

Discussion Paper

Development approaches to forced displacement in the Great Lakes Region.

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Cover Photo: *Crafts cooperative, supported through a UNDP reintegration project for returning internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees @ UNDP Burundi 2015*

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1. Introduction

Migration and displacement are key priorities for UNDP's support for achieving the sustainable development agenda in the Great Lakes Region (GLR). In preparation for the 2016 UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants, this Discussion Paper presents UNDP's role in promoting development approaches to forcibly displaced population groups in the GLR, including support to refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), host communities and communities of return. This Discussion Paper aims to promote discussion on cross-border and multi-country approaches and overall regional cooperation in addressing forced displacement. The paper is based on experiences from five Great Lakes countries, including Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

Box 1: UNDP's development approach to migration and displacement

UNDP advocates for support living up to the commitments made in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the commitment to "leave no one behind", including refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities. UNDP advocates for development approaches to reduce the need for forced displacement by, amongst others, addressing the root causes of displacement in the GLR. Development approaches focus, for instance, on enhancing community resilience to be better able to cope with and recover from the impact of large numbers of displaced and protect development gains. This may include strengthening the capacities of local authorities and livelihoods opportunities, while supporting displaced population groups to resume their lives, become self-reliant, and contribute to local economies. In doing so, UNDP calls for greater international solidarity in supporting and stabilizing countries hosting displaced populations to mitigate the economic, social, environmental and other possible impacts of large-scale displacement and create economic opportunities for local populations and displaced people alike.

The UNDP Guidance Note *A development approach to Migration and Displacement* (November 2015), outlines three main areas of work for UNDP to address the root causes of displacement and provide comprehensive responses to situations of crisis, protracted displacement and return, ensuring that UNDP adds value to and builds on existing efforts already under way at national, regional and global levels. UNDP's interventions in migration and displacement in the GLR and globally, are set within three broad areas of work:

- **Developing comprehensive national policy and institutional frameworks for migration**
- **Managing migration for long-term positive development at the sub-national and local level**
- **Resilience-based development solutions for migration and displacement in times of conflict and disaster**

To implement these interventions, the Guidance Note suggests the development of new and the strengthening of existing partnerships for UNDP across a wide range of organizations, sectors and disciplines. Key partners include: governments; national and local action groups; local communities; donor partners; other UN organizations and development partners; international financial institutions; research and science organizations; and the private sector.

2. Promoting development approaches to forced displacement in the Great Lakes Region: a joint responsibility

The Great Lakes Region (GLR) is comprised of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the countries along its eastern border— Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. Similar to other global trends, the number of people currently displaced in this region continues to rise, mostly due to conflict and instability. The increasing scale, complexity and protracted nature of

“Securing durable solutions for internally displaced persons and refugees is a joint responsibility and one that needs to be undertaken progressively. We have learned many lessons in the field. Now we must use what we have learned to bring together more actors to achieve common commitments”

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the annual meeting in Geneva of UNHCR’s Executive Committee, 1 October 2014

forced displacement in the GLR is creating significant challenges for host communities, and creating tensions over access to livelihoods and basic services.

It is estimated that nearly 3.5 million¹ forcibly displaced people are hosted in the GLR, many of whom left their homes decades ago to escape conflict, poverty and environmental degradation. Limited resources and a lack of social cohesion may exacerbate tensions between displaced populations and host communities, which can potentially lead to further conflict and new cycles of displacement.

Large movements of forcibly displaced people also create opportunities for groups involved in conflict and armed violence to covertly cross borders, enter communities alongside the displaced and may use camps of displaced persons for recruitment and training grounds.

In the DRC alone, conflict and violence have led to over 1.8 million registered IDPs, some of whom have experienced as many as seven episodes of displacement.² The DRC’s neighbouring countries are also affected, particularly Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania, which together host a total of 451,682 Congolese refugees.³ Despite its internal dynamics, the DRC is also host to refugees from within the region, currently 387,963 including the most recent influx from South Sudan. In Burundi, ongoing political conflict and recent natural disasters have displaced 100,853 people, most of whom are women and children. A total of 274,339 Burundians have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, including 78,000 in Rwanda, mainly in Mahama camp. Uganda is also a major destination for refugees, with 538,252 refugees and asylum seekers from the DRC, South Sudan and Burundi currently present, 56 per cent of whom are children.

An effective response necessitates support in host countries and communities, requiring increased investment in addressing and analysing the root causes of forced displacement in countries of origin- integrating both top-down and bottom-up measures. Top-down measures should include strengthening regional coordination between the five countries, to establish appropriate legal and policy frameworks, regional level planning for the identification of common objectives and oversight mechanisms. Bottom-up measures should aim to strengthen the absorption capacity of the host communities and the communities of return, build trust between host communities and the returnees, IDPs or refugees, and strengthen the capacities of civil society. Development approaches with a regional perspective are the only viable way to offer a sustainable choice to the displaced in the GLR.

¹ UNOCHA (2016). Regional Outlook for the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes Region: Recommendations for Humanitarian Action and Resilience Response; July – September. Available from: <http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/regional-outlook-horn-africa-and-great-lakes-region-recommendations-humanitarian>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

The Great Lakes Regional Strategic Framework 2016-2017

The Great Lakes Regional Strategic Framework for 2016-2017 was launched in March 2016 by the UN Secretary-General at the Security Council Open Debate on the *Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts in the Great Lakes Region*. The Strategic Framework outlines the UN's development approach to the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework (PSC-F) for the DRC and the surrounding region. The Framework is based on the findings of a comprehensive conflict and socioeconomic regional analysis and the Special Envoy's Road Map. It acts as a reference document for the UN's regional development action in the region and identifies the rationale for Six Pillars of intervention to address the root causes of instability and ensure sustainable and durable peace and security.

The six Pillars are:

1. land and natural resources management;
2. economic integration, cross-border trade, food and nutrition security;
3. mobility;
4. youth and adolescents;
5. gender and sexual and gender-based violence;
6. justice and conflict prevention.

UNDP and the World Food Programme (WFP) act as co-champions for the implementation of the Strategic Framework. The UN Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes provides political leadership and strategic guidance. The Special Envoy in his Road Map recognizes the need to address the root causes of displacement in a coherent, comprehensive and balanced manner, integrating development with due regard for social, economic and environmental dimensions and respect for the human rights.

Overall, the Regional United Nations Development Group (R-UNDG) has identified three different types of regional action required for effective delivery of the Strategic Framework:

1. Activities to be undertaken by UN Country Teams within their United Nations Development Frameworks (UNDAFs) that have regional implications.
2. Issues that are cross-border and involve the interaction of two or more Country Teams, will require regional level cooperation to coordinate and agree on what support can best be provided by whom.
3. Initiatives that are sub-regional will require fully-fledged regional cooperation and resource mobilization justified on a case-by-case basis where it adds value.



Crafts cooperative. Project beneficiaries dying textiles, supported through a UNDP 3x6 project @ UNDP Burundi

Coordinators in the region to support governments to identify and implement Durable Solutions for IDPs, refugees and returnees.

In 2011, the UN Secretary-General issued a Decision endorsed the Preliminary Framework on Ending Displacement in the Aftermath of Conflict (also called Decision on Durable Solutions (DS)). The development of the DS Framework was co-led by UNDP, UNHCR and OCHA as a follow-up on the Secretary-General's Report on peace-building in the immediate aftermath of conflict.⁴ The DS Framework was developed to improve the clarity and predictability of the UN responses in the post-conflict period, including in the areas of public administration, transitional governance, early employment, rehabilitation of basic infrastructure, and "reintegration of returnees".

⁴ A/63/881-S/2009/304

Strategic Framework Pillar 3- Mobility

The third pillar under the Strategic Framework focuses on Human Mobility. This Pillar is co-led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to find durable solutions for refugees, returnees and IDPs in the region. The pillar recognizes the need for strong leadership by national authorities and cooperation between humanitarian and development agencies. Any support provided under this Pillar will complement and add value to what is done already at country level, recognizing also that creating sustainable conditions enabling durable solutions for IDPs and returning refugees is primarily a national responsibility.

Pillar 3 also emphasizes the need for regional authorities to partner with national governments and to strengthen capacities for managing population movements within and across their borders.

Durable Solutions

The need for regional support to displacement is rooted in the commitments made in the Convention of the African Union on the Protection and Assistance of IDPs in Africa (Kampala Convention) and in the Great Lakes Pact on Peace, Security, Stability and Economic Development. The delivery of these commitments made in the Kampala Convention where taken forward, amongst others, by Decision No 2011/20 of the UN Secretary-General asking the Resident/Humanitarian

The decision also requested UNDP and UNHCR, in consultation with the Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (CWGER), the Global Protection Cluster (GPC), the RC/HCs and national authorities to select three pilot countries to develop and implement durable solutions strategies by December 2013. The engagement of national and local governments throughout the process was recognized to be of utmost importance. The decision also calls on Resident /Humanitarian Coordinators, to lead the development of a Strategy for Durable Solutions for IDPs and returning refugees, determining the most appropriate division of roles and responsibilities based on the Framework and the mandates of the respective agencies, and in consultation with national authorities and partners.

Based on above global and regional frameworks and decisions, UNDP-UNHCR will jointly promote Durable Dolutions in the Great Lakes Regions. The joint support will focus on three main outputs:

Output 1: Building the normative framework and capacity of the authorities to manage the internally displaced population to avoid the need for border crossing.

Output 2: Facilitating the voluntary, safe and dignified return and reintegration of refugees and IDPs.

Output 3: Strengthening management capacity at the regional level for effective support to policymakers and practitioners.

The Durable Solutions initiative supports governments and regional organizations in the formulation of national and regional strategies on displacement, will build institutional capacity at regional level enabling an evidence-based approach to displacement, will support host communities and support the creation of an enabling environment for voluntary return and reintegration of refugees and IDPs in the region.

The successful implementation of the Durable Solutions initiative requires commitment at both technical and political level. It requires consistent and active contribution by the regional authorities, as well as the support of national governments, humanitarian and development agencies, host communities and project beneficiaries.

Durable Solutions action plan for the Great Lakes Region

Specifically, for the Greate Lakes region, both UNHCR and UNDP will support the developmentof a joint regional action plan with other partners providing development approaches for those refugees who will not be eligible for resettlement. The joint action plan would seek to:

1. Consider connections to the Solutions Alliance Initiative. This may include the establishment of Solutions Alliance National Groups.
2. Help the asylum countries to enhance protection and conditions of asylum in their country, including through a favourable refugee policy, e.g. freedom of movement, the right to work, enhanced self-sufficiency, etc.

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