habitual residence or who have resettled in another part of the country shall not be discriminated against as a result of their having been displaced. They shall have the right to participate fully and equally in public affairs at all levels and have equal access to public services”.

places IDPs at the centre of the process. IDPs should be the primary actors in the process of finding the durable solution of their choice (and they generally are).<sup>15</sup> A rights-based approach should ensure that:

- (a) IDPs are in a position to make a voluntary and informed choice on what durable solution they would like to pursue;
- (b) IDPs participate in the planning and management of durable solutions, so that recovery and development strategies address their rights and needs;
- (c) IDPs have access to humanitarian and development actors;
- (d) IDPs have access to effective monitoring mechanisms; and
- (e) In cases of displacement caused by conflict or violence, peace processes and peacebuilding involve IDPs and reinforce durable solutions.

23. These five objectives derive from the rights and responsibilities set out in the section III. This section will explain in general terms what it takes to achieve them, without providing the detailed guidance of an operational manual.

#### **A. Voluntary and informed choice of a location for a durable solution**

24. National and local authorities, humanitarian and development actors need to provide IDPs with all the information they require to choose a durable solution, while also ensuring that IDPs can exercise this choice without coercion.

25. Relevant information has to reach all parts of the IDP population, including women, children (in accordance with their age and maturity), persons with special needs and persons who are potentially marginalized (e.g. minority groups among the IDP population). The information has to be provided in a language and format understood by the IDPs, including those who are not literate. Where IDPs are in urban areas or dispersed, special efforts will be needed to ensure that they receive notice of consultations and information. At a minimum, the information conveyed should include:

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<sup>15</sup> In a number of cases, IDPs will pursue durable solutions spontaneously outside any planned processes.

- Assessments of the general situation in the community of origin or potential areas of local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country, including the political situation, safety and security, freedom of movement, amnesties or legal guarantees, the human rights situation, legal and other mechanisms to protect the rights of women, children, youth, minorities, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and the type and duration of assistance available to them. The assessments should include a realistic account of the risks of renewed displacement in potential areas of return, local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country and objective information on the existing protection and (disaster) risk reduction mechanisms in place. Information should be provided on the mechanisms put in place to ensure smooth (re-)integration within the resident population.

- The procedures for returning, integrating locally or settling elsewhere in the country, including information on reintegration packages, administrative regulations, and documentation requirements. In the case of return or settlement elsewhere in the country, IDPs will require practical information such as what items they can take with them, available transport, and arrangements for those with special needs.

- The conditions in places of return, local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country, including degrees of destruction, access to housing, land, livelihoods, landmine risks, employment and other economic opportunities; availability of public services (public transport, healthcare, education, means of communication, etc.); conditions of buildings and infrastructure for schools, health clinics, roads, bridges and sanitation systems; and assistance available from national, international and private actors.

26. Providing information through community assemblies involving men, women and children of a certain age and maturity (or small but inclusive groups of representatives where large assemblies are not possible) may be one effective way to convey information directly to all IDPs and thereby avoid privileging certain individuals. Public announcements through accessible mass media (e.g. radio) are particularly useful, in

particular where IDP populations are dispersed, difficult to access or pursue durable solutions spontaneously.

27. To the extent possible, arrangements should be made for IDP representatives to visit and assess conditions for return or settlement elsewhere in the country. These “go and see” visits should include all parts of the IDP population, including women, children of a certain age and level of maturity, persons with special needs and persons who are potentially marginalized. The visits should include opportunities for consultation with populations residing in these areas to identify issues that may create conflict and the means to resolve them. Development and humanitarian actors should support national and local authorities in developing the capacity to adequately inform IDPs.

28. IDPs have to be given the opportunity to voluntarily choose a durable solution. In principle, a voluntary choice is based on an individual decision. However, in many settings it is acceptable and appropriate in the local context to have decision-making by family or by community. In such cases, women, children (in accordance with their age and level of maturity) and persons belonging to groups who have special needs or are potentially marginalized need to be fully included. Moreover, there should be individual support options for adults who have valid reasons to choose a different type of durable solution than their family or community (e.g. people who are too traumatized or vulnerable to return or others who would like to finish their education). The best interests of the child should be the primary consideration guiding durable solutions for children. The perspectives of children need to be heard and their views given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.

29. No coercion must be used to induce or prevent return, local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country.<sup>16</sup> Coercion includes not only physical force, restrictions on freedom of movement, harassment or intimidation, but also tacit forms of coercion such as providing erroneous and deliberately misleading information, making

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<sup>16</sup> Guiding Principle 28 emphasizes that IDPs should be able “to return voluntarily, in safety and with dignity, to their homes or places of habitual residence, or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country”.

assistance conditional on specific choices, setting arbitrary time limits to end assistance or closing IDP camps, collective centres, transitional shelters and other facilities before the minimum conditions conducive for returns, local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country<sup>17</sup> are in place.

30. IDPs also have to have a meaningful choice, which is often linked to the availability of assistance. In principle, recovery and reconstruction efforts should focus on the type of durable solutions that IDPs wish to seek. Selective assistance for a particular solution or incentives tied to a particular durable solution are only acceptable if they are based on objective and serious reasons. Investments in return areas may, for instance, be favored if return has been accepted as a priority option in a peace agreement. One can also imagine a situation in which a group of IDPs cannot safely return to a flood-prone area, yet their local integration would overwhelm the local absorption capacity, so that the authorities give priority to supporting their settlement in the country. Relevant factors that may call for favoring certain locations for durable solutions over others include:

- The wishes of a majority of IDPs;
- Priorities identified in a peace agreement that takes into account IDPs' rights, needs and legitimate interests;<sup>18</sup>
- The local absorption capacity for integrating IDPs in areas of return, local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country;
- Differences between areas with regard to security and available protection mechanisms, including disaster risks;
- Differences between areas with regard to the availability of natural resources, sustainable livelihood and employment opportunities, infrastructure or public services;
- Environmental sustainability of the durable solution envisaged;<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See above, para. 21 (f).

<sup>18</sup> See below, paras. 48-51, on how IDPs can be involved in peace processes.

<sup>19</sup> Where larger numbers of IDPs seek a durable solution in a particular area this has an impact on the local environment and natural resource base. Durable solutions can be negatively affected by environmental degradation and resource depletion leading to a crisis in long-term viability or creating a potential cause of conflict between IDPs and host communities.

- The overall cost of supporting different options, bearing in mind available resources and pledged donor funds.

31. There may be exceptional situations where the choice of a durable solution can be restricted because conditions are too unsafe to permit returns or settlement in a specific location. Freedom of movement and residence is a fundamental human right, but it can be restricted in narrowly defined circumstances. IDP return or settlement elsewhere in the country, may be prohibited where IDPs would still face serious risks to their life or health despite the best efforts of the authorities to protect them. Recurrent disasters, for instance, may make an area uninhabitable or seriously unsafe, even if all necessary and reasonable disaster risk reduction measures were to be adopted. Or the demining of a certain terrain might prove to be so difficult and costly that it might not be reasonable when compared with other post-conflict needs.

32. In situations of displacement resulting from serious violations of human rights, in particular ethnic cleansing, the authorities are under a strict obligation to protect IDPs from further violations and returns may not permanently be prohibited.

33. Measures prohibiting or effectively denying freedom of movement and residence may only be imposed on the basis of law. Restrictions on settlement choices may only be instituted as a last resort and only as long as absolutely necessary to protect those affected from serious risks to their life, physical integrity or health. They must be applied without discrimination. IDPs must be informed and consulted in advance of imposing the restriction, including where evacuations are to become permanent relocations. The alternative settlement area provided to IDPs should offer comparable living conditions, livelihood opportunities and public services. Decisions must be communicated to IDPs in a language and format they can understand.

**B. Participation of internally displaced persons in the planning and management of durable solutions**

34. IDPs must be consulted and participate extensively in the planning and management of the processes supporting a durable solution.<sup>20</sup> All parts of the IDP population, including women, children (according to their age and maturity), persons with special needs and persons who are potentially marginalized, must be fully included. Local communities that receive IDPs and other affected populations also need to be consulted.

35. Processes to involve IDPs should respect existing social structures, forms of organization and decision-making processes within IDP communities, provided and to the extent that this does not prevent women, children (in accordance with their age and maturity), persons with special needs and persons who are potentially marginalized from being involved on the basis of full equality. Community meetings, social and other service delivery, feeding centres, skills training and income generating programmes, and other environments in which the displaced gather can be used to ensure the full participation of IDPs in the planning and management of durable solutions. The involvement of civil society in outreach efforts, round-table discussions involving different stakeholders or facilitated dialogues between Government officials and communities may help ensure broader participation of IDPs and other affected populations and can help reduce stigma and prejudice that IDPs may encounter. IDPs who have spontaneously sought a durable solution also need to be consulted about continuing assistance or protection needs.

36. Special efforts also need to be made to consult IDPs on general legislative and policy proposals affecting their rights, legitimate interests and prospects to achieve a durable solution, e.g. laws on reconciliation and transitional justice or policies on disaster risk reduction.

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<sup>20</sup> See Guiding Principle 28 and para. 21 (d) above. For guidance on the methodology see, for instance, *The UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessments in Operations* (2006).

37. The assessed needs and rights of all parts of the IDP population, including women, children, persons with special needs and persons who are potentially marginalized, need to be addressed in recovery and development strategies. In some cases it may be appropriate to elaborate IDP-specific strategies for recovery or development and corresponding legal frameworks. National and local authorities have the responsibility to take the lead in recovery and development processes. They should establish their leading role by setting priorities in the allocation of the budget at their disposal.

38. Needs assessments and consultations with IDPs as well as with communities that have to integrate or re-integrate the displaced are essential to ensure that the specific needs and rights of IDPs are taken into account and that the efforts undertaken reinforce existing coping strategies of the displaced population.

39. In some situations, it may be appropriate to develop a displacement-specific strategy. This may be a national strategy, a strategy limited to certain displacement-affected areas or even a regional strategy that is jointly developed by several countries. In other cases, it may be appropriate to integrate the specific needs and rights of IDPs into general recovery or development strategies targeting a given area. Considerations for determining whether an IDP-specific or an area-based approach is more appropriate include:

- What is the proportion of IDPs among the overall affected population?
- Are there gross disparities between the situation of IDPs and the resident population in areas of return, local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country?
- Are the primary recovery or development concerns linked to internal displacement? To what extent do IDPs have needs that are different from those of the general population?
- How would an IDP-specific approach, as opposed to an area based approach, impact on reconciliation and the relationship between IDPs and the resident population?

- Are IDPs still in protracted displacement, while the general population has moved from recovery to development?

40. IDP-specific strategies should also take into account the needs of resident populations who share the burdens of displacement. These include host communities and host families that took in and supported displaced families as well as communities that receive IDPs who return, locally integrate or settle elsewhere in the country.<sup>21</sup> Distinctions between groups of IDPs (e.g. IDP groups from different waves of conflict or IDPs who fled natural disaster as against those who fled conflict) must not be made unless the groups have different needs.<sup>22</sup> All efforts should be made to ensure that IDPs receive reintegration support that is comparable to that provided to returning refugees and demobilized combatants to the extent that these groups have comparable needs.

41. A coordination mechanism, ideally one that builds upon existing coordination structures, should be set up to coordinate the implementation of the strategy and ensure that early-recovery efforts are carried over into long-term recovery, development and reconstruction programming.

42. In the case of disasters, it is important that post-disaster recovery and reconstruction plans also take into account specific needs of IDPs, which may differ from those of other affected populations. IDPs should participate in the design phase of such plans in accordance with the principles outlined above.

### **C. Access to actors supporting durable solutions**

43. National authorities should grant and facilitate safe, unimpeded and timely access to non-governmental and international humanitarian and development actors assisting

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<sup>21</sup> See also above, para. 21 (h). The Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons refers in this context to “displacement affected communities” to underscore that internal displacement has repercussions that extend beyond IDPs and calls for the provision of assistance to a broader spectrum of beneficiaries.

<sup>22</sup> Processes to register IDPs in order to give them access to reintegration support or special legal processes (e.g. property restitution) must be inclusive and not arbitrarily exclude displaced populations that fall under the descriptive definition provided by principle 2 of the Guiding Principles.

IDPs to return, locally integrate or settle elsewhere in the country. International and national humanitarian and development organizations have an important role to play in assisting durable solutions. Access must not be arbitrarily denied, particularly when the authorities are unable or unwilling to provide the required humanitarian and integration or re-integration assistance themselves.<sup>23</sup>

#### **D. Access to effective monitoring**

44. National and local authorities, humanitarian and development actors should set up effective mechanisms to monitor the process of supporting durable solutions and determining what remains to be done to achieve a durable solution. Monitoring helps to ensure that conditions on the ground comply with this Framework and the international human rights standards upon which it is based, in particular with regard to safety, security and voluntary returns. Assessments should also include a gender analysis and take into account persons who have special needs or might be marginalized within the displaced population. Credible complaint mechanisms for IDPs and other affected populations can ensure that concerns can be brought to the immediate attention of the responsible national or local authorities.

45. In order to provide an objective and transparent basis for monitoring, the criteria set out in this Framework<sup>24</sup> should be translated into indicators that are sensitive to the local context. The indicators should be developed in close cooperation between the authorities, humanitarian and development actors and after consultation with IDP communities. While it will often not be feasible to obtain reliable and disaggregated data in post-crisis situations, indicators can be based on data derived from surveys using small but representative population samples or assessments based on a qualitative methodology (focus group interviews etc.) and carried out by independent experts. Provided that disaggregated data is obtainable, indicators should be devised so as to show differences within the IDP population based on sex, age, ethnicity and other relevant categories.

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<sup>23</sup> See Guiding Principles 25 and 30.

<sup>24</sup> See below, paras. 53-105.

46. International monitoring bodies, national human rights institutions, non-governmental organizations and other independent observers should enjoy free and unimpeded access to areas of IDP return or settlement and to individual IDPs.<sup>25</sup> Scrutiny by independent actors complements the efforts of national and local authorities and humanitarian and development actors in monitoring their own work. Independent mechanisms should ensure the transparency of their work through public reporting. The scope of the monitoring work should be determined in memoranda of understanding signed by national and local authorities and the monitoring institution.

47. In situations of displacement resulting from conflict and generalized violence, it also needs to be ensured that peace processes and peacebuilding involve IDPs and reinforce durable solutions.

**E. Peace processes and peacebuilding must involve internally displaced persons and reinforce durable solutions**

48. Where relevant, IDPs should participate in peace processes. Their rights, needs and legitimate interests need to be addressed in peace agreements and peace building strategies emerging from these processes, which often predetermine whether and how durable solutions will be ensured. At the same time, durable solutions for IDPs may be a key element in building a lasting peace. Humanitarian and development actors have to analyse the linkages between conflict and displacement to understand how peace processes can strengthen the potential for durable solutions (and vice versa).

49. All parts of the IDP population, including women, children (in accordance with their age and maturity), persons with special needs and persons who are potentially marginalized, should be involved in peace processes. IDPs should also be actively

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<sup>25</sup> See Guiding Principle 30: “All authorities concerned shall grant and facilitate for international humanitarian organizations and other appropriate actors, in the exercise of their respective mandates, rapid and unimpeded access to internally displaced persons to assist in their return or resettlement and reintegration”.

involved in the formulation and implementation of peacebuilding strategies.<sup>26</sup> If direct participation of IDPs in the peace negotiations is not possible or desirable, their indirect participation should be ensured. Humanitarian and development actors have an important role to play in advocating for the participation of IDPs and assisting their effective participation, including through training, community development and other appropriate means.

50. Durable solutions should be a specific goal of peace agreements. Where a close relationship exists between conflict and displacement, the peace agreement should effectively address the specific needs and rights of IDPs, including:

- Safety and security
- Housing, land and property issues
- Reconciliation and peace building
- Post-conflict reconstruction
- Remedies for violations suffered.

51. Peace agreements should:

- use clear and consistent definitions pertaining to internal displacement;
- incorporate displacement-specific rights and protections that reflect the needs and legitimate interests of IDPs;
- specify the roles and obligations of relevant actors with regard to IDPs;
- address the implementation process, including the participation of IDPs.

52. Beyond or in the absence of a formal peace process, community reconciliation and confidence-building mechanisms are often necessary, in particular where IDPs and the resident population or different groups within the IDP population are seen as having been associated with opposing sides in the conflict, but now live side by side. In addition, conflict resolution mechanisms may be needed to resolve disputes that occur when IDPs

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. Guide for Mediators on Internal Displacement (Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement/United States Institute of Peace, 2009); see also Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

seek to integrate or re-integrate into communities where there is competition over scarce resources, such as land or livelihood opportunities.<sup>27</sup>

## **V. WHAT CRITERIA DETERMINE TO WHAT EXTENT A DURABLE SOLUTION HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?**

53. The following eight criteria may be used to determine to what extent a durable solution has been achieved: (a) safety and security; (b) adequate standard of living; (c) access to livelihoods (d) restoration of housing, land and property;; (e) access to documentation; (f) family reunification; (g) participation in public affairs; and (h) access to effective remedies and justice.

54. It will be necessary to apply the criteria bearing in mind the specific situation and context. Moreover, these criteria are interlinked and overlap (e.g. the restoration of land has a positive effect on livelihoods and an adequate standard of living). As noted above, under-pinning all of the eight criteria is the principle of non-discrimination – that IDPs are not discriminated against, neither on the basis of their displacement nor on other grounds.<sup>28</sup>

55. Given the complexities and challenges of many displacement situations, these criteria often mark an ideal that may be difficult to achieve in the medium term. The criteria should therefore be seen as benchmarks for measuring progress made towards achieving durable solutions.

### **A. Long-term safety and security**

56. IDPs who have achieved a durable solution enjoy physical safety and security on the basis of effective protection by national and local authorities. This includes protection from those threats which caused the initial displacement or may cause renewed

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<sup>27</sup> Competition over resources is also typical for post-disaster situations and there is often a need for conflict resolution mechanisms in such situations as well.

<sup>28</sup> See above, para. 21 (g).

displacement. The protection of IDPs who have achieved a durable solution must not be less effective than the protection provided to populations or areas of the country not affected by displacement.

57. While absolute safety and security may often not be achievable, IDPs must not be the subject of attacks, harassment, intimidation, persecution or any other form of punitive action upon return to their home communities or settlement elsewhere in the country. In addition, they must be protected from landmines, unexploded ordnances, small arms or other violence. Displacement and its social consequences also render women, boys and girls more vulnerable to exploitation, intrafamily violence or sexual violence, which must be addressed.

58. IDPs who have achieved a durable solution also enjoy freedom of movement. They can freely leave their areas of settlement and return and come back. While certain movement restrictions to protect essential interests or the freedoms of others may be imposed on a temporary basis (e.g. curfews in tense security considerations), they must not be discriminatory or arbitrary. For example, travel restrictions that apply only to IDPs or the specific areas in which they live but not to the resident population would generally pose a serious obstacle to IDPs achieving durable solutions.

59. In the case of return to or settlement in disaster-prone areas, disaster risk reduction measures (early warning, preparedness, mitigation and adaptation) have been implemented to minimize, to the extent possible and reasonable, risks stemming from natural or human-made hazards. In many cases, it is not enough to rebuild the status quo before displacement since it offered insufficient protection. Instead, the national and local authorities and donors should be ready to make substantial investments to “build back better.” National and local authorities will need to take measures to reduce the vulnerability of IDPs and the general population from recurrent natural hazards or secondary hazards.

60. Efforts to promote the sustainable use of livelihoods and safeguard the environment (e.g. reforestation programmes) can help prevent natural hazards from becoming human-made disasters.

61. Permanent relocation of IDPs to another area offering comparable living conditions may be required as a last resort, where minimum safety cannot be achieved, even if all necessary and reasonable disaster risk reduction measures are taken.<sup>29</sup>

62. IDPs who have achieved a durable solution have full and non-discriminatory access to national and local protection mechanisms, including police, courts, national human rights institutions and national disaster management services. The primary responsibility for ensuring that IDPs do not face dangers to their physical safety and security rests with national and local authorities. They have to provide protection to the displaced, especially by addressing their particular protection needs. Although law enforcement and judicial systems in rural areas, or in countries in transition from conflict or severely affected by disasters may not yet be sufficiently developed or re-established, it is important that IDPs have the same level of access as the resident population in the area to national and local protection mechanisms. The establishment or reconstruction of effective courts and police in areas of return, settlement elsewhere in the country or local integration should be considered a priority.

63. Countries that experienced conflict or major natural disasters may temporarily need assistance from the international community in establishing safety and security. A gradual hand-over process, at the end of which national and local authorities assume full responsibility for protection, promotes durable protection. Protection that depends on the continued presence of international actors, namely peacekeeping forces, without a hand over strategy is generally not durable.

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<sup>29</sup> See also above, paras. 31-33.

64. Depending on the type of displacement, the local context and obtainable data, it would be useful to consider the following as indicators of progress towards achieving safety and security:<sup>30</sup>

- Level of clearance of mines and unexploded ordinance on main roads, living areas and cultivatable land in sites of IDP return or settlement elsewhere in the country;
- Degree of reduction of checkpoints or other special security measures;
- That IDPs face no discriminatory or arbitrary restrictions of their freedom of movement;
- Progress made in disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating former combatants;
- Number of police stations and courts as well as trained police and judicial personnel deployed in IDP return or settlement areas compared to the national average or the local situation before displacement. The degree of access by IDPs to police and judiciary compared to the resident population. Frequency of police patrolling in IDP areas;
- Number of reported acts of violence or intimidation targeting IDPs on the basis of their IDP or minority status;
- Prevalence of violent crimes suffered by IDPs compared to crimes suffered by the resident population, the situation before displacement or the national average (as appropriate);
- Degree of continuation of spontaneous and voluntary returns to specific areas;
- Reduction of the number of persons facing risks emanating from natural hazards;
- Measures taken to reduce future disaster risks;
- Safety and security perceptions of IDPs seeking a durable solution.<sup>31</sup>

**B. Enjoyment of an adequate standard of living  
without discrimination**

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<sup>30</sup> These indicators are examples. Depending on the actual situation, some of them may be relevant while others are not. Users of this Framework also have to decide to what extent the quantitative data that some of the indicators require can be reasonably obtained. See in this regard also above, para. 45.

<sup>31</sup> How IDP communities themselves perceive safety and security can help determine whether protection is effective, bearing in mind, however, that long-term exposure to violence and insecurity may have shifted perceptions of acceptable threat levels.

65. IDPs who have achieved a durable solution enjoy, without discrimination, an adequate standard of living, including at a minimum shelter, health care, food, water and other means of survival. An adequate standard of living requires that at a basic minimum IDPs have adequate access, on a sustainable basis, to:

- Essential food and potable water
- Basic shelter and housing
- Essential medical services, including post-sexual assault care and other reproductive healthcare
- Sanitation
- At least primary school education.<sup>32</sup>

66. In this context, adequacy means that these minimum goods and services are:

- Available to the affected population in sufficient quantity and quality bearing in mind the local context. For instance, housing units may have to be reconstructed or newly constructed for IDPs seeking a durable solution, including where they locally integrate, settle elsewhere in the country or return, but did not have property prior to displacement;
- Accessible, i.e. the goods and services (a) are granted without discrimination to all in need, (b) are within safe and easy reach and can be physically and financially accessed by everyone, including vulnerable and marginalized groups, and (c) are known to the beneficiaries. For instance, if essential food and potable water cannot be provided due to environmental degradation or soil contamination after a disaster, an adequate standard of living cannot be ensured;

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<sup>32</sup> The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has taken the view that a minimum core obligation to ensure the satisfaction of, at the very least, minimum essential levels of each of the rights is incumbent upon every State party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: “Thus, for example, a State party in which any significant number of individuals is deprived of essential foodstuffs, of essential primary health care, of basic shelter and housing, or of the most basic forms of education is, *prima facie*, failing to discharge its obligations under the Covenant.” See CESCR, general comment No. 3 (1990), para. 10.

- Acceptable, i.e. the goods and services are culturally appropriate and sensitive to gender and age. Indigenous or nomadic people, for instance, often have special cultural traditions when it comes to food or housing;
- Adaptable, i.e. goods and services are provided in ways flexible enough to adapt to the changing needs of IDPs.<sup>33</sup>

67. National and local authorities have the principal responsibility to ensure that these core needs are met and must make the requisite budget allocations. They should also call upon humanitarian and development actors to assist in addressing these concerns where State resources are insufficient.

68. IDPs who have achieved durable solutions can access public services, including education, healthcare, social housing and other welfare measures, on the same basis as members of the resident population with comparable needs.

69. Where there are large disparities between displacement-affected areas and other parts of the country (which could be a source of renewed tension and displacement) tangible commitments on the part of the authorities and partners should be made to progressively realize the economic, social and cultural rights of both IDPs and other affected populations. In many cases, it is necessary to “build back better” and address root causes of displacement to ensure that solutions are durable.

70. Depending on the type of displacement, local context and obtainable data, it would be useful to consider the following as indicators of progress towards an adequate standard of living:

- Assistance programmes in place to provide IDPs with essential food, potable water, basic shelter and essential health care;

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<sup>33</sup> See Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, general comment No. 4 (1991): The right to adequate housing (art. 11 (1) of the Covenant), para. 8; general comment No. 12 (1999): the right to adequate food (art. 11), paras. 8-13; general comment No. 15 (2002): the right to water (arts. 11 and 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), para. 12.

- Estimated number of IDPs who are malnourished or homeless;
- Percentage of IDPs who do not have access to essential food, potable water, basic shelter or essential health care compared to the resident population, the situation before displacement or the national average, as appropriate;
- Percentage of IDP children with access to at least primary education in adequate conditions and quality, compared to the resident population, the situation before displacement or the national average, as appropriate;
- No legal or administrative obstacles preventing IDP children from going to school;
- Rates of IDP children whose education was interrupted by displacement and who resume schooling;
- Percentage of IDPs living in overcrowded housing/shelter, compared to the resident population, the situation before displacement or the national average, as appropriate;
- IDPs do not face specific obstacles to access public services, assistance or remittances from abroad compared to local residents with comparable needs.

### **C. Access to livelihoods and employment**

71. IDPs who found a durable solution also have access to employment and livelihoods. Employment and livelihoods available to IDPs must allow them to fulfil at least their core socio-economic needs,<sup>34</sup> in particular where these are not guaranteed by public welfare programmes.

72. Beyond this, access to livelihoods is a relative measure. Reintegration often occurs in circumstances of fragile economies and high unemployment affecting the entire population, including IDPs. It will not always be possible for all IDPs to gain employment or regain their previous livelihoods. However, IDPs must not face obstacles that prevent them from accessing employment and livelihoods on the same basis as residents (e.g. where IDPs are relocated to a remote area without affordable transportation to local labour markets).

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<sup>34</sup> See above, paras. 65-70.

73. There might be a need for positive preferential measures to help IDPs acquire new professional knowledge, adapt to new livelihoods and acquire new skills (for instance, where IDPs from a rural area locally integrate into an urban environment or where IDPs were excluded from the labour market for a long time). There is a particular obligation to provide alternative livelihood opportunities for IDPs who are being forcibly relocated by the authorities from high-risk areas.<sup>35</sup>

74. Opportunities that IDPs had during displacement should be preserved to the extent possible. When displacement lasts over long periods of time or involves a rural to urban transition, it often alters the social dynamic within IDP communities. Women and young adults may have access to education or employment opportunities that were not available in their area of origin.

75. Depending on the type of displacement, local context and obtainable data, it would be useful to consider the following as indicators of progress towards employment and livelihoods:

- There are no legal or administrative obstacles to IDP employment or economic activity that the resident population does not face;
- Unemployment among IDPs compared to the resident population, the situation before displacement or the national average, as appropriate;
- Types and conditions of employment of the IDP population compared to the non-displaced population, including rates of informal-market employment and access to labor law standards, such as the minimum wage, as appropriate;
- Poverty levels among IDPs compared to the resident population, the situation before displacement or the national average, as appropriate.

#### **D. Effective and accessible mechanisms to restore housing, land and property**

76. IDPs who have achieved a durable solution have access to effective mechanisms for timely restitution of their housing, land and property, regardless of whether they

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<sup>35</sup> See above, paras. 31-33.

return or opt to integrate locally or settle elsewhere in the country.<sup>36</sup> These standards apply not only to all residential, agricultural and commercial property, but also to lease and tenancy agreements. The right to restitution or compensation extends to all displaced persons—including men, women and children—who have lost ownership, tenancy rights or other access entitlements to their housing, land and property, whether they have formal or informal titles or rights on the basis of mere uncontested use or occupation (e.g. people arbitrarily displaced from informal settlements). It also includes people who stand to inherit property from deceased family members (e.g. orphans). People with a special attachment to their land such as indigenous peoples require special attention.

77. The process through which restitution of housing, land and property and related compensation is carried out can be complex and time-consuming. It is not necessary for this process to be fully concluded before IDPs can be said to have found a durable solution. The determining factor is that they have access to an effective and accessible mechanism for property restitution and compensation (including, where needed, free legal assistance) and are able to reside safely and securely during the interim. In some cases it may be appropriate to establish special restitution and compensation mechanisms (e.g. a Land Claims Commission) while in others, existing institutions, including traditional property dispute mechanisms, may have the capacity to handle the caseload effectively and impartially.

78. Addressing housing, land and property rights issues requires a comprehensive perspective. In principle, restitution is the preferred remedy. But in some cases it may be more equitable, after weighing different interests, to compensate the displaced owner instead of restoring his or her property. Appropriate solutions should be found for persons whose tenancy rights have been compromised in the course of displacement. Alternative solutions should be found for temporary occupants of IDP property who face eviction in the course of property restitution, in particular if they are displaced persons themselves

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<sup>36</sup> Guiding Principle 29(2) spells out the responsibilities of competent authorities regarding property restitution and compensation.

For more detailed guidance see Inter-Agency, Handbook on Housing and Property Restitution for Refugees and Displaced Persons. Implementing the 'Pinheiro Principles', March 2007, also available at [www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/pinheiro\\_principles.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/pinheiro_principles.pdf).

and occupy the property in good faith (e.g. negotiated tenancy agreements between occupants and IDP owners).

79. Problems that women and children may face in obtaining recognition of their ownership or access to property need special attention, particularly where there are legal barriers to women or children inheriting property. Claims of particularly vulnerable groups of IDPs (e.g. families with many children or IDPs living in dilapidated collective centres) should be processed as a priority.

80. National laws need to be examined and, where necessary, revised to ensure that IDPs do not lose property rights on the basis of an unfair application of legal provisions on abandoned property or adverse possession. Finally, efforts should be made to ensure that restitution decisions in favor of IDPs are systematically enforced, with care taken to guarantee the safety, security and reintegration of IDPs after they re-possess their housing, land or property. It must be ensured that returnees without property rights as well as IDPs who locally integrate or resettle to areas where they do not own property still have access to basic shelter and housing.<sup>37</sup>

81. IDPs who want to return to houses that have been destroyed have the possibility of having them rebuilt or, where this is impossible, to be provided with an alternative. In some cases, the authorities will have a legal obligation to rebuild the house because they are responsible for the destruction (for instance, where houses were destroyed during a military operation that violated international humanitarian law or due to a disaster because of the authorities' failure to adopt necessary and reasonable disaster risk reduction measures). In other cases, there is no obligation in a legal sense, but returnees still have to have their houses reconstructed to achieve a durable solution that provides an adequate standard of living.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> See also above, paras. 65-70.

<sup>38</sup> *Idem*.

82. Depending on the type of displacement, local context and obtainable data, it would be useful to consider the following as indicators of progress towards the protection of housing, land and property rights:

- Existence of effective and accessible mechanisms to resolve housing, land and property disputes relevant to displacement and steps taken to overcome the most common challenges to implementing housing, land and property rights;
- Percentage of IDP land and property claims resolved and enforced; number of remaining claims; and estimated time required to resolve the remaining claims;
- Percentage of IDPs remaining without adequate housing, reduction in this percentage over time and comparison with the percentage for the resident population or the national average, as appropriate;<sup>39</sup>
- Percentage of destroyed or damaged homes of IDPs adequately repaired; number of remaining houses to be repaired and estimated time required to repair the remaining houses;<sup>40</sup>
- IDPs have access to support programmes (including access to credits) to restore or improve housing, land or property on the same basis as the resident population.

83. In a number of contexts, it will also be necessary to look at the following four criteria to determinate to what extent IDPs have achieved a durable solution:

#### **E. Access to personal and other documentation without discrimination**

84. IDPs who have achieved a durable solution have access to the personal and other documentation necessary to access public services, reclaim property and possessions, vote or pursue other purposes linked to durable solutions.<sup>41</sup> During the course of displacement, people often lose documents necessary for the enjoyment and exercise of

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<sup>39</sup> This is also a useful indicator for measuring progress regarding adequate standard of living (see above, para. 70).

<sup>40</sup> This indicator is also relevant for the previous sub-section (Adequate standard of living).

<sup>41</sup> A right to documentation is axiomatic to other human rights such as the rights to recognition before the law (art. 6, Universal Declaration), registration immediately after birth (art. 7, CRC), property and housing (arts. 17 and 25, Universal Declaration), education (art. 26 Universal Declaration) etc. See also Guiding Principle 20(2).

their legal rights, such as passports, personal identification documents, birth certificates, marriage certificates, voter identification cards, title deeds, school records and professional or academic certificates or social security cards. In other cases, IDPs may have never had documents or their documents were not recognized and this becomes a particular problem during their search for durable solutions (e.g. where an urban IDP who wants to integrate locally cannot apply for a job without a birth certificate or national ID card).

85. The competent national or local authorities need to facilitate the issuance of new documents or the replacement of documents lost in the course of displacement, without imposing unreasonable conditions, such as requiring the return to one's area of habitual residence in order to obtain documents. Women and men have equal rights to obtain documents and women have the right to have documents issued in their own names.<sup>42</sup> Separated and unaccompanied children also need to be provided with their own documents.

86. Where control over territory is divided, practical solutions for documentation need to be found. National authorities, for instance, may recognize papers provided by de facto authorities as prima facie factual proof of personal status without this implying legal recognition of the entities providing the papers.

87. Depending on the type of displacement, local context and obtainable data, it would be useful to consider the following as indicators of progress towards ensuring access to documentation:

- IDP women and men face no legal or administrative obstacles to obtain (replacement) birth certificates, national ID cards, voter identification cards or other personal documents relevant to the context;

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<sup>42</sup> Guiding Principle 20(3) states: "Women and men shall have equal rights to obtain such necessary documents and shall have the right to have such documentation issued in their own names".

- Mechanisms to replace documents are accessible and affordable bearing in mind the local context;
- Percentage of IDPs without birth certificates, national ID cards or other personal documents relevant to the local context compared to the resident population, the situation before displacement or the national average, as appropriate;
- Mutual acceptance by Governments and de facto authorities of papers where control over territory is divided.

### **F. Family reunification**

88. IDPs who wish to reunite with family members from whom they were separated have been able to do so and can seek a durable solution together. Families separated by displacement should be reunited as quickly as possible, particularly when children, older persons or other vulnerable persons are involved. Where control over territory is divided, national and de facto authorities should cooperate pragmatically (e.g. through humanitarian actors or other impartial intermediaries) to allow for family reunification despite obstacles such as closed boundary lines.

89. For unaccompanied or separated children, family reunification will generally be in their best interests. However, prior to supporting reunification, an assessment needs to be made as to whether it exposes or is likely to expose the child to exploitation, abuse or neglect. This assessment should be based, inter alia, on information already verified by the competent national or local authorities. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that reunification exposes or is likely to expose the child to risks, a best-interest determination is required as to whether family reunification is indeed in the child's best interest. The authorities are responsible to provide protection until the child's family is found.

90. Appropriate tracing is to be undertaken at the earliest possible time to establish the fate and whereabouts of missing relatives and to inform the next of kin of progress made in the investigation and the results obtained. In some cases, it may be impossible, despite the best efforts of the competent authorities and humanitarian actors, to find

missing relatives. In these situations it may become necessary to establish special legal procedures to provide the next of kin with accelerated access to pensions and family property and to formalize or legalize care arrangements for unaccompanied and separated children that avoid, whenever possible, placing them in institutions.

91. Depending on the type of displacement, local context and obtainable data, it would be useful to consider the following as indicators of progress towards family reunification:

- Mechanisms have been put in place to reunite separated family members. No movement restrictions prevent family reunification;
- The number of internally displaced children or other dependent persons who have not yet been reunited with their families;
- The number of persons without access to property/pensions due to a missing family member or other provider;
- The number of unaccompanied and separated internally displaced children for whom a best interest determination is needed but has not been conducted.

### **G. Participation in public affairs without discrimination**

92. IDPs who have achieved a durable solution are able to exercise the right to participate in public affairs at all levels on the same basis as the resident population and without discrimination owing to their displacement.<sup>43</sup> This includes the right to associate freely and participate equally in community affairs, to vote and to stand for election, as well as the right to work in all sectors of public service. In many cases this requires special measures to be implemented before return, local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country. Where large numbers of IDPs have not returned, it may be necessary to carry out voter registration and education programmes in IDP sites, to make provisions for absentee ballots or set up special polling stations.

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<sup>43</sup> Guiding Principle 29(1) specifies that internally displaced persons “shall have the right to participate fully and equally in public affairs at all levels” upon their return or resettlement. IDPs also have this right while displaced (see Guiding Principle 22 (d)).

93. Depending on the type of displacement, local context and obtainable data, it would be useful to consider the following as indicators of progress towards participation in public affairs:

- IDPs face no legal or administrative obstacles not faced by the resident population that prevent them from voting, being elected or working in public service;
- The percentage of adult IDPs eligible and registered to vote in comparison to the resident population or the national average, as appropriate;
- The percentage of adult IDPs participating in elections held in comparison to the resident population or the national average;
- The percentage of IDPs among public servants and elected officials in comparison to the percentage of IDPs in the overall population.

#### **H. Access to effective remedies and justice<sup>44</sup>**

94. IDPs who have been victim of violations of international human rights or humanitarian law, including arbitrary displacement<sup>45</sup> must have full and non-discriminatory access to effective remedies and access to justice, including, where appropriate, access to existing transitional-justice mechanisms, reparations and information on the causes of violations.

95. All victims of violations of international human rights and grave breaches of international humanitarian law have a right to an effective remedy,<sup>46</sup> and of course, IDPs are no different in this regard. Effective remedies include equal and effective access to

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<sup>44</sup> See also paras. 76-82 on the restitution of housing, land and property.

<sup>45</sup> Guiding Principle 6 sets out the right to be protected against arbitrary displacement and provides a non-exhaustive list of cases of arbitrary displacement.

<sup>46</sup> See International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 2, para. 3, and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art. 8. While international humanitarian treaty law does not set out the right, it is recognized by the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law, adopted and recommended to member states by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/147.

justice; adequate, effective and prompt reparation for harm suffered; and access to relevant information concerning violations and reparation mechanisms.<sup>47</sup>

96. Securing effective remedies for the violations of international human rights and humanitarian law which caused displacement, or which occurred during displacement, may have a major impact on prospects for durable solutions for IDPs. Failure to secure effective remedies for such violations may cause risks of further displacement, impede reconciliation processes, create a prolonged sense of injustice or prejudice among IDPs, and thereby undermine the achievement of durable solutions. Thus, securing justice for IDPs is an essential component of long-term peace and stability.

97. In some situations, it is therefore necessary in order to achieve durable solutions to formally address past violations by holding perpetrators accountable, providing victims with reparations in a formal sense, (including compensation), and/or providing information on the causes of displacement. This would be particularly important in cases where IDPs became victims of war crimes or crimes against humanity, where they remain at risk from the perpetrators of violations or abuse, or where they themselves feel that formal justice must be done to enable them to physically, socially and emotionally overcome their displacement experience.

98. Reparation may include: restitution that aims at restoring the situation prior to arbitrary displacement; compensation for economically assessable damage; rehabilitation (including medical and psychological care); and satisfaction, which needs to be given in so far as the violation cannot be made good by restitution or compensation<sup>48</sup> and can take the shape of public acknowledgement of violations, official apologies, or judicial action against individual perpetrators.<sup>49</sup> Reparations must adequately address the specific violations of rights suffered by IDPs with due attention paid to their nature, seriousness,

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<sup>47</sup> Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation, para. 12.

<sup>48</sup> Draft Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts (see General Assembly resolution 53/86), art. 37.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation (General Assembly resolution 60/147), paras. 19-22. See also Draft Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts (Assembly resolution 53/86), arts. 34-37.

scale and pattern. In some cases, simple, administrative and non-bureaucratic procedures (e.g. standardized compensation amounts for different types of lost assets) might be more appropriate than overly complex systems.

99. Humanitarian and development assistance received during or after displacement does not amount to compensation, although its fair and equitable allocation can contribute to community reconciliation and conflict prevention. There are a variety of ways to establish the causes of displacement, including through truth commissions. Restrictions on amnesties for international crimes imposed by national or international law must be respected at all times.

100. In cases of disasters or non-State actors committing serious crimes, the authorities may still incur responsibility for having failed to provide adequate protection. In other cases, non-State actors committed crimes against IDPs despite the authorities' best efforts to protect them. Even in such cases, the authorities still need to take all possible steps, in accordance with due process guarantees and other human rights obligations, to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable and provide reparations. This may call for innovative measures, e.g. seizing and redistributing the assets of perpetrators who gained large personal profit from arbitrarily displacing others or requiring local perpetrators to help IDPs rebuild their destroyed houses and related infrastructure.

101. IDPs, including women, children (according to their age and maturity) and people who have special needs or are potentially marginalized, need to be fully informed about existing remedies and should be involved in their design, implementation and evaluation.

102. Information on existing remedies should be disseminated in a language and format IDPs can understand. Relevant institutions should be geographically, culturally and economically accessible. Mechanisms to provide remedies must be simple enough to allow access to all victims, regardless of education, social status, gender, age etc. and take into consideration the specific obstacles IDPs face, such as loss of documentation, trauma and fear of further victimization. Mechanisms must also be conflict-sensitive and

designed to avoid creating divisions among the victim population or reinforcing existing social and economic inequalities.

103. Involving IDPs also contributes to providing a greater sense of justice and dignity and helps in redressing the relationship between the victims and the State.

104. While national and local authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to provide IDPs with effective remedies for violations suffered, they may require support from international actors. Humanitarian and development actors may have an important role to play in advocating for access to justice and effective remedies, assisting States in meeting their obligations, training IDPs on their rights and assisting IDPs in appropriately participating in the design and implementation of relevant measures. It is important that actors undertake a careful analysis of the type, nature and patterns of violations that took place, the local political and social context and the particular aspirations of IDPs and other victims.

105. Depending on the type of displacement, local context and obtainable data, it would be useful to consider the following as indicators of progress towards reparation:

- Existence of accessible mechanisms that have the legal mandate and factual capacity to provide IDPs with effective remedies for violations suffered, including violations committed by non-state actors.
- Percentage of IDPs who consider that the violations suffered have been effectively remedied and a sense of justice restored.
- Number or percentage of identified cases of displacement-related serious human rights violations or grave breaches of humanitarian law that result in effective and adequate reparation.